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# THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF St. JOHN.

1.

## INTRODUCTION.

No apology is needed today for an essay in Biblical Theology. Divers circumstances have combined to give it an importance which is likely to increase in the future. There has been a revulsion from metaphysical dogmatism and detailed exegesis which has encouraged the study of the Bible as a whole. No doubt immense service has been done in the past by the detailed work of exegetical scholars; especially by work which, for a time and for a purpose, the direct influence of theological preconceptions have been laid aside. But it is only up to a certain point that this is either desirable or possible. Such work is too detailed to be creative. The time has come for the detailed work of exegetical scholars to be gathered into one whole and there is evidence that this is being realised.

Biblical Theology stands midway between exegesis and systematic theology. Its special mark is that it studies separately the several Biblical documents, in relation to the individual authors with the aim of reproducing the standpoint of each writer. This in no wise prejudices the fact that there is substantial unity of doctrine throughout the New Testament; and it is by the method of Biblical Theology that such a fact is established. The study of the

author's thought throws back a flood of light upon the several items of exegetical enquiry and it is in this that Biblical Theology attains its characteristic expression.

There are two characteristics of Biblical Theology. In the first place it is not directly concerned in the bearing of Biblical truths upon the religious life; it is history rather than homily. It seeks to learn what was the meaning of the author. In the second place it does not seek to go beyond the historical standpoint of the author. It does not attempt to extract universally valid propositions, or to extend by inference the sphere of his ideas. It does not seek to translate the author into equivocal terms of modern thought; but to interpret him in the terms of his own philosophic method.

These characteristics of Biblical Theology will be kept in mind in this particular study. It will be my purpose to give such an exposition of the thought of John that it will comprise not only his theology - in the sense that every topic of his theology will be discussed - but in order to display his theology as a whole, as a system. The profundity of Johannine thought will thereby be revealed. Small minds are a jumble of unrelated and discordant ideas; big minds remain true to a few central and fundamental beliefs. These beliefs are expressed in different ways; conveying thus the impression of the complexity and manifoldness of life itself. But variety

of expression does not bespeak discordance of ideas. An underlying unity is revealed in the fabric to whose meaning the many strands of diverse colours have gone. It will be the purpose of this essay to reveal that unity in the Johannine writings.

It is not difficult to arrange the several topics of Johannine Theology under the familiar headings and discuss them separately. But it is no easy task to arrange the teaching of John according to a system which will reflect the fulness of his rich mind; which will show how one part of his thought dovetails into another and display the unity of the many ideas which comprise the Johannine conception of Christianity. It demands not only a minute inspection of the single texts in order to rise to an apprehension of the author's thought as a whole, but it requires also an imaginative faculty which will co-ordinate the scattered details into a constructive reproduction of the author's thought. Dr Maurice Goguel has said: "It is on psychology, that in the last analysis, must rely every attempt to understand the life of Jesus" (1). This is especially true of the Fourth Gospel. And some attempt will be made to arrive at a sympathetic insight into the mind of John in this essay.

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(1) Vie de Jesus, p. 196.

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For the purpose of this study I will accept the Fourth Gospel and the three Johannine Epistles as coming from the same hand. Canon Streeter has said: "The three Epistles and the Gospel of John are so closely allied in diction, style, and general outlook that the burden of proof lies with the person who would deny their common authorship.... we are forced to conclude that all four documents are by the same hand." (1) The external evidence for the ~~external~~ authorship of the Fourth Gospel as worked out by Westcott in his classical commentary (2) and the internal evidence as discussed by Scott Holland (3) appear to be overwhelming. But the references to John the Elder cannot be set aside (4) The view which appears to do fullest justice to the evidence is that the writer of the Fourth Gospel is John the Elder, who was an intimate disciple of John the Apostle; that he records the teaching of the Apostle with great fidelity; that the Apostle is the "witness", to whom reference is sometimes made, and is also the "disciple whom Jesus loved". It may be that the Apostle actually dictated to the Elder parts of what now constitutes the Gospel; but parts are the Elder's own recollections of the Apostle's teaching and

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(1) The Four Gospels p.460 (2) The Gospel of St John pp v - xxviii. (3) The Philosophy of Faith and the Fourth Gospel. (4) This evidence is fully discussed by Moffatt, Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, pp596 - 619.



parts are his own comment. By adopting this view we can recognise that the author of the first Epistle is also the actual writer of the Fourth Gospel, while also admitting the differences to which most scholars call attention. These differences include not only the references to the work of Christ, but also the Parousia, the use made of the O.T., faith, the Logos conception and the application of the term "paraclete". It is also claimed that the linguistic differences are sufficient to demand a different author. These facts have led scholars like Dr. Moffatt (1) to arrive at the conclusion that the writer of the first Epistle, while belonging to the general Johannine school of thought, occupies a slightly different ground from that of the Fourth Gospel. Prof. Dodd (2) in his new Commentary sees a different and a far less profound author for the first Epistle. The difference may however be due to a difference of standpoint and purpose and it would be uncritical to insist that a writer must adhere to identical forms of expression under varying circumstances. On the other hand there are close affinities between the two documents in grammar, style, phraseology and thought (3) and these appear to make it certain that the author of the Epistle was also the author of the Gospel. It is

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(1) I.L.N.T. pp 589-593. See also Schmiegal, The Johannine Writings pp 201-211; Scott, The Fourth Gospel pp 88 ff., but cf Literature of the New Testament p.261 (2) Moffatt's New Testament Commentary. I owe this reference to Canon N.D. Coleman. (3) Brooke Johannine Epistles (I.C.C.) pp i-xix.

also generally held that the second and third Epistles are by the author of the first Epistle and the Gospel. The Johannine phraseology and point of view are very marked especially in the second Epistle. The affinities of the third with the second are so close that we may assume that they were written by the same author and in all probability at the same time (1). J.H. Moulton held that "in every consideration of style" the Johannine Epistles form with the Fourth Gospel "a literary unity" (2).

We shall therefore consider that the Gospel and the Epistles are the product of a single hand and exhibit a unity of thought which will enable us to draw upon all the documents in attempting to construct a system of Johannine thought. There may be different strata in the Fourth Gospel due perhaps to an oral stage so that some of it seems like (a) narratives taken straight from the Tradition, with little or no change; (b) some also taken from the original Tradition but so interwoven with interpretation that we cannot recover the original form; and (c) some free writing in accordance with the known habits of Hellenistic religious authors of the period. (3). Nevertheless

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(1) Charles, Book of Revelation (I.C.C.) vol. i pp xxiv. ff  
Brooke, Johannine Epistles (I.C.C.) pp lxiii ff

(2) Grammar of New Testament Greek, vol. ii. p. 31.

(3) Stanton, The Gospels as Historical Documents pt iii, pp 17-76; ~~Jackson, The Problem of the Fourth Gospel, pp 97-123.~~

the book has a deeper unity than is suggested by either chronology or topography. (1) The end is in view from the beginning (i.29; xix.36); the divisions of the subject are clearly marked; there is a steady climax in the events; a growing revelation of Himself and of His Father by the Son; we watch His 'hour' all the time, as it delays, approaches, arrives. As a detailed example of this we may point out the logical connection between the first six chapters.

It is the evangelist's purpose in the first four chapters to give a series of witnesses to the truth as it is in Jesus. After giving the witness of John the Baptist there comes the witness of the disciples. After that comes the witness of a pharisee (iii). And then follows the two witnesses, of the woman of Samaria and of the Nobleman of Capernaum (iv). There is nothing haphazard in this arrangement. It is an account of an ever widening circle of witnesses (2). From the Forerunner to the intimate disciples; from the intimate disciples to the Jerusalem pharisee, from the Jerusalem pharisee to the Samaritan woman, from the Samaritan woman to a Gentile Nobleman. Then comes the idea of the life giving Word which takes the reader to the end of chapter vi. Many attempts have been made to transpose chapters v. and vi. on the ground that the connection between iv.42 and vi.1 is

(1) cf Straughan, The Fourth Gospel, p 81.

(2) A reverse process is to be found in vi. There the circle grows progressively smaller as the chapter proceeds. The audience is reduced from the multitudes to the Jews, from the Jews to many of His disciples, from the many disciples to the Twelve.

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more natural. But for this there is no MS authority and it is essential that v. comes before vi. as v. defines the Son as adequate to give the Life-giving Bread in vi. This is not to deny that there may be some passages which have apparently been misplaced (1) Such misplacements are probably due to the accidental disarrangement of leaves in the original MS or to editorial revision. Nevertheless such theories of displacement assume a topographical, chronological or logical sequence which may not have been present in the mind of the author. (2)

It is a criticism of Archbishop Bernard's Commentary that it introduces into ~~of~~ a Gospel which <sup>is</sup> all of one piece a distinction which destroys the unity both of the whole and of each section. Bernard distinguishes between the Witness and the Evangelist in too sharp a manner. The Gospel is history and interpretation; not history interpreted. Thus the unity of the whole is lost and no skill in exegesis can compensate for the loss. For example iv is one complete whole in which the narrative is carefully built up to reach the confession of the Samaritans ~~xxxxxx~~ The words of Nicodemus in iii are set in a framework controlled by the significance of water. It seems impossible to treat the words "of water" as a gloss, or to detach the confession

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- (1) see Moffatt, I.N.L.T. pp 552 ff  
(2) For a full discussion see F.W. Lewis, *The Disarrangements of the Fourth Gospel*, and F.R. Hoare, *The Original Order and Chapters of St. John's Gospel*.

of the Samaritans as though it were added to a record complete without it. Hoskyns and Davey do not fall into this error in their Commentary. According to these scholars "He has forged his book into one whole, its unity being secured by a steady revolution round one central theme, indeed round one point where the author has seen the truth manifested in the darkness.....His work therefore contains no fragments, no isolated, scattered bits of information, no detached or detachable doctrines or dogmas, no independent rites or ceremonies." (1)

It may be objected that the Gospel which is by far the most abundant source for our study gives, not primarily John's teaching, but the teaching of Jesus. , Does this mean

(1) The Fourth Gospel p.43; see also Streeter The Four Gospels p.377. Three main theories have been put forward regarding the unity of the Fourth Gospel: (a) partition theories, which disentangle a more or less genuine Grundchrift from the subsequent editorial revisions. (b) Revision theories which explain the phenomena of the canonical Gospel by positing an editor who not only in the appendix, but elsewhere recast the Gospel for his own purpose. (c) Both these theories may be combined with the further hypothesis of dislocations in the text. But whatever may be the evidence for these theories the Gospel has a sequence which stamps upon it a unity of thought which justifies the statement in the text.

that we are restricted, for the special purpose of this study, to the more obvious comments of the author? We need not be reduced to this extremity. The question of the historicity of the speeches of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, vital as it is for religious interests, is not one of immediate concern in an essay on Johannine theology; we are here exclusively concerned with the doctrines of the author. We have already suggested that there are various strata in the Fourth Gospel but these are so interwoven that it is almost impossible to separate them. And without the least prejudice to the substantial authenticity of these reports it requires but slight familiarity with the contrast between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel to convince one that they are not verbatim reports, but rather reflect the peculiarities of the author, who puts into the mouth of the Jews, the Baptist, and of Jesus Himself, the same characteristic language which we find him employing in his Epistles. The speeches of Jesus as recorded in the Fourth Gospel contain only what the author has completely assimilated and made his own, and consequently the Fourth Gospel is, as we call it, the Gospel according to St. John (1).

This is the general opinion of modern scholars. Dr. J.E. Carpenter expresses the fact by maintaining that the

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(1) That is the Gospel of which the Elder is the writer but of which the Apostle is the true author.

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members of the Johannine circle represent Jesus " as speaking by anticipation in their name"(1) In a long chapter Dr. Percy Gardner argues that the Evangelist gives the teaching of ~~Jesus~~ Jesus as Plato gives the teaching ~~the~~ of Socrates. (2). Dr. B. H. Streeter thinks that the original readers would not have supposed the author to mean that the doctrine propounded in the discourses was verbally identical with what Jesus actually taught in Palestine, "but rather that it was organically related to what Christ taught in such a way as to be the doctrine which Christ would have taught had He been explicitly dealing with the problems confronting the Church at the time when the Gospel was written." (3) Dr. W. H. Howard holds that "it is the Evangelist's manner to take a saying of Jesus and render it into an idiom that is rich in meaning for his own contemporaries". (4)

There are certain widely accepted claims in respect of the philosophical and religious affinities of the Fourth Gospel which must be considered in the course of this study. There are some who say that the Gospel is an extension of the characteristic teaching of S. Paul; others that Greek philosophical thought is the key to the understanding of the

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(1) The Johannine Writings, p 225 (2) The Ephesian Gospel pp 100 ff. (3) The Four Gospels, p 371 (4) The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, p. 221

Gospel; others that the Hellenistic Mystery Religions, with their stress upon union with the Deity, ideas of birth, light and life, have left their mark upon the Evangelist's mind; others that the key is to found in the O.T. literature and other influences which operated within the borders of Judaism during the first and second centuries A.D. It will be convenient to discuss some of these claims now.

(a) Dr. B.W. Bacon says "the supreme key to the Gospel is the absolute loyalty to Paulinism. Its author is the 'Vindicator' (goel) of Paul, accomplishing after Paul's death that "unity of Spirit" in the universal Church, which was the supreme aim of Paul's life." The Greek metaphysic which some find in the Logos doctrine is there, according to Dr. Bacon, because Paul himself has met him half way in Hellenistic cosmology and anthropology. If Paul had written the Gospel the Logos doctrine would have been given the same prominence as in the Johannine Gospel. "Paulinism" to the author of the Fourth Gospel "is much more than an influence. We should call it rather his universal solvent in which all elements of mere historical tradition are held in solution until precipitated and recast in his own molds of thought. (1). Deissmann (2) says that "the greatest monument of the most genuine understanding of Paul's

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(1) The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate, pp281 ff

(2) Paul, Eng. Trans. p. 155



mysticism is the Gospels and Epistles of John."

The great contrast however between Paul and John is that of the God-mysticism of John and the Christ-mysticism of Paul. (1) Paul never speaks of union with God or of "being in God" as John does and this appears to undermine the thesis of Dr. Bacon at its most important point. Furthermore Paul dwells upon the suffering, the humiliation and the death of Christ. He held that in coming to earth Jesus had emptied Himself of His divine glory and that His divine nature had for a time suffered eclipse. The Fourth Evangelist, on the other hand, sees in all the steps of that life a glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father which shines out in works such as no other man did, and in words which no other man spake, and supremely in the death on the cross. Nevertheless it would be strange if such a powerful thinker as Paul had no influence on John, especially as they were both concerned to recommend the Christian Gospel to the Gentile world.

(b) In the detailed treatment of John's thought we shall notice the close relation to O.T. conceptions; at this point I will only remark upon the Aramaic characteristics of John's style. Even if we consider that Dr. Burney (2) failed to establish the case for an Aramaic original afterwards translated into Greek we can still distinguish through

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(1) see Schweitzer, Die Mystic des Apostels Paulus, p 361.

(2) The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel.

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the Greek characteristics of the Hebrew language. The most general signs of it are: the simple and unperiodic structure of the sentences; the monotonous connection of sentences by "and", "but", "then", to the neglect of the rich store of particles which in Greek served to express the logical relation of the clause; the circumstantiality and monotony of the expressions; and the fondness of antithesis and parallelism. Dr. Burney has made it clear that the three notes of Semitic poetry are constantly found in the Fourth Gospel, viz parallelism, rhythm and rhyme, and that the Prologue has many of the characteristics of a Hebrew poem. Dr. E. A. Abbott (1) finds in the Johannine method of recording Christ's sayings an example of the way in which the sacred text was treated in the Jewish schools of the last few centuries B.C. "The Fourth Gospel", he says, "asserts that all Christ's sayings, while he lived, were in need so to speak of a Targum. They were proverbs, requiring the interpretation that would be given them after his death by the Holy Spirit in order to apply them to practice.... To us it seems a contradiction in terms to speak of an 'inspired Targum'. Yet that is what the Fourth Gospel is." Dr. Israel Abrahams (2) finds in John vii. 22 where Jesus defends his general position from the analogy of circumcision

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(1) The Son of Man, p 411

(2) Studies in the pharisaism of the Gospels, i. p. 135

another instance of the Fourth Gospel's close acquaintance with Hebraic traditions. Dr.Hugo Odeburg (1) has marshalled a mass of evidence to show that John has close affinities with Rabbinic theology. He points out that within the environment of Rabinical Judaism there was a mystical Judaism and suggests that many of the religious ideas of the Fourth Gospel receive their inspiration from this environment. (2) These literary features suggest that the author thought in the Semitic vernacular and his references to the O.T. reveal a greater familiarity with the sacred text than seems reasonable to expect from a Greek convert. Dr.C.C.Torrey (3) says:"all the quotations in this Gospel are from the Hebrew....the quotations are all made from memory, and with the customary freedom of choice and arrangement."

(c) It was inevitable that comparisons should be drawn between the works of Philo and the Johannine writings (4).

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(1) The Fourth Gospel interpreted in its Relation to Contemporaneous Religious currents in Palestine and the Hellenistic Oriental World. (2) op.cit. p.5 (3) see below (4) see T.Drummond,Philo Judaeus, 2 vols.; H.A.A.Kennedy Philo's Contribution to Religion; The Works of Philo Judaeus Translated from the Greek by C.D.Yonge. (3) The Four Gospels. A New Translation p.330. According to Dr.Torrey the Fourth Gospel was written in Aramaic prior to the year A.D. 70, and "was carried out of Palestine by one of the Christian fugitives to be translated and put into circulation at a later day."

The brooding fulness of thought which fill the Fourth Gospel demand for its interpretation a constant sensitiveness, especially as to the deeper meanings which prompted the methods which are characteristic of the Alexandrine Jewish philosophy as represented by Philo. Moffatt(1) says that the differences between Philo and John only serve to bring out the latter's familiarity with the Philonic methods and materials. The most obvious resemblances are to be found in Philo's conception of the Word as a mediator between the transcendent God and the material universe and as the agent of divine activity in creation and revelation. These will be discussed more fully when we come to consider John's choice of the term Logos.

Other points of contact may be found in John 1.18, for Philo also protests against the idea of God being seen (de mut. nomin.2). The miracle of the turning the water into wine (11.2-11) finds a parallel in Philo's Melchizadech who ἀντι ὕδατος οἶνον προσφερέτω καὶ ποτιφέτω καὶ ἀκρατιφέτω ψυχῆς (leg.alleg.iii.50). The six waterpots from which the wine is drawn correspond to the Philonic principle that "six is the most productive of numbers" (ἑξάδε τη γονιμωτάτη de decal. 30) The unceasing activity of the Father in v.17 reflects Philo's assertion: πάνετα γὰρ οὐδέποτε ποιεῶν ὁ θεός (leg.alleg.i.3)

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(1) I.N.L.T. p.523 ff.

The disciples' relation to Christ as friends rather than as slaves (xv.15) may be compared with Philo's comment on Genesis xviii.17: οὐχὶ δεσπότης ἢ κύριος φίλον γὰρ τὸ σοβὸν Θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ δούλον

(de Sob. 11). We find other possible parallels as follows:  
 i.5= Gen.i.3 ; B.9= Quod deus sit imm. 6 and de mun. op. 7 ;  
 i.16=de post.Cain.43 ; i.38= quod det.pot.ins.sol. 8 ;  
 i.50=Gen.32 ; i.51=de Somn.i.22 ; iii.14=leg.alleg.ii.19 ;  
 iii.19=Quaest.inGen.ii.22 ; iv.10=leg.alleg.ii.21 ; iv.42=  
 quod deus sit imm. 34 ; v.32=de Sacr.Ab. et Cain.par.28 ;  
 viii.12=Sapten.24 ; xi.51=de Const.Princ. 8 ; xiv.6=de post.  
 Cain. ; xv.2=de Somn.ii.19 ; xix.3=in Flacc.6. ; xix.31=  
 in Flacc.6 10.

These parallels show that there is enough agreement both in literary methods and religious speculation to suggest that the Fourth Evangelist was deeply influenced by the Philonic spirit, but whether he was directly aware of the works of Philo remains uncertain.

(d) Since the publication of "Poimandres" in 1904 by Prof. Reitzenstein of Strasburg and of the "Hermetica" in 1925 by the late Walter Scott many scholars have noticed the close parallels between the Hermetic literature and the Fourth Gospel. Loisy, for example, says(1): "The conception religious and mystical, of our Logos is much more strictly and directly related to Egyptian theosophy, which, using

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(1) Le Quatrieme Evangile, 2nd Ed. p.89

on one side the assimilation of the Logos to Hermes in the Stoic preaching, and on the other identifying Hermes with the God Thoth, saw in Thoth-Hermes, not only the Logos organ of creation, but the mediator of the divine revelation and of regeneration for immortality, and worked, like our Gospel, with the mystic terms of "truth", "light", "life". It is with this mystery doctrine that the Johannine conception, a theory of Christian mystery, has affinity, without being able to affirm otherwise, that there is direct dependance.". Loisy consequently affirms that the author was "one converted from paganism" and a "master of gnosis rather than an apostle of faith" (1).

The Hermetic literature consists of a number of Tractates by a series of unknown writers, attached to no definite locality, but presenting a common view of God, the world and human nature under the name of Hermes Tresmegistus (2). In the opinion of Miss M.R.Ely (3), "The Poimandres represents the expression of a rather long development of religious speculation, whose origin was certainly pre-Christian, but whose literary expression is probably contemporaneous with early Christianity, and perhaps partly anterior to it." In this literature the

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(1) op.cit. p.66 (2) E.R.E. Article Hermes Tresmegistus, vol.vi.p.626. (3) Knowledge of God in Johannine Thought, p.101.

ultimate essence of the universe is conceived as archetypal light. From this proceeds Mind and Truth and all things. God may be defined as the creator of Mind and Truth. "Thou art Mind in that Thou thinkest, Father in that Thou createst, God in that Thou workest, and Good as maker of all things." (Corp. Herm. v. 11). God is represented as perpetual energy with the result that "there is nothing which is not in God, and nothing in which God is not." (Corp. Herm. ix. c) From the Light comes forth the Logos who is designated Son of God. In a hymn of praise to God Hermes sings: "Holy art Thou who by Logos hast constructed all things that are; Holy art Thou, of whom all nature is an image." (Corp. Herm. i. 31) The writer asks "from what womb can a man be born again" (Corp. Herm. xii. 1), and he describes the reborn as a "Son of God".

Here then is a body of literature containing such Johannine phrases as "Life", "Light", "Logos", "Truth", and such typical Johannine doctrines as the never ceasing energy of God and of rebirth. These phrases were apparently current coin among the people for whom John wrote. The literature gives us a glimpse into one of the many workshops in which Christianity was fashioned. John may well have had these pure seekers after God in mind when he wrote and some may have found in his unique message of the "Word made flesh" the fulfilment of their yearnings.

(e) Prof. Walter Bauer in his commentary Das Johannes

Evangelium (1925) and Dr. Hugo Odeburg in the work already mentioned have shown that there are many striking parallels between the Fourth Gospel and the Mandaean literature. The Mandaeans are the surviving representatives of a Gnostic movement of the second century. They possess a large collection of scriptures the contents of which are of great antiquity. The largest and most interesting portion of these writings is liturgical and mythological in character. The myths relate to the origin and nature of the world, of the gods, and that of men. In the opinion of W. Brandt (1) they cannot be dated earlier than the 1st century A.D.. Amid a strange medley of Jewish, Chaldean and Persian elements we find some typical Johannine phrases such as: "I am a word", "the light of Life", "the first Light the Life, which was out of the Life", "the worlds do not know thy names, nor understand the Light." (2)

We may also compare the following: John xvii.21, "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me", with "The Sent of the Light am I, whom the Great One has sent into the world" (Ginza, or Treasure House, Right ii.64). John xvii.2 "Thou gavest him authority over all flesh", with "The Great One has.....given authority to thee over everything" (Ginza, R.iii.73). John viii.12, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not wa<sup>rk</sup> in <sup>the</sup> darkness but shall have the light of life", with "Mandra d'hayye revealed himself to all the children of men and saves them (1) E.R.E. vol.viii.p.386a. (2) Bauer, op.cit.pp 8-31.



from darkness to light, from obscurity to the light of life" (Ginza, R.v.3).

Prof. Bultmann (1) in seeking an explanation for these parallels traces them to the disciples of John the Baptist. The Mandaean texts give prominence to the River Jordan, the rite of Baptism and John the Baptist. And it may be that the Mandaeans trace their origin to the disciples of the Baptist. These texts therefore, according to Bultmann, incorporate the substance of the teaching of John the Baptist. Jesus was at first associated with this movement but later broke away and formed a community of His own. The Fourth Gospel reproduces more faithfully than the Synoptic Gospels this gnostic element in the teaching of Jesus derived from the Baptist. A consequence of this theory is that Johannine Christianity is really older than the Synoptic tradition. The Jerusalem community represents a secondary development produced by Judaizing reaction, probably due to Peter. It is doubtful whether the arguments in favour for the earlier presentation of Christianity contained in the Synoptic Gospels can be overcome by such slender evidence as this. W.Brandt (2) thinks that the theory that the Mandaeans were originally a Jewish or Judaeo-Christian

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(1) see J.E.Carpenter, The Johannine Writings pp288-289

(2) E.R.E. Article Mandaeans vol.viii.p.386

sect is at variance with certain characteristics in their literature. And after an examination of these characteristics he says "The inevitable inference is that the Mandaeans had been throughout complete strangers to the religious traditions of the Jews." Prof. Lietzmann after a careful study of the Mandaean Baptismal liturgy has come to the conclusion that the notices of John the Baptist belong to a later stage of the tradition and have no other basis than the canonical Gospels. There is nothing to connect the Mandaeans, he says, with conjectural followers of John the Baptist. He believes that the Mandaean Baptismal rite is actually derived from the Nestorians, even to the use of the word Jordan in the sense of Baptismal water.(1) We may conclude therefore that any parallels between the Mandaean literature and the phraseology of the Fourth Gospel is due to the influence of Jewish and Christian beliefs on the later development of Mandaeanism.

In regard to all these instances of parallelism between pagan literature and the Fourth Gospel there is no need to assert a dependance of one upon the other. Their relationship might be collateral in the sense that both might be independent products ~~then~~ of the same psychological factors. The researches of anthropologists seem to show that man everywhere tends to satisfy the same instincts in the same way. Similar myths, rites, customs, tabus have sprung up to all appearance

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(1) see Church and Gnosis, by F.C. Burkitt, p. 114

independantly in diverse lands in response to the same social or individual needs, and there is no need to postulate a 'monophyletic' origin even for so wide and elaborate<sup>a</sup> system as totemism. The basal human needs which Christianity and the pagan religions alike claimed to satisfy was the craving of the sick soul for "salvation". And as it is common to the religious mind to desire purity and strength it was natural that the rites common to all should have taken the form of a cleansing bath and of a sacred meal. In regard to verbal parallelism Bernard points out(1) a very close similarity between a passage from the Timaeus of Plato and the Johannine doctrine of *μωνογενής*. He says consequently that it is highly precarious to build up community or similarity of doctrine upon coincidences of language between two writers.

It should furthermore be observed that John is never dominated either by the literature of his day or by the movements of his time. His mind is too great and original to direct his attention to the task of blending various tendencies with Christianity or refuting opposing ideas. A man of genius preserves his identity of mind amid a welter of competing interests, motives and ideals which surround him. Any references to current movements are always strictly subordinate to his main purpose. And the Fourth Gospel impresses one with its coherent and unified presentation; and it reveals a mind, not of unrecnciled and contending beliefs, but which

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(1) S. John (I.C.C) p. cxli.

has attained mental, moral and spiritual maturity.

Nevertheless it is necessary to know the atmosphere of thought and religion in which the Fourth Gospel was written. A presentation of Christianity emerging from Ephesus about 100 A.D. will not be conceived in the same vein as a record of traditions that were current in Jerusalem half a century earlier. It will lay emphasis upon aspects of truth previously hardly in sight. Its terms and its phrases will be influenced by the intellectual outlook, the current jargon, the religious controversies. The literature which we have been discussing reveal the beliefs and opinions of the non-Christian world in Ephesus at the time <sup>the</sup> Fourth Gospel was written. As Dr. Gardner remarks (1), Ephesus was the preordained place for the writings of John. "His teaching <sup>a</sup> fell on ~~rich~~ soil rich alike with the learning of Jewish Hellenists, the wisdom of Greek philosophy, and the enthusiasm of Phrygian mystics.". These conditions no doubt prompted the chief themes of the Fourth Gospel and influenced its vocabulary. The circumstances were very different from those in which the Synoptic Gospels were written and it is this that causes the chief difference between the Fourth Gospel and the other three.

The proposition that the author of the Fourth Gospel was acquainted with at least Mark and Luke is so generally accepted that there is no need to argue it out here (2); but we must

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(1) The Ephesian Gospel, p. 17 (2) see e.g. Bacon, The Fourth Gospel p. 366 ; Stanton, The Gospels as Historical Documents, iii p 214 ; Streeter, The Four Gospels, chap. xiv ; Dr. Gardner Smith, however does not think that John had read any of the Synoptic Gospels, see St. John and the Synoptic Gospels.

estimate its significance for our presentation of the religious thought of John.

The real connection of the Fourth Gospel with its predecessors lies not in vocabulary but in ideas, and should be tested not on stylistic grounds but on historical and doctrinal grounds. For example at almost every point where the orbit of the Fourth Gospel coincides with that of the Synoptic tradition, the former can be shown to represent a more developed stage of Christian reflection upon the facts. Sir Edwin Hoskyns in his illuminating discussion on the Historical Tension of the Fourth Gospel in his Commentary, draws attention to the way John draws isolated sayings in the Synoptic Gospels into the very centre of his theological scheme. An example of this may be given in the Markan saying: "I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another." In the Fourth Gospel the Jews are made out to take this literally, but the readers of the Gospel and the disciples are meant to see a much deeper meaning in the saying for "he spake of the temple of his body" ( 11.21). Thus "far from merely providing an improbable and inadequate accusation, the Saying now utters a resounding challenge that confidently anticipates the supreme act by which Judaism will be superceded and the true worship of the Father inaugurated, namely the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The Saying has become inseparable from the major themes of the Gospel." (1) There are also examples of similar

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(1) The Fourth Gospel, p.77

treatment of non-Markan material which has found its way into Matthew and Luke.

Nevertheless the day is over when the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptists can be played off against each other. The problem is too delicate and complex for such crude methods. The object of the two records are different. They are addressed to different audiences living in a different intellectual atmosphere. The Galilean Apostles, for the most part, conceived the Gospel as a system of ethics and eschatology, of precepts and rewards. The evangelistic tradition current in Aramaic speaking portions of the Church began as a compilation of the precepts of Jesus. To the end, even when enlarged by Mark's version of the Petrine story, the Palestinian Gospel remained an endeavour to "teach ~~xxxnaxxhatxexerzixngs~~ men to observe all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded." (Matt. xxviii. 20). But in the Greek speaking world in which John lived a new technique was required. The Messiah which was the name under which Jesus was preached to the Jews was meaningless when the Gospel was carried from Palestine to the Gentile world. John "sets out to interpret the Christian story and Christian experience to the new world of Hellenism by translating the Gospels into a form intelligible to Greek modes of thought." (1) The total impression left by the first three Gospels is that Jesus whatever else He was, was truly man. The total impression left by the Fourth Gospel is that Jesus

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(1) B.W. Bacon, The Gospel of the Hellenists, p. 112

had the consciousness of a unique divine personality.

Every consideration of the differences between the Fourth Gospel and its predecessors leads us to conclude that the aim of the Gospel is accurately represented in John's own declaration: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." (John xx.21) . This valuation of Jesus' person is particularly expressed in relation to the "signs" which He did. But it is not only the signs; it is also His teaching which in the Fourth Gospel has a special reference to His person. There is a tendency to obliterate the features of surprise, ignorance mistake and disappointment. Everything is made to hinge upon the appreciation or rejection of Jesus, upon belief or disbelief in Him, upon men's ability to see, or their blindness to God's manifestation in Him.

All these considerations unite in representing that the aim of the Fourth Gospel was a higher characterisation of the significance of Christ's person. In the first place it was higher than his own earlier appreciation. Not only was the Resurrection a crisis for the disciples' appreciation of Jesus, but doubtless John through all the years of his life grew to fuller and fuller comprehension of the profound words and mighty deeds of his Master. In fact this development in appreciation of the truth is an idea persistently reiterated in this Gospel in connection with the mission of the Comforter (xiv.26; xv.26;

xvi.12-14). In the second place his characterisation was higher not than the belief then current in the Church; not higher than the standpoint of the writers of the Synoptic Gospels when they wrote (cf Matt.xi.27-30), but higher than the prevailing expression and supplemental to it in this respect. He found a means of conveying the current belief about Jesus which was more adequate than any previous attempt.

This emphasis upon the person of Jesus has led some to think that the author was a speculative mystic of the Alexandrine type. Miss Evelyn Underhill, for example, says (1): "It is not even the memory of the disciple - even the Beloved Disciple whose reminiscences, if he be not a purely symbolic figure, may well have coloured the Ephesian traditions after Jesus' death - but the vivid first hand knowledge, the immovable certitude of the mystic "in union" with the Object of his adoration, which supplies material for this unearthly picture of the earthly life of Jesus." In Miss Underhill's opinion the temporal background of the historic life receives the projection of the author's spiritual experiences. "He selected, from the huge and quickly growing Christian legend, those events which seemed to him like the types, the dramatic representations, of the great wonders and changes which had been wrought in his soul."

At first sight it does appear as though John were only interested in the moral effectiveness of the revelation made by Jesus. Great emphasis is laid upon the subjective significance of

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(1) The Mystic Way, pp 229 & 234 ; cf W.R.Inge The Theology of the Fourth Gospel in Cambridge Biblical Essays p.254.



Christ's person. But he contends just as emphatically for the objective reality of the things narrated (1) The comparison with St Paul is instructive in this connection. For St Paul the objective reality of the great dogmatic facts of Christ's life is of essential importance. St Paul, however, abstracts the dogmatic element from the lively unity of its personal and ethical connection. The death and resurrection of Christ are the indispensable basis of his dogmatic scheme. John, on the other hand, looks upon the life of Jesus as a whole and finds in it both the basis of his dogmatic inference and its subject value as the highest revelation. It is for this reason that he regards the incarnation as the central fact in his thought. It is not that John's emphasis lay upon the incarnation in a narrow sense, as a particular moment in the life of Jesus, or as a separate dogma. "The Word was made flesh" (1.14) is rather an expression for the total manifestation of Christ. It denotes both the dogmatic <sup>fact</sup> and the significance of Christ as the revealer of God (1.18). This characteristic of John runs through and through his representation and has led to the erroneous opinion that the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ have no dogmatic importance in the Fourth Gospel.

John's treatment of the "works" of Jesus throw light on this

(1) Kundsia in Topologische Ueberlieferungsstafte im Johannes Evangelium regards the topographical details in John as far more accurate than those of Mark. He regards the Gospel as the first witness to the stream of tradition found in Pilgrim-literature.

characteristic. The miraculous works of Jesus are called "signs" not only by this name but by his constant representation of them as expressions of Christ's mission. As wonders they prove that His mission is from God (iii.2), and as symbols they reveal the character of His Mission (vi.2). In the first point of view it is the greatness of the miracle which is significant (v.20); in the second it is its kind (x.32). The resurrection of Lazarus owes its importance not merely to its character as a wonder, but also to the fact that it manifests Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life. As signs Jesus' works are practically words; but it must not be overlooked that work and word are constantly contrasted, that each is in a certain sense the supplement of the other, each being in its own special way a ground of faith. A mere talking Christ does not help the world; the Son therefore manifests Himself (and the Father) as a worker (v.17). The works have for John a special importance in that they reveal the will and the might to perform that which is promised in the word. It is not the speech but the deed of Christ which is the ground of faith (x.37). It is not true therefore to say that the "historical element is a mere setting similar to that which we find in the Hermetic writings and in the Platonic dialogues" (1). The historical details are an essential part of the message of Christ. The works of Christ have at one and the same time the significance of a deed

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(1) W.L.Knox, Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity,  
p.61

done in all objective actuality, and of a revelation whose importance lies in its subjective appreciation. "The non-historical factor penetrates our supposed historical data and the historical factor is woven into what is manifestly non-historical." (1)

The fact that the references to Baptism and the Holy Communion are recorded in complete detachment from the practice or institution of either has led to a similar emphasis upon the subjective element in the Fourth Gospel. (2) Commenting on the discourse in the sixth chapter Bernard cites Lightfoot as saying "Faith is the flesh, the substance of Christian life; love is the food, the energy coursing through the veins and arteries." (3).

But John's insistence upon the fact that "the Word was made flesh" should make us hesitate before adopting the idea that John thought little of the external character of the Sacraments. What he does is to guard against any isolation of God's activity in the world. The Word of God is active and present everywhere. The Sacraments represent and focus a principle at work far beyond themselves, and it is this wider truth that John would have <sup>us</sup> learn. (4). In the hard saying (vi. 52-59) we are compelled to recognise a reference to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and after every attempt to rationalise it in terms of revelation and spiritual

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(1) Hosyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel, p. 120 (2) It should be noticed that the omission of the H.C. in the Fourth Gospel is in common with the original texts of all the Gospels. Liturgical matters are often taken for granted. cf The omission of the Lord's Prayer in Mark. (3) S. John (I.C.C.) p. clxxv (4) cf Westcott, The Gospel of St. John, pp 112 ff.

communion there remains a residuum of absolutely objective character - or else Christ was needlessly offensive to His disciples (1).

John's doctrine cannot therefore be evaporated into a mere subjective system of revelation, faith, knowledge, life. The real and objective importance of Christ's descent from heaven (vi.38), His death (vi.51), and His ascension (vi.62), is not nullified by the fact that they are at the same time vehicles of revelation. It is a characteristic of John's thought that while grasping the material fact he finds in it a deep spiritual import. He is truly sacramental in outlook. In the words of Baron von Hugel (2): "The Church and the Sacraments, still predominantly implicit in the Synoptists, and the subjects of the costly conflict and organisation in the pauline writings, here underlie as already/operative facts, practically the entire profound work." This judgement is important for in the opinion of von Hugel the method and form of the Fourth Gospel "are pervadingly allegorical; its instincts and aim are profoundly mystical". (3)

A further characteristic of John's thought is that it is profoundly contemplative and intuitional. Nothing can be further from the truth than to call him speculative. He never speculates - he sees. (4). He sees a drama: the conflict and finally the

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(1) According to Odeburg the offence is that Jesus declares Himself to be the Bread from Heaven and has nothing to do with eating the bread and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. The Fourth Gospel etc p.p 267 ff. (2) Essays, and Addresses, 1. p.84 (3) Encyc. Brit. Ed. 11, vol. xv. p.455 (4) cf ὁ εὐφρανόμενος... ὁ ἐθεοπόνητος in 1 John 1.1, where the distinction is either (a) as between the external sight of miracles, and the spiritual beholding of the glory of Christ, or (b) as between the sight which has simply knowledge for its result, and that fuller and more entranced gaze which rejoices in the

victory of the powers of light over the darkness; and he simply writes what he sees. He sees the earthly manifestation of the Son of God; and he pictures it in the Gospel:

To me that story - ay, that life and death,  
Of which I wrote 'it was', - to me it is;  
- Is, here and now; I apprehend nought else.

He sees in Jesus the light of the glory of God and in the full inspiration of that sight he imparts, in his epistle, the practical significance, the moral result, of that manifested life. Logical analysis, dialectical method in general, was quite foreign to John. His thought moves in the sphere of a few profound facts, the significance of which he develops by contrast. The antithetical method of expression which is so characteristic of his writings is based upon the ~~paradoxical~~ parallelism of Hebrew literature. What appears at first sight to be disconnected antitheses contain a real progression of thought (1). But antithesis is for John far more than a literary form. It is the expression of his deepest thought. He sees everything in its essential character and in fundamental contrast. The contrast between God and all that is not of God he names according to its different aspects: light and darkness, life and death, love and hate. The Logos is no gnostic mediator in this contrast (2). He was manifested to destroy the

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object contemplated. He who contemplates is sufficiently struck to stop and gaze. See also John vi.36-40 where "beholdeth" in verse 40 is an intentional advance upon "having seen" of verse 36. See also Abbott, Johannine Vocabulary, pp 110-111

(1) John iii.17-18; iv.20-21; vii.37-38 and 1 John 1.6-7 ; v.18-19; 11.4=5=6.

(2) The fifth chapter is especially adapted to reject the erroneous idea of a *δευτερον Θεος*

works of darkness; the darkness is to be abolished and is already passing away before the shining of the true light.

In spite of the fact that John sees things in their fundamental contrast as light and darkness he does distinguish different stages of development. He see in the germ the promise of the full fruit. Eternal life is actually possessed by the believer now, though its full fruition is to be expected in the hereafter. Appreciation of Christ's person is called faith in every stage, from the lowest to the highest, and at evry stage it works eternal life. We have even now a true knowledge of God though we shall be perfectly like Him only "when we see Him as He is".

The dominant characteristics of John's thought are therefore the principle of contrast which is expressed by light and darkness and the whole series of related antitheses; the intuitive faculty which represents stages of development pictorially, dramatically and in terms of vision, rather than argumentatively and logically; the blending of subjective and objective, spiritual and historical, without denying the real importance of either; the colouring of Jewish and Greek thought which determines the conception of of God and of the world and the specific content of salvation in a new relation to God within the community of the chosen brotherhood, the new Israel. It will be my purpose to bring out and to illustrate these characteristics in the following exposition of the religious thought of John.

GOD.

GOD IS LIGHT.

John justifies the name Theologion. For although the Gospel is a history of the Life of Jesus and the Epistle is concerned with the problems of Christian brotherhood his teaching is essentially a theology. The history he records is in every detail the revelation of God and his ethics are resolved into the imitation of God. If there is any ethical question to solve he finds his answer in the nature of God. He judges every practical problem before the judgement throne of God. If there is a lack of harmony among the brethren he looks into the face of God as revealed in Jesus and he knows that "he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." If any Christian is tempted to sin the rebuke comes with a directness and absoluteness which is inconceivable except from this point of view - "He that sinneth hath not known God". The exalted conception of Christ's person which is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel is set in its right place by his profession of Christ as being one with the Father (x.30). The significance of Jesus depends upon His relation with God. The supreme demand which Jesus made of His disciples was that they might believe that "I am in the Father and the Father in me; he that

hath seen me hath seen the Father" (xiv.9-10).

It is noticeable that it is this Gospel which has the highest conception of the Person of Christ which is most emphatic in the subordination of the Son as son. The assertion that "the Father is greater than I", is not an anomaly, it is an essential fact in the self witness of Jesus(1). Jesus Himself testifies to the derivation of all his power from the Father. It is the Father who sent Him (xii.49;vi.39;viii.16); His life and death is in accordance with the purpose of God (xv.10;x.18); He came not to do His own will but the father's (v.30); His works are the Father's works and done in His Name (x.25,37); He speaks only what He has seen (viii.38), heard (xv.15), and learnt (viii.28) from the Father; His very life is derived from the Father (v.26;vi.57); and His position in the world is characterised by this, "I am come in my Father's name" (v.43).

It is clear therefore that God is the centre of John's thought. We are thus led up to the proclamation of the Good News in Christ by a single proposition about God: "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1.5) The importance which John attaches to this utterance is

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(1) This phrase has been explained mainly in two ways: (a)

The eminence of the Father lies in the fact that the Son has the Divine essence by communication. (b) That the eminence of the Father lies in His relation to the Son as Incarnate and not yet glorified. For explanations given by the early Fathers see Westcott, S. John, additional note to xiv.28



shown both by its immediate introduction, "This is the message which we have received from him and announce to you", and also by the position which it occupies at the beginning of the Epistle (1). The introductory verses make it plain that the message which he here summarises is the epitome of his whole knowledge about God in Christ. The central position occupied by God in John's thought is here demonstrated by the fact that the saving revelation of Christ finds its highest and most inclusive expression, not in a proposition about man, but about the character of God. It is eminently characteristic of John's symbolic use of language that he is able to pack the whole Gospel message into one sentence. The very richness of his symbolism prevents us from being satisfied with a simple explanation of his use of the term "light" as descriptive of the character of God (2).

The commonest use of the word light in John is also the simplest and most obvious. When Jesus says, "I am the light of the world" (viii.12 ; ix.5) the term is apparently used with the same simplicity as in Matt. v.14, "Ye are the light of the world", denoting the pervading moral worth of pure influence, it being the attribute of light that it shines

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(1) ἀπυγγέλομεν The preposition here has the sense of increasing and strengthening as well as repetition. It is always used of solemn teaching with a character of authority about it. In LXX it is almost a sacerdotal word ( Deut. xxiv.8; Is. lli.15). "We announce" therefore implies grandeur and importance in the message and earnestness and commission in the messenger.

(2) In the words of Godet: This profound term designates perfect moral goodness, combined with blissful consciousness of His sanctity, in the sphere of the highest life, where luminous clearness of the Divine wisdom also rules as opposed to the world"

and gives light to all that are in the house. This simple application of the figure in the sense of moral revelation is still clearer in xii.35=36, "Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that the darkness overtake you not; and he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whether he goeth." The most obvious use of it in this sense is in iii.20,21, "For every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may be manifest, that they have been wrought in God." In John xiii.30 Judas is represented as passing from the light of the world into the outer darkness - "and it was night." (1).

It is evident however that this simple signification falls short of the many uses of the term by John. In the passage just quoted the terms light and darkness acquire a purely ethical significance as the spheres, or even the principles, of good and evil. In this sense S. Paul uses them (Ephes. v.8.9; 11. Cor. vi.14). And that this is an element in John's use of the term is suggested by his use of darkness in an active sense and as a positive concept (1.5; xii.35; 1 John ii.11). In this sense light denotes

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(1) of Origen's comment on this verse. He says we must regard the visible "night" as a symbolical one, suggesting "that the night which came in the soul of Judas was the darkness which moves upon the face of the deep, namely Satan entered into him". Lommatzsch's edition, vol.11, p.460.

a state of undisturbed happiness and of salvation, just as darkness means a state of perdition. As an extension to this meaning John uses light not only as a condition of happiness (v.35), but of life itself (viii.12). The term thus assumes a more positive content and works a change in objects as well as reveals their character.

Even so we do not exhaust the meaning which John gives to the word light. The phrase "God is light" (1 John 1.5) means something more than that God is very clear and intelligible or that self-revelation is His very nature. John's use of the word is so emphatic that it seems reasonable to interpret all other uses of the term by means of this. It seems that all that John found in Jesus as the revelation of God should be included in this term. For regarding light primarily in its simplest form as that which reveals and also having in mind that Christ is the manifestation of the light (1.12), John could not fail to think also of the content of the revelation - holiness, power, justice, love. The term may therefore be extended to mean the inherent quality of God. Although this whole store of ideas may not be immediately apparent in the term light itself, it is a word with which the whole sum of the Gospel and the essential nature of God can be associated. The message is one of good tidings, one of joy and life, one in which there "is no darkness at all." And it was natural to speak of light as the element in which God lives, just as darkness is the element in which the world lives. It is furthermore characteristic of John to

express so much in little, and so far from being a solitary use of the term as a description of God, it is rather the climax of his whole thought about God and we must read back even into the simple uses of the term something of the pregnancy of this summary of theology that "God is light".

John would be aware that in the Hebrew Scriptures God had been called the Light of the World (Dan. 11.22) and that Israel was the Light of the Nations (Is. xlii.6). In Rabbinic literature we find a development of this O.T. conception. For example Bar Qappara in the second century A.D. commenting on psalm xviii said: "The Holy One said to men: thy lamp is in My hand to kindle the perpetual lamp. The Holy One said: if thou lightest my lamp, I will light thine." (Leviticus Rabbi xxxi.4) Adam was specifically named by the Rabbis as the "Lamp of the world" (T.J. Sabbath 11.8). Teachers of the Torah were also called Lights of the world, for the commandment is a lamp and the lamp is light (T.B. Sabbath Baba Bethra 4 a) (1). The phrase "I am the Light of the world", from the standpoint of the Rabbis, could only be uttered by God or by the Tora. Jesus' adoption of the title "the light of the world" therefore corresponds to the Jewish designation of God as the "light of the world". It was characteristic of later Jewish writers to use the twin images of life and light to describe the effects of obedience to the wisdom of God revealed in the Mosaic Law

(1 Bar. iv. 1; 2 Bar. lix. 2, lxxvii. 16; 4 Ezra xiv. 20, 21).

(1) For an analysis of the ideas connected with light in Jewish literature, see Kohler in Jewish Encyc viii. p. 83

In the N.T. generally the two terms are transferred to describe not obedience to the Law, but the Grace of God that has been made known in Jesus Christ (Matt. iv.6 ; Luke 11.32; Acts 11.15; 2 Tim.1.10 etc ). In the Fourth Gospel the transference is complete: it is as Life of the World that Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (xi.) and as Light of the World that He heals the man born blind (ix).

Though Jewish thought and phrases are in the background it is probable that John was also influenced in his choice of the term light as a description of God by the frequency with which the terms life and light appear in contemporary pagan mystery religions. Bauer says that "there seems to have been a fixed formula by which the Deity introduced itself: I am the light." (1). In the "Poimandres" "God is the first light" (Corp.Herm.1.21). A boundless expanse of light is a symbol of God. The first Mind is "light and life". From the light comes forth the Logos (Corp.Herm. 1.5.6.12.21; xiii.9.18). Hermes bids mankind to "rid yourselves of darkness, and lay hold of light." When Hermes realises his own attainment of the abode of Truth, he says, "Wherefore I believe and bear witness that I enter into life and light." (Corp.Herm. xiii.7.8.9).

The Mandaean in their liturgies and the "Book of John" have a similar gnosis of life and light, though the particular phrase "I am the light of the world" does not occur. Of the

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(1) Das Evangelium Johannes, p. 116.

many examples that might be quoted the following is typical: "This one is the light of life, which was revealed, and the men of proved faith praised it. And Manda d'Hayye said to them: I am come in order to dwell with you and I shall establish you in the light of life. I have separated you from the nations and the generations, I will establish you in the love of the Truth, and you shall be truthful ones before me in the light of the life" (G.R. V.2, 179, 22-27 cf John vii.28). )

Philo also has some impressive parallels with Johannine thought on this matter. He writes, "First God is light.....and He is not only light, but the archetype of every other light, nay, more ancient and higher than every archetype. For the pattern was the Logos which contained all his fulness - light, in fact; for as the Lawgiver says, God said, "Let light come into being", whereas he himself resembles none of the things which have come into being." (de Somn. i.75). This association of the light with the Logos is striking, but Philo does not appear to bring light into conjunction with life in the same manner as the Hermetic and Mandaean literature.

#### THE TRUE GOD.

John like the other writers in the Bible had no interest in the proposition that "God is" as the mere contradictory of the proposition that "God is not". But in the deeper sense that God is the source of all existence John laid great emphasis. He probably included this idea in his

conception of God as light, as the positive reality opposed to negative darkness. But he had in the word true, with the substantive and adverb, truth and truly (ἀληθής, ἀληθείας ἀληθεύει, ἀληθεύω) a more definite expression for it. The description of God as "the true" (1 John v.20) should, I believe, be interpreted along the lines of Jewish thought as the ground of the confidence of faith, though Dr W.F.Howard thinks that John was influenced more by the Hellenistic connotation of the word (1).

The common connotation of the English words true and truth is like the root meaning of the corresponding Greek words, a relative idea; it denotes the correspondence of an object with its idea, or of an idea with its expressed reality. On the other hand the root words in Hebrew thought (אֱמֶת אֱמֶת) is similar to the root meaning of our English words. As true and truth are akin to troth and trust so in the Hebrew the words express faithfulness, reliability, and even faith itself. The Greek words have an intellectual cast, they have to do with ideas and their relation to facts; the Hebrew words deal primarily with persons and things, and it describes them as realities which may be leaned upon and trusted (2).

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(1) Christianity according to S. John, p. 184; cf Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, pp 141-143 and Dodd The Bible and the Greeks pp 65 ff. (2) See Abbott: Johannine Vocabulary p.22, par. 1469. True men - Gen.xlii.11; true words - 2 Sam. vii.28; true God - 2 Chron. xv.3.

The Hebrew use of these words has profoundly influenced John's use of the corresponding Greek words. The Hebrew meaning is superadded to the Greek, though the words do not thereby lose altogether their intellectual connotation. These two meanings appear in John's use of the two adjectives *ἀληθής* and *ἀληθινός*. The former abides more closely to the idea of the true as being in distinction from that which is mendacious; it remains a relative idea demanding another subject in regard to which the person is true. The latter describes the subject in question in its absolute nature, and thereby describes the object in its proper and essential character. The contrast which defines *ἀληθής* is generally that between veracity and falsehood; while that suggested by *ἀληθινός* is between essential reality and deceptive appearance.

The Hebrew connotation of the word may be seen in "He who sends me is true" (vii.28) which has its parallel in Jer. xxvi.15; in "lead you unto all truth (xvi.13) with which we may compare psalm xxv.5; in truth and light of 1.9 and 1 John 11.8 which are associated in psalm xlii.3; and in "true vine" (xv.1) which has its counterpart in Jer. 11.21.

It is with this Hebrew influence in mind that we are to approach the expression "full of grace and truth" in 1.14. Its place in the Prologue and the way in which John uses it to show the contrast between Christ's manifestation and the O.T. revelation, shows that he placed great emphasis upon this phrase. It is significant also ~~that~~ as the only instance



of the phrase in the N.T. of the Hebrew formula "loving-kindness and truth", so often used of God's revelation of Himself (לֶחֶם אֱמֶת Ex.xxxiv.6; 2 Sam.ii.6; ps.xxv.10; ix.10,11; lxxxvii.15; cxv.1; cxxxviii.2) . This pair of ideas appears in the Synoptists in the form "mercy and truth", as qualities to be exercised by men. But John finds in "grace and truth" precisely the Hebrew idea of the qualities displayed by God.

In Ex.xxxiv.6 God reveals His Name as full of mercy and truth. In the prologue of the Fourth Gospel this solemn designation is transferred to the Logos. It is there used as an expression of the glory of Jesus as the only begotten from the Father. . The ancient law was but an imperfect revelation of God because it represented Him only in terms of such injunctions as could be practically enforced in the society of that day; whereas the more perfect revelation which was in old time merely "proclaimed", was first "beheld" in the Word made flesh. That which is God's peculiar character and glory is also Jesus' possession. Jesus Himself is therefore "the truth" (xiv.6), because the sum of qualities hidden in God is revealed in Him. He reveals God as the true in the sense of the faithful and absolutely real. Furthermore it is in harmony with this Hebrew conception that the truth does not come into being through human perception, but exists in perfect completeness above and apart from any intellectual appreciation by men. Only within

the world can there be ascribed to it a "becoming" (ἐγένετο )

Just as life and light are a unit and belong peculiarly to God so John regards the truth as an undivided unity; God is the only true (xvii.3). Truth, however, can be known (1 John v.20); God's word is truth (xvii.17); and so like light it represents God's nature in terms of an active force and in relation to His rational creation (1). It is in this connection that the spirit and the truth are brought into relation (iv.23). The Spirit is the Spirit of the truth (xiv.17;xv.26;xvi.13); "the spirit is the truth" ( 1 John v.7) (2). In this connection too truth and life are brought together ( 1 John.v,20) and in their union constitute the way to God (xiv.6) (3).

As God is the "only true" John sees that all things in the world have reality in the deepest sense only as they partake of it from God; hence "the true light" (i.9; 1 John ii.8); the "true bread" (vi.32); "the true food" and "drink" (vi.35); "the true vine" (xv.1) John speaks of that which is "truly love" (1 John ii.5; ii.18) in distinction from love that is mere pretence, and of the "true worshippers" (iv.23) and of being "truly disciples" (viii.31). The opposite of truth is a lie, which indicates not merely conscious

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(1) Life is frequently associated with truth in non-Christian literature. See e.g. the passage from Mandaean literature quoted above on page 42 and the following passages in Philo: Quod sit deus immut.96; Leg. Alleg.3.45; De Jos.68; De Fug et Inv. 139) (2) The article should be preserved in translating all these passages. (3) The source of this great utterance is probably Jer. x.10 יה אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֶת וְהוּא אֱלֹהֵי חַיִּים

deception, but mere appearance, an empty symbol. As the truth belongs to God, so the lie characterises Satan (viii.44) and he who in his inmost being is dependent upon him has him for "father". The truth, as God's nature, is the root of all worthy human existence; a man may be "of the truth" (xviii.37; iii.19) as he may be "of God"; and both conceptions coincide in xviii.37 and viii.47.

We see therefore that when John describes God as the true he thinks of Him not only as veracious and faithful, but as the essential reality. He describes Him not only as the true God in contradistinction to "idols", but as the "alone true". This knowledge enables us to appreciate the solemnity of the final utterance of the epistle, in which John expresses the absolute confidence of his faith: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know the True, and are in the True, in His Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God and eternal life." (1). In the words of Dr.A.E.Brooke (2): "The God who completely fulfills the highest conceptions of Godhead is the God who has been revealed in Jesus Christ, as contrasted with all false conceptions of God, against which the readers are warned in the next verse" - "My little children guard yourself from

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(1) Moffatt in his translation of the N.T. translates *τὸν ἀληθινόν* by "the Real God".

(2) The Johannine Epistles, p.152.

idols.

THE FATHER.

That John thought of God as "personal" is a sure deduction from the Hebrew cast of his thought; but it is also determined by the fact that God revealed Himself in a person - Jesus Christ. Therefore with all the use he makes of such abstract terms as light and truth which may have been determined by contemporary religion, and which may equally describe an impersonal deity, his favourite name for God is "the Father."

John does not use the word create ( $\tau\omicron\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ ) in the prologue; but  $\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\tau\omicron$  has practically that meaning in 1.3; and we might almost say that this verse - "without him", i.e. the Logos, "was not anything made" - is expressly formulated to leave room for the superior activity of God. The close parallel, which we shall later study (1), between the prologue and the first chapter of Genesis puts it beyond doubt that John thought of God as Creator; but he goes beyond Genesis by thinking of the creation as a continuous process (v.17).(2) In Rabbinic speculation on the continual activity of God discussion was limited to the concomitant idea of the Divine Sabbath rest from the work of creation. For example in Mechilta 37b, "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed (Ex.xxxi.7). From what did He rest? From His work of creation or from judgement? The scripture says 'and was refreshed', teaching

(1) see page 107. (2) cf Straughan, The Fourth Gospel, pp 168f

cease  
 that judgement does not ~~cease~~ before Him for ever. And in the same sense it says : (ps. lxxxiv. 19) 'Justice and judgement are the habitation of Thy throne! mercy and truth shall go before Thy face", and it says (Deut. xxxii. 4) the Rock, His work is perfect for all His ways are judgement."

Because of this continued activity in judgement as set forth in Rabbinic literature Dr. Odeburg is convinced that v. 17 is based on the same Jewish notion. It signifies, he says, that Jesus stands in the same relation to the Sabbath as God and is continually active in the same work as His Father, namely that of judgement. (1). This interpretation suits the context in which Jesus is described as being engaged upon the divine work of conferring life and executing judgement and is in harmony with John's slight interest in the physical world as such.

A distinction must be observed between God as Father in a real sense ( *ὁ γεννητὸς* ) and as Father in an ethical sense. The doctrine that God is the Father of all men in virtue of their material creation is not a Biblical idea at all (2). There is only one passage in the whole N.T. which ~~which~~ can be claimed to support the idea. This is the passage in the Acts when S. Paul on the Areopagus quoted from "certain of your poets" , "For we are also his offspring". And even this probably means no more than "made in the image of God" (3).

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(1) The Fourth Gospel etc p. 202 (2) Though *Πατήρ* is occasionally used in the more general sense of Creator - James 1. 17; Heb. xii. 49. (3) see R. B. Rham, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 317

It is in fact a pagan idea and is to be distinguished from the Christian idea chiefly because it is not capable of the same depth of meaning which we find attached to God's Fatherhood in the N.T. and especially in John.

While therefore John does not follow contemporary thought in thinking that God's children are His offspring in the carnal sense he has points of contact with Greek and Jewish thought in his teaching on the "new birth". The important passage in this connection is iii.5 ff : "Except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." We will discuss later the question whether this passage refers to Baptism (1), at the moment we are concerned with the nature of the new birth. The context suggests that there is a contrast to be seen between the two worlds of the spirit and the flesh on a line with the contrast between τὰ ἐπουράνια and τὰ ἐπιγεία. Thus the expression ἐξ ὕδατος και πνεύματος should be put in contrast with εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δεύτερον εἰσελθεῖν και γεννηθῆναι. Upon this supposition it may be argued that ἐξ ὕδατος και πνεύματος means primarily ἐξ σπέρματος πνευματικῆς in contrast to earthly seed. The expression thus means that the spiritual man or members of the Kingdom of God owe their existence as such to the procreative power of God symbolised by the sacrament of Baptism (2)

(1) Odeburg maintains that there is no suggestion here of Baptism but to the procreative power of the Spirit (The Fourth Gospel etc p.48.) But both Baptism and the procreative power of the Spirit are implied, see further p.211 (2) A symbol is that which partakes of the nature of the thing symbolised.

It follows that such a new birth involves much more than just a moral change in a man: just as one must be born as a physical organism in order to enter into the <sup>physical</sup> ~~physical~~ world so one must be born as a spiritual organism in order to enter into the divine world. This involves also a new standard of moral values, for the new realm entered is the realm of truth in contrast to falsehood, of light in contrast to darkness. (1)

Such teaching would not be strange to the first readers of the Fourth Gospel for they would be familiar with the ideas of *παλιγγενεσία* of the Hermetic literature. To become divine was the object of the Hermetic mysteries and passages in the Corpus Hermetica through valuable light on the ideas current in John's time. For example it is asserted that "no one can be saved until he be born again." (Corp.Herm.xiii. 1.) In the experience of rebirth the soul is bathed in a spiritual laver; and a heavenly messenger cries: "Wash yourselves in this laver if ye can believing that ye shall ascend to him from whom it came." (Corp.Herm.,iv.4). In the Tractate xiii which bears the title *λόγος ἀπόκρυφος περὶ παλιγγενεσίας* Hermes tells his son Tat that the world has been made by God with Reason and man's function is to contemplate his works, and thus come to know his maker. To this end God filled a great bowl with Mind and sent it down to earth and bade a

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(1) cf Odeburg, The Fourth Gospel etc pp. 48 ff.

herald summon men to baptise themselves therein. As many as thus partook of the heavenly gift became as immortal gods to mortal men. In the discourse on rebirth Tat is puzzled to know from what womb a man may be born again and from what seed. The womb, he is told, is wisdom, the begetter is God, and the ministrant is some man who is a son of God. But rebirth cannot be taught it can only be experienced. He to whom it is given feels within himself a form fashioned of immaterial substance, he passes out of himself into an immortal body. He who would be born again must cleanse himself of irrational torments of matter. Then the powers of God - truth, good, life, light come and build up the body of reason. And at last Tat exclaims: "Father, God has made me a new being, and I perceive things now, not with bodily eyesight, but the working of mind.....I see myself to be the All.....I am present everywhere", and he breaks out into a hymn of praise, "I have seen that which I seek; I have found rest according to thy purpose; by thy will I am born again." (1) In the opinion of W.Scott (2)"the group of Hermetists to which the author of Corpus xiii belonged probably got this conception either from Christians, or from some pagan mystery-cult in which men were reborn by a sacramental operation."

In the Metamorphoses of Apuleius (3) we have a most

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(1) Scott, Hermetica, ii.p.373 gives an exhaustive ~~axaxant~~ list of periphrases for rebirth in the Hermetica. The above account is based on Libellus xiii, Scott, 1.239-255. According to A.D. Nock in Conversion, p.11 this tractate describes "a curious sacrament of Auto-Suggestion". (2) Scott, op.cit. ii.p.374. (3) Metamorphoses xi.23, in Loeb Classical Library. N. 44



exhaustive account of the Isis initiation such as Scott refers to. The candidate Lucius undergoes a bath and ceremonial lustration to prepare him for his enlistment in the service of the goddess. After the Baptism Lucius was clad in a mystic's robe and set on a dais beside the image of the goddess, revealed to the worshippers as divine, owing to his union with the goddess. A three days celebration of the initiate's new birth followed and Lucius returned to Rome uttering a solemn thanksgiving. (1) A striking parallel to Christian initiation is to be found in the taurobolium or criobolium which admitted men to the mysteries of Cybele and Attis; and sepulchral inscriptions have been found which testify to the belief that those who received this rite thereby became "eternally regenerate". (2)

In the Mythras Liturgy rebirth is brought about by the vision of the great god Helios (3) After the appearance of the great god the worshipper is bidden to "gaze upon the god, and bellow long, and greet him thus: 'Hail, Lord, Master of the water; Hail, founder of earth; Hail, ruler of the Spirit. Lord, born again am I, and so in my exaltation depart; and being exalted dies. Born in life-giving birth and dissolved in death, I go my way as thou hast ordained and as thou hast commanded and hast made mystery."

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(1) W.L.Knox in Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity, p.91 doubts whether this passage affords evidence for regeneration. (2) see S.Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, chap.iii. (3) Printed in "The Vision of God, by K.E.Kirk, p.473.

The metaphor of divine begetting is frequently found in Philo. He equates γεννᾶν with ποιεῖν and applies it to the creation of the Logos, of the world, and even of animals and plants. In Ebr. 30 he says: "The Architect who made this universe was at the same time the father of what was thus born, whilst its mother was the knowledge ~~ε~~ ~~ε~~ possessed by its maker. With this knowledge God had union, not as men have it, and he begat created being. And knowledge having received divine seed, when her travail was consummated, bore the only beloved son, who is apprehended by the senses, the world which we see." Other relevant passages are as follows: De Virtut. 204; De Confus. Ling. ~~63~~ 63; De Cherub. 43; De Vit. Mos. 1.279; De mutat. Nomin. 63; Leg. Alleg. 1.47, 111.180; De Migr. Abr. 31, 35, 142; De Post. Cain. 135; Quis Rer. Div. 62, 2000; De Mund. Op. 84; De Somm. 1.181; Quod deus sit imm. 47; De Spec. Legg. 1. 329. But Philo limits the metaphor of begetting to God's creative activity or his endowment of men with spiritual, ethical and religious gifts. In his use of Παλιγγενεσία he restricts himself to the cosmological sense and he does not conceive of God begetting man anew, but only something in man.

Possible parallels are also to be found in the Rabbinic writings of Greek proselytes who have accepted Judaism. For example, "A man's father only brought him into this world; his teacher who taught him wisdom, brings him

into the life of the world to come." ( Mishna, Surenhus. iv. 116). "The stranger who is proselytised is like a child newly born, because he must break away from his former teachers and principles, as well as from the ties of kinship." (1)

This evidence from contemporary <sup>literature</sup> showing how wide-spread were the ideas of rebirth is all the more interesting when it is realised that it is not a prominent conception in the N.N.T. It occurs in Titus iii.5, "He saved us through the washing of regeneration (παλιγενεσις), and in 1 peter 1.3,23 where Christians are described as "begotten again" (ἀναγενήσας). S. Paul comes near to the same conception when he speaks of a man in Christ as being " a new creation" (2 Cor.1.17). Dr. W.L.Knox says that John iii.5 ff is merely a rewriting of Romans vii.5 ff in terms of new birth instead of death and resurrection (2). Dr.E.F.Scott, however, believes that the Johannine doctrine of new birth rests on presuppositions wholly different from those of Paul. His reason for this is that in the Fourth Gospel "the birth does not consist in a renewal of the moral nature, but in a transition from the natural state of being to a higher state." (3). He nevertheless admits that the pauline idea of putting off the old man and putting on the new, the figures of death and resurrection as applied to the Christian suggests the idea, which John works out more fully, of a sudden, mysterious transition from the old life to the new. (4).

(1) see Bernard, S. John p cxliii. (2) Some Hell. Elements in Prim. Christianity, p.62 note (3) The Fourth Gospel, p 220. (4) op.cit. p.279.

John's expression in 1.12 "To them gave he the right to become children of God," suggests a nominal or legal conception of the status of the children of God, like S. Paul's sonship by adoption; but the real sense of fatherhood by begetting is expressed in the same sentence: "which were begotten, not of bloods, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And in 1 John iii.1 the privilege of merely nominal sonship is exceeded by the real relation: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God - and are" (1) This conception of the real nature of God's parental relation is everywhere prominent in John, and doubtless affected his choice of the word "children" (τεκνία) rather than sons (υιοι) to express likeness of nature rather than a position of privilege (2). The name Son is reserved for Christ, though xii.36 may be an exception to this.

We will be studying later the idea of Jesus as the Son of God, at the moment we will only draw attention to the fact that John describes the relation of the children to the Father in the same terms as he uses to describe His relation to the Son. The favourite expression which John uses to describe Christ's nature and privilege is that of Son (1.34;

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(1) καὶ ἐγενήθησαν υἱοὶ καὶ ἐγενήθησαν υἱοὶ καὶ ἐγενήθησαν υἱοὶ N.A.B.C.P. 33.424. (2) "The difference between υἱοὶ and τεκνία appears to be that whereas τεκνία denotes the natural relationship of child to parent, υἱοὶ implies in addition to this, the recognised status and legal privileges reserved for sons". Sanday and Headlam, Romans (I.C.C.) p.202

xx.31; 1 John ii. 22,23; v. 23 etc); and Jesus Himself claims no higher title ( iiii.35; iiii.36; v.23; xix.7). "The only begotten Son" is an expression which John uses (i.14; 1 John iv.9) and Christ (iiii.16,18) to denote His unique relation of love and privilege. (1) Both terms indicate likeness, and Christ's fitness to reveal God rests upon the unique acquaintance of the only begotten Son with the Father and upon His likeness to Him. (i.18). Yet notwithstanding this uniqueness in position and nature, notwithstanding also the fact that the children are never called the sons there is a very close analogy between the position of the Son and the children. The word children denotes privilege (ii.12) and also likeness to God ( 1 John iiii.2). Still more clearly does the act of begetting imply likeness in the children, as well as in the unique Son: "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (iii.8); "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone also ~~doeth~~ that doeth righteousness is begotten of Him (1 John ii.29); "Every one that loveth is begotten of God" (iv.7); in 1 John iii.9 it is expressly the seed of God which works conformity to His likeness, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." The analogy is brought out still more clearly in 1 John v.1 where both are spoken of under the same term, "Whosoever believeth

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(1) See below p.70 for a fuller discussion of the meaning of "the only begotten Son".

that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God; and whosoever loveth him that begat him also is begotten of him", and in 1 John v. 18, "We know that whosoever is begotten (γεννημένος) of God sinneth not; but that he that was begotten (γεννηθείς) of God", Jesus, "keepeth him."

This conception is founded upon <sup>God</sup> as the source of all life, and is intimately connected with John's idea of eternal life as the pre-eminent gift of God in Christ. That God is life, is with John, an idea co-ordinate with "God is love", "God is light", and "the true God". The idea of the divine Fatherhood is compounded of the two ideas, life and love: the true God is also eternal life (1 John.v.20). We have to note again that in connection with God's Fatherhood John is not thinking of life in an earthly sense, but always in the profound significance which he attaches to eternal life. In this sense God alone is the source of life, "the Father has life in himself, and to the Son he gave to have life in himself" (v.26). Thus the Son becomes the medium of life for men (vi.57) and He it is in a sense who constitutes the children of God (i.12). Christ is therefore "the life" (xi.wt; xiv.6); He is the "bread of life" (vi.35); and apart from Him there is no life possible for men (1 John v. 11,12).

When we come to consider the ethical relation involved in the Fatherhood of God it is not at first sight obvious in what respects John exceeded even the Jewish

standpoint. It is true that in the O.T. some of the rarer spirits in Psalmody and prophecy rose to the conception of God as a Father, but it had not become a current name. In contemporary Judaism however, as the N.T. itself is sufficient to prove, it had already become a familiar designation of God, a common address in prayer, and a boast of Jewish privilege (1). In the Synoptic accounts it seems as if Christ were constantly bent upon bringing home to His disciples the Father's individual relationship to them and care for them. The same purpose is also accomplished in the Fourth Gospel, but in a widely different way. John, so far from particularising the relationship, seems to generalise it: his phrase is "the Father", never "our Father", and but once "your Father". This phrase however does not denote a Fatherhood of wider range; it is not the Father and mankind, but "the Father and the Son", "the Father" equals "my Father". In the first epistle especially "the Father" appears as a set theological designation of God in distinction from "the Son", and the name is used with the same significance even in the speeches of Christ in the Gospel.

This peculiar mode of representation is excellently designed to display Christ's method of bringing home to the

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(1) see Abrahams, Studies in ~~pharisaic~~ <sup>and</sup> pharisaism of the Gospels, series I. ch. xix. Rom. viii. 15 might suggest that Saul of Tarsus had not learnt God's Fatherhood in Judaism.

disciples the intimacy of God's relation to the Father. For just as the significance of the Father as the begetter of life is seen primarily in his relation to the only begotten Son; so too is the Father's ethical relation to the children interpreted in terms of His loving relation to the Son. The constant representation of the Fourth Gospel is to the effect that Jesus did not speak in the terms of popular usage of the Fatherhood of God as a relation common to Himself and His disciples; but that He appropriated, peculiarly to Himself, and thereby immeasurably exalted the intimacy and the reality of the conception. When He speaks of the Father it is almost always in relation to Himself and in a way which is practically equivalent to "my Father". He emphasises His unique knowledge of the Father (vi.46), the Father's unique love toward Him (iii.35; v.20; xvii.24). This relationship is so close that He can say, "I and the Father are one" (x.30), "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (xiv.11), and He is in such sense the medium between the Father and the children, that God's love is conditioned by the love to Christ (xiv.20,23)

The significance of having thus expressed this deep and intimate relationship between the Father and the Son is seen when at the last hour Christ transfers to His disciples the fulness of this intimate relationship in saying, "My Father and your Father" (xx.17). In the High Priestly prayer He says, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them" (xvii.26). Having brought His disciples into this



relationship of children to the Father, He establishes a relationship so close that His own mediatorial position is in a sense superceded; for although the disciples are instructed to pray~~s~~ in His name (xvi.24), He nevertheless adds, "I say<sup>not</sup> unto you that I will pray the Father for you for the Father Himself loveth you" (xvi.26,27). Though our union with the Father is mediated by the Son it is not on that account less real and close. In the epistle "our fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ" are regarded as co-ordinate relations (1 John 1.3). We "abide in the Son and in the Father" (1 John 11.24). The same fact is emphasised in the loose employment of personal pronouns (*αὐτός, ἐκεῖνος*). Sometimes it is a real difficulty to know whether the reference is to Christ or to the Father (1 John 1.5-10). The Father has displayed His active interest by the fact that "He hath sent the Son, the Saviour of the world" (1 John.1v.14), and He it is who also sends the Spirit of Truth as "another Comforter" (xiv.16,26) who like the Christ abides in us (xiv.17).

It is very clear that the more richly the idea of God's Fatherhood is developed, so much the more impossible is it to think of it in relation to the world in general. As defined by the whole range of ideas with which Fatherhood is associated in the Johannine writings, the relation is limited to those whom Christ has chosen out of the world (xv.19). It is evident that the ideas of begetting, the new birth and eternal life were not realised in the case

of all men. Even "his own" (the nation which boasted that God was their Father (xviii.41) ) received not Christ (1.11) thereby proving that they were not the true children of God (viii.42); but as many as received Him to them gave He the right to become the children of God (1.12). God's Fatherhood is therefore no longer limited to the nation; His children are scattered abroad and are brought together into one community by Christ's death (xi.52).

God's love as an attribute of the Father is, in this deeper sense, limited to the children: "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God" (1 John iii.1); "herein ~~was~~ was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John iv. 9). From this last verse we see also that God was revealed as love, not only by Christ's loving service and sacrifice (1 John iii.16), but by the very sending of the only begotten Son as a sacrifice on the part of the Father, and that His love is thereby revealed not as complacent affection, but as an active impulse.

We must notice, however, that notwithstanding this special love of God for the children chosen out of the world, John nevertheless regards love and salvation in a universal aspect. God's relation to men as Creator is wider than that of Father, and as Creator He loves His creatures. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal

life" (iii.16). In this verse we have the most universal expression of God's love towards His rational creation. This naturally follows from the principle that in His very nature, and independent of created object, "God is love" (1 John iv. 9.16). This attitude of God towards his rational creation will be further discussed under the heading of salvation.

## THE WORD WITH GOD.

## THE SELF WITNESS OF JESUS.

In the previous chapter we discussed the nature of God. In the course of the discussion we saw that the love of God was directed, in the broadest sense, to the whole of the world; more particularly towards the children chosen out of the world; and in a unique sense, towards the only begotten Son. In this chapter we will discuss more fully the relation of Jesus to the Father. This can best be divided into two sections: Jesus' own witness as expressed in terms of Sonship, and John' own conception which is characteristically formulated in connection with the term Logos.

This is justified because John never attributes the use of the term Logos to Jesus; and also because in his own pronouncements both in the prologue and in the epistle he associates with the Logos and the Son ideas which advance beyond the explicit terms of Jesus' own self-witness. In the opinion of Loisy : "The theology of the Incarnation is the key to the whole book, and it is that which dominates from the first line to the last"(1). And it appears from this

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(1) L'Évangile de Jean, p. 98.

that he means that the Logos doctrine of the prologue dominates the entire Gospel. Similarly Dr.W.L.Knox (1) bases his exposition of the Fourth Gospel on the assumption that the Logos idea is "worked out in the Gospel in a series of episodes, which illustrate the main theme". On the other hand Dr.A.E.J.Rawlinson says that the Logos conception "does not in any way dominate or pervade the theology of the Gospel as a whole" (2). He prefers to think that the Christological idea which is really characteristic of the Gospel is the idea of our Lord as the Son of God with whom the Logos is identified. The difference probably arises from the fact "that in the prologue and the remainder of the Gospel we have the history of the evangelist's thought in reverse order." (3) The argument of Dr Rendel Harris that behind the prologue lay a hymn in honour of Wisdom (4), and the evidence that Dr.Burney brings forward that it was originally in "the form of a hymn, written in eleven parallel couplets, with comments introduced here and there by the writer" 5) suggests that John took over an existing hymn about the Logos and adapted it to his own purposes. Furthermore

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(1) Some ~~primit~~ Hellenistic Elements in primitive Christianity chap. 111 (2) New Testament Doctrine of Christ p.209; cf W. F.Lofthouse, The Father and the Son, pp 64 ff (3) H.V. Stanton, The Gospels as Historical Documents, 111.p.178 (4) The Origin of the Prologue §2 to the Fourth Gospel. (5) The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel, p.40

John never allowed metaphysics to take control of his history. He is clearly conscious of a difference between his own technical language and that of the narrative where he is controlled to some extent by the facts and the traditional record. Dr. E. F. Scott says (1) that "the doctrine of the Logos born of philosophical theory, has nothing to do with the historical revelation in Jesus, and is wholly inadequate to explain it." But this is an exaggeration and the following discussion will show that the Logos idea was a necessary and integral ~~part~~ part of John's theological scheme.

It is generally said that John does not note as do the Synoptists a progression in the self-witness of Jesus. This opinion is no doubt due to the fact that when John <sup>wrote</sup> Christian reflexion and Christian experience had reached a doctrine of Christ's person which had not been clearly thought out by Christians in the early days of Christianity. Nevertheless there are two things to be said on this point. (a) The difference between the Synoptists and John is not a difference between a human Jesus and a Divine Christ. We can discern in Mark and in the document called Q a Christology as profound as that found in John. As I have already indicated the clearer statements in the Fourth Gospel are due to the different circumstances in which the Gospel was written. They were evoked by the growth of false gnosis and by the intellectual

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(1) The Fourth Gospel, p 175.

needs of a Greek speaking society. (b) If we pay close attention to this question of progress we will observe that there is a progress, though of a different kind to that found in the Synoptists. John marks clearly the progress of the disciples' appreciation of the significance of Jesus' claim. The claim to divine Sonship remains constant but at different stages those who reject Him and those who accept Him rise to new estimations of the person of Jesus.. From this point of view, that is from the point of view of the disciples, the expression Son of God is not a constant quantity, but has an ascending scale and an ever richer content of meaning. It runs through the whole gamut, from the expression of a relation which every Israelite might claim (i.49) to the confession of Thomas (xx.28), "My Lord and my God".

In the name Son of God there was nothing peculiar. In the O.T. it had been used of angels (Gen. vi.1-4); of magistrates (ps. lxxxii) ; of individual Israelites (Deut.xiv. 1.2.) Hos. 1.10); the theocratic king (2 Sam. vii.14; ps. lxxxix.27); and of the nation of Israel (Ex. iv.22; Deut. xxxi.6-10). These examples show that in the O.T. the idea of Sonship <sup>to</sup> God indicated special nearness to Him. The title is not used as a specific designation for the Messiah although the passages cited in which the ideal theocratic king is called God's son and "first born" point to the appropriateness with which the Messiah might be called the unique son. We find a development along these lines in the extra-canonical

Jewish writings. In 4 Esdras vii.28, for example, we find, "For my son, Messias, shall be revealed with those that are with him." "And it shall come to pass after these years that my Son, Christ, shall die etc." (4 Esdras.vii.29). This relation between the Son and Messiah is found in N.T.usage. In Mark xiv.61 the High priest asks "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed ?". It would appear nevertheless that Jesus avoided the Messianic significance of the term and used it rather to denote a personal relation of fellowship and intimacy with God. And in a strictly Jewish context the title would not in itself signify more than enthronement as the divinely-upheld Monarch and Ruler of the people of God. (1).

In view of the Jewish antecedents of the title it would be natural if John had been influenced by them in his choice of the term, especially as it had been used by the Synoptists and by our Lord Himself (Matt.xi.27). There is however a passage in Origen's work against Celsus which leads us to another possible source of influence. He says "it is both easy and usual for such persons to say, 'I am God, or a son of god, or a divine spirit. I have come. Already the world is at the point of destruction, and you, O men, are lost through your unrighteousness, but I am willing to save you; and you shall see me again coming upon you with heavenly power; blessed is he who now worships me; upon all

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(1) see Stevens, The Theology of the N.T., pp 56 ff and H.D.B. article Son of God, vol. IV pp 570 ff



others I will cast fire eternal, upon both cities and country estates; and men, except they acknowledge their deserts, shall groan for it and repent in vain; but those who obey me I will preserve for ever." (1). The reference of course is to the ideas popularly conveyed in the Hellenistic world by such titles as "son of god", and  $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$   $\acute{\iota}\nu\theta\rho\omega\tau\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$  (2). It would appear that the phrase  $\acute{\upsilon}\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$   $\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\acute{\upsilon}$  came to mean among the Hellenised semitic populations, "a divine being", "a god", "a supernatural person". The supernatural power might be proclaimed in many ways - in miracles and wonders, in ecstasies and visions. On account of many of these a man might establish a claim to be  $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$   $\acute{\iota}\nu\theta\rho\omega\tau\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$  or a "son of god". (3) John would be aware of these many claims to divine honours and our Lord's claim to be a "Son of God" falls naturally into such a context, though as we shall see, John regards Jesus as the Son of God in a unique way which differentiates Him in kind from all other "sons of god". It should be noticed also that the Fourth Gospel contains elements of primitive Judaeo-Christian ideas about Christ. "Rabbi" says Nathanael to Jesus, "thou art the  $\kappa\epsilon\gamma\alpha\zeta\alpha\delta\epsilon\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\kappa\alpha\iota$  Son of God, thou art the king of Israel."

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(1) Origen, Contra Celsum, vii.9 (2) see Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity pp 106-112. (3) Rawlinson, op.cit. p.70.

This passage betrays the fact that John is "well aware that originally, and in a purely Jewish as distinct from a specifically Christian context of thought, the title 'Son of God' was synonymous with that of Messiah, and denoted simply the theocratic King of the people of God." (1)

In the O.T. the term "begotten" is used as a metaphor in connection with divine sonship (ps.11.7) and in the liturgy of Mitra we read, "I ama man.....born of mortal womb... having been this day begotten again by Thee, out of so many myriads rendered immortal in this hour by the good will of God in his abounding goodness." (2) But according to John the begetting of Jesus as the "Son of God" was something quite different from both Hebrew and ~~Ἰουδαϊκῆ~~ Hellenistic usage. For Him the term has a value absolutely sui generis: He is the "only begotten Son of God" (1.14) Only John in the N.T. applies the word *μονογενῆς* to Jesus, and he does this four times in the Gospel and once in the first Epistle (1.14; 1.18; 111.16; 111.18; 1 John iv.19) The word is used primarily of an only child who is specially dear to its parents. (Judg. xi. 34; Tob.111.15; Luke vii.12; viii.42; xix. 38). Conversely as Dr. Turner points out (3) *ἄγαπῆς* is used for an only son in the LXX ( Gen. xxii.2,12,17; Amos viii.10; Jer.vi.26; Zeph.xii.10; ps. 11.7). The term therefore represents a

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(1) Rawlinson, op.cit. pp 212,213. Abbott suggests that "SON of God" here means no more than "Son of the Supreme Angel", Son of Man, par. 3377, p.419 (2) The Vision of God, by Kirk, p.473. (3) New Commentary (S.P.C.K.) iii.p.52.

relation of tender love. But it can hardly fail to have also the significance of real ~~derivation~~ derivation from the Divine Nature. IN 1 John v. 1 the children are also begotten; but if the relation of the Son to the Father were upon the same plane as that of the children, we should expect Him to be called, as by S. Paul, "The first begotten among many brethren" ( Rom. viii.29). Instead of that He occupies in John's thought an absolutely singular relation to God as the only begotten Son. The distinction is further emphasised by the way in which John refrains from the use of the expression sons (<sup>υἱοί</sup> ~~υἱοί~~) of God in relation to men, and by substituting for it the word children (<sup>τέκνα</sup> ~~υἱοί~~).

It would seem therefore reasonable to say that the ethical relation which is everywhere prominent in the expression we are studying rather suggests than excludes a substantial relation. There is no doubt, as I remarked above, that in the epistles "the Son" denotes a nature more closely allied to God than to man. The constant conjunction of the Son and the Father is of itself sufficient to establish John's doctrine on this subject. The believer's relation to the Father and to the Son is expressed in the same terms ( 1 John ii.22-24), and the last verse but one of the Epistle includes both "him that is true, and his Son Jesus Christ" in the affirmation, "this is the true God and everlasting life." The phrase "the only begotten Son" of the prologue is substantially equivalent

to "the Logos", and as such shares the divine glory. "The glory of the Incarnate word was such glory as the only begotten Son of the eternal Father would derive from Him and so could exhibit it to the faithful." (1) Jesus' self-witness could hardly be said to fall short of this though it may perhaps be more justly said to lead up to it. The "comfortable word" of iii.16 is a comment by John on the words he has already ascribed to Jesus in His discourse with Nicodemus. Both the style and grammar suggest that the writer is meditating on the great events of the past.

When Jesus said "my Father worketh even until now, and I work," He prompted the Jews to say that He was "making himself equal with God" (v.44.17.18). Dr. Odeburg has shown that the phrase *ὅτι ἴσους τῷ Θεῷ* corresponds exactly to the Rabbinic expression which suggested to anyone trained in that mode of speech "to make himself independent of God". Dr. Odeburg paraphrases verses 19 ff as follows: "The Son does not 'make himself equal with' the Father, he does not presume upon an independent authority. On the contrary, all his authority is derived from his Father. He is not a rebellious son, a blasphemer of the Divine Father; on the contrary, his peculiar opposition is justified by his being and acting in absolute unity of intention and thought with his Father. His continual

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(1) Bernard, S. John, p.24

activity is not independent of the Father's activity; on the contrary, he does the Father's works, he executes what the Father shows him, and commands him to do." (1) This is an illustration of the claim that the Fourth Gospel contains a genuine tradition of Jesus' teaching, reflecting the circumstances in which the words were spoken.

IN viii.54 Jesus discriminates His own position sharply from that of the Jews in the contrast "my Father - your God". He claims that "all things which the Father hath are mine" (xvi.15). "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (xiv.19). "Believe in God, believe also in me" (xiv.1). This simultaneous injunction of faith in God and in Christ under the same conditions and expressed in the same way (*πιστεύετε ἐν εἰς*) is very striking (2). To this we add the remarkable claim "we will come unto him and make our abode with him" (xiv.23) It is in the light of such testimony that we must read the claim, "I and the Father are one" (x.30) and "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (xiv.11). Concerning this union of the Father and the Son, W.Lock quotes Sanday as follows, "Unclouded openness of mind of the Son to the mind of the Father, that was the essence of His being....a profound inner sense of harmony and indeed unity of will." (3)

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(1) The Fourth Gospel etc, p. 203. (2) "The really important matter is the recognition of a clear distinction between believe on or believe in with the dative simply", J.H.Moulton Grammar of N.T. Greek, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. p.260. (3) New Commentary, III. p.260

If we sum up the details of Jesus' testimony about Himself, the total impression can hardly be other than this : that He had the consciousness and made the claim of being of the same nature as God (1). If we cannot suppose that John appreciated the metaphysical analysis presupposed in the expression "the same substance" in the Nicene Creed, we can reasonably express his conception of Jesus' witness by saying that He in contrast with men was of the same kind as God.

Another question arises, whether Jesus expressed the fact of His pre-existence, or left it to be inferred from His general claim of divinity for the two questions are closely related. The fact is that Jesus' consciousness of pre-existence is so clearly expressed that one wonders how it could be called in question. It is only by ascribing to John an extremely subtle and philosophical mind that otherwise clear statements are made to bear a meaning alien to the natural use of language.. It is not proved by the frequent expressions which represent Him as "sent" or even "sent into the world"; for such expressions are used of John the Baptist and others. Nor is it indubitably expressed in the claim of learning from the Father, of doing and saying what He has seen and heard from Him; for this might

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(1) For the Filial-Consciousness of Jesus, see Rawlinson, New Testament Doctrine of Christ, pp.251 ff.

conceivably be the result of inspiration and inspired vision. There are other expressions which denote derivation from God, but not pre-existence: "I am come forth from God and am come from God" (viii.42). Wendt says (1) that this is to be understood in the same sense as when the disciples are spoken of as being not "from the world" (xv.19), or as when the Jews are described as being "from the Devil" (xv.19). Believers also are described as being from God (1 John iv.4). (2)

We may however with more confidence point to those expressions which represent Jesus as coming down from Heaven (iii.31;vi.33,38,41,42,51). There are also other statements which would seem to admit of no misunderstanding. For example he speaks of the "Son of Man ascending where he was before" (vi.62); he says, "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world, and go unto the Father"(xvi.28). In the High Priestly prayer He says: "for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world" (xvii.24); and He speaks of the "glory which I had with thee before the world was" (xvii.5). Glory was the term which designated the radiant being of the Deity on whom Moses had longed to gaze, (Ex. xxxiii.18,22), and it supplied the name for God as the Lord of glory or Great Glory. (3). Wendt seeks to explain this

(1) Teaching of Jesus, ii. p.168 (2) The question whether the title Son of man includes in itself the idea of pre-existence is discussed later in this essay. As a negative answer is there given nothing further need be said at this point. (3) see Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, pp 103-106.

~~this~~ passage by saying : "According to the mode of speech and conception prevalent in the New Testament, a heavenly good, and so also a heavenly glory, can be conceived and spoken of as existing with God and belonging to a person, not because this person already exists and is invested with Glory, but because the glory of God is in some way deposited and preserved for this person in Heaven" (1). In support of this statement he appeals to those passages which speak of rewards as being stored up in Heaven for men (Matt. v.12; vi.20). The analogy however between John xvii.5 and those passages which represent rewards as stored up in Heaven is very remote. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus speaks of the rewards of His disciples as existing in advance in Heaven, but He does not speak of the disciples as pre-existing. In the Fourth Gospel He does not only speak of His glory as stored up for Him in Heaven, but of Himself as already possessing that glory before the world was. If He had said that the disciples pre-existed in the enjoyment of heavenly bliss, He would have said something analagous to xvii.5. In order to have furnished aa perfect analogy between the two passages Jesus should either have said in the Fourth Gospel that His glory pre-existed, or in the other passages that His disciples pre-existed.

But Jesus' testimony does not end with a claim for relative pre-existence. He demands belief in His absolute

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(1) Teaching of Jesus, ii. p 169.



pre-existence. "Believe that I am," "before Abraham was I am" (vii.24; viii.58). According to Weidt this indicates an ideal pre-existence only. As Abraham's vision of Messiah's day was only ideal, so the existence of the Messiah at the time was only in the plan and purpose of God. But such an interpretation does not suit the context in which the words stand. To the assertion of Jesus that Abraham saw his day (v.56) the Jews reply that Abraham lived centuries ago, while He was not yet fifty years old (v.57). They would thus involve Him in what was to them the absurdity of claiming that He co-existed with Abraham. Jesus meets this objection squarely by asserting not only that He existed when Abraham lived, but that He existed before Abraham was born. Nothing but a reference to real personal pre-existence in the answer of Jesus fits the meaning of the objection which called it forth. (1)

Canon W.L.Knox (2) sees in this ~~statement~~ sentence a conflation of the words in which <sup>Y</sup>ahweh proclaims Himself to Moses at the Bush with the phrase <sup>Y</sup>ἰσχυίῃ which frequently appears in Hellenistic literature (3). He points out that the language of Ex.iii.14 was often used by Jewish controversialists to prove that the God of Israel was really the God of

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- (1) cf G.B.Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament, p207  
 (2) Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity, pp.70ff  
 (3) For instances see Bernard, S.John, p.cxix.

of philosophy. "Thus Jesus here practically proclaims Himself as the Logos of the God of pure being who appeared to Moses at the bush; and it is scarcely surprising that the Jews should seek to stone Him." Such an interpretation necessarily involves the idea of pre-existence. (1)

Dr. C. J. Wright (2) would dispose of the matter in another way. He says that Jesus is here speaking of a "pre-temporal life". It was life not of time, but of eternity. The whole emphasis of the Gospel, he says, is on life in its eternal and essential quality. Eternal life is not a life of never ending duration, it is a life of perduring essence. "What he said to them was that the life he knew was qualitatively different from all existence which is measured in years." Similarly Baron von Hugel speaks of mystical experience as rising above successiveness to a "simul<sup>an</sup>teity" which is akin to the Divine Thought. (3).

With this we may agree but such a view of eternal life does not necessarily exclude the idea of time, or we may deny pre-existence to God Himself. The relation between time and eternity is an abstruse problem into which I cannot enter here (4). But this at least may be said: if God were

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(1) cf Bernard, op.cit. p.332: "It is clear that J. means to represent Jesus as thus claiming for Himself, the timeless being of Deity, as distinct from the temporal existence of man"  
 (2) The Message and Mission of Jesus, p 684 f (3) Mystical Element in Religion ii. pp 246 ff (4) see W. Temple, Nature Man and God, Lecture xvii and W.R. Matthews, God in Christian Thought and Experience, ch.xii)

absolutely timeless, the conception of the Divine Will would be meaningless. I believe that I am justified in saying that the thought of eternal life without some conception of time would be foreign to the mind of John brought up in a Hebrew atmosphere of thought. It is true as Dr. Wright says that the life of Jesus "in its essential nature, was grounded in the eternal nature of God Himself. It partook of the very 'Being' of Him who said was 'I am that I am' ". That is the claim of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel and it is a unique claim. But we may go on to say that such a claim to share the eternal life of God Himself does not exclude the idea of pre-existence, but presupposes it, unless we are also to deny pre-existence to God Himself. There is nothing inconsistent in introducing the conception of time when comparing the eternal life of Jesus in fellowship with God and the earthly life of men. As we have seen Jesus Himself introduces the idea of time in His comparison with Abraham  $\text{Ἰπὴρ Ἀβραάμ ἡν ἔσθαι ἐν ἡμῖν}$ . That the Fourth Gospel represented Christ as claiming to have existed with God personally from all eternity is a reasonable <sup>conclusion</sup> from the evidence before us.

The phrase "before Abraham was I am" signifies even more than mere pre-existence. By it Jesus claims to be the over-existent and ever-central Son, to whom everything and every being of the Spiritual World are constitutively and essentially related; their very existence in the Spiritual world are

bound up with Him as truly and necessarily as they are bound up with the Father. The essential claim of Jesus could be no better expressed than in applying to Himself the Divine Name אֱלֹהִים אֶשֶׁר אֱלֹהִים (Ex.111.14) of the Hebrew Scriptures.

#### THE LOGOS WITH GOD.

The foregoing discussion has been limited to two propositions: the self-witness of Jesus and His consciousness of pre-existence. The historical manifestation of Jesus as interpreted by Himself in word and work was not only the foundation and starting point of John's own belief, but in the main covers it and co-incides with it, even in the form of expression. But John does advance beyond this historical witness. By sinking himself deeper and deeper in the contemplation of the eternal pre-existence of the Son he reaches a standpoint which was possible only in the light of Christ's resurrection. This developed point of view he represents not at the end of the Gospel, like the confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God", which was the culminating expression of the disciples' faith after the resurrection; but at the very beginning, and as the standpoint from which the earthly history should be regarded.

Bishop Westcott points out that John's teaching on the Logos is properly a question of doctrine and not nomenclature (1). We have already quoted Dr.B.W.Bacon to the effect that

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(1) The Gospel of St. John, p.xv.

the whole Logos doctrine is to be found in S. Paul (1). The conception of Christ as a cosmic principle is prominent in Colossians. According to Paul Christ is the image ( $\epsilonἰκὼν$ ) of God and in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; He was the agent in creation; He pre-existed in the form of God; He is the first born of all creation; He is in all; He is the life giving Spirit, transforming His disciples into His spirit. This theology is not confined to Colossians but is also found in Corinthians. It is surprising therefore that Paul does not use the term Logos for it must have been known in Ephesus. He had furthermore come into close contact with the Alexandrine Apollos. Canon W.L.Knox thinks that Paul was unacquainted with the word. He says (2): "It is interesting to observe as showing the gradual diffusion of the language of the Synagogues of the Dispersion that Paul is not acquainted with ~~with~~ Philo's far more convenient word, while the author of the Fourth Gospel is. The latter writer has even less contact with Philo's outlook than Paul himself, but Philo's word has become by this time a common place of the synagogues."

It is difficult to believe that Paul was unaware of the term Logos and there was probably some reason why he shunned the use of it. It is to be noticed that Paul does not use the closely related term wisdom in his later Epistles. He uses it in first Corinthians (1.30), but in

(1) p.12 (2) S. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p114 n.

Colossians where his language is very like that of the Wisdom books he avoids the term (Col.1.15). The same characteristic is to be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It may be therefore that early Christian writers avoided a term which was current in the pagan world lest there should be confusion and misunderstanding. But no such inhibition troubled John and he boldly adopted a term well known at Ephesus and filled it with a Christian content.(1)

It may seem strange at first sight why he should adopt a term which had been rejected by earlier Christian writers. We have seen what an exalted significance John attaches to the title Son of God. His affirmation in regard to the Son rises to full height when at the conclusion of the Epistle he says: "This is the true God and everlasting life.". Still more significant would be the assertion of 1. 18 if we accepted the strongly supported reading, "The only begotten God".(2) This expression retains the idea of begetting and at the same time affirms absolute identity of nature. John was however faced with two problems for which he was seeking not so much an explanation as a name. The name he found in the term Logos and the problems were as follows :

(a) There was the problem which has worried all religious philosophers from time immemorial: How can God reveal Himself

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(1) It should be noticed however that John avoids such gnostic words as *ἀγνοῦσι*, *ἠέστῃς* and *θεοῦ* (2) see discussion on various readings in Westcott, The Gospel of St John pp32 ff; cf Burney's interesting suggestion that the Aramaic has been misunderstood for the Absolute for Construct State and so rendered "the only begotten God", The Aramaic Orig. of the Fourth Gospel, pp 39-40.

to man ? For the Jew the question was how can "God who inhabiteth eternity" also "dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit" ? For the Greek the problem was how can God who is Pure Being, Essential Essence,  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \omicron\upsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\upsilon\upsilon$  and can therefore have no contact with the weak and finite elements of our nature, have any dealings with the actual affairs of daily life ? The answers which had been made and which were the subjects of discussion among the religious people of Ephesus will be considered in a moment.

(b) The second problem was a peculiarly Christian one. John, with the other Christians, had risen to an appreciation of Jesus as not only in a general sense divine, but of the same kind as God, and actually God. Yet at the same time the historical manifestation of Jesus showed that He was personally distinguished from God. This belief seemed to be set in irreconcilable contradiction to the fundamental monotheism of the Jewish religion from which Christianity had sprung. The problem expressed itself in the form of an equation: The Father who is God plus the Son who is God = One God. To a Hebrew who believed that Jesus was God in a real sense this was the supreme problem of his faith. The name Son was unsuited to meet this precise difficulty, because its chief stress lay upon the idea of personality, and so upon distinction in the Godhead. What was wanted was a name which would designate Jesus according to His nature, and in substantial identification, not only with God in the abstract,

but with the God of the Old Testament.

It so happens that the term Logos had been used in such a way that it could be adapted to provide a solution to both these problems.

(a) The history of the Logos idea began at Ephesus with Heraclitus (c 535-475 B.C.) and a worthy successor is to be found in the Alexandrine Jew Philo. Dr.W.R.Inge says that "it is clear from the tone of the prologue that Philo's conception of the Logos, or something akin to it was already familiar to those for whom the evangelist wrote." (1) Philo uses the word Logos no fewer than thirteen hundred times and he uses the term to "express the conception of a mediator between the transcendent God and the universe, an immanent power active in creation and revelation." (2). Typical utterances of Philo are as follows: "The primal existence is God, and next to Him is the Logos of God" (leg.alleg. 11.86) "The image of God is the Logos, through whom the whole universe was framed" (Spec. Leg. 1.81). "If the whole creation....is a copy of the divine image, it is manifest that the architypal seal also, which we aver to be the world decried by mind, would be the very Logos of God" (Op. Mund. 25).

The link therefore between the timeless and immutable God

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(1) E.R.E. article on Logos, vol.viii. p.133. (2) W.F. Howard, Christianity according to S.John, p.38; cf Scott, The Fourth Gospel, pp.152 ff



and the material world was the Logos. This was the answer given by Philo to John's first problem. But the answer given by John was much fuller and more satisfying (1). Philo was prevented by his own principles from arriving at the Christian solution of the problem. "There are", he said, "three kinds of life: one which is  $\tau\acute{\iota}\pi\omicron\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$ , another  $\tau\acute{\iota}\pi\omicron\varsigma \gamma\epsilon\acute{\nu}\epsilon\tau\iota\upsilon$  and a third which is a mixture of both. But the  $\xi\omega\gamma\eta \tau\acute{\iota}\pi\omicron\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$  has not descended to us, nor has it come as far as the necessities of the body, (Quis rer. div. haer. 9). The Logos of John accomplished what Philo's Logos could not do, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." John was able to bridge by the Incarnation the gulf which Philo, by speculation, thought impassable.

(b) The popularity of the term Logos is further illustrated by the use of it in the Hermetic literature. The first of these Libelli bears the title Poimandres and in this document the cosmogony of Genesis is the basis for a speculative theory in which the Logos occupies a prominent part. The theology of the Poimandres may be summarised for our purpose as follows. There is a supreme God who is described as Mind, and as Life and Light. The Logos, one of the three sons of the Supreme God, is one of God's agents in making the world. "From the Light there came forth a holy Word...and methought this word was the voice of the Light (1.5a)." The

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(1) For the differences between the two conceptions see Drummond, Philo Judaeus, ii. pp 185 ff.

Word which came forth from the Light is the Son of God"(1.6). After having taken a prominent part in the separation of the elements, "forthwith the Word of God leapt up from the downward tending elements of nature to the pure body which had been made, and was united with Mind the Maker" (1.10) W.Scott says that this conception of the hypostatised Logos is hardly to be found elsewhere in the Hermetic writings, except in a few sentences quoted by Cryil. (1). AS the Poimandres was written according to Scott between 100 and 200 A.D. it reflects a theology which must have been current when the Fourth Gospel was being read. Scholars however appear to be agreed that there was no direct contact between the Poimandres and the Fourth Gospel. Prof.C.H.Dodd who has made a specialised study of this literature says that the likeness may best be explained "as the result of minds working under the same general influence" (2). Dr.Carpenter also comes to this conclusion."With some common religious terminology....the Hermetica and the Fourth Gospel appear wholly independent. Each makes its own contribution to the spiritual life of its age in its own form" (3)

(c) These religious speculations and the use of the term Logos to provide the link between God and the world were bound to influence the mind of John as he thought upon the first problem and how it fitted in with his belief about Jesus. He would be further strengthened in his choice when looking back upon the literature of the O T. he found

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(1) Hermetica, ii, 11 (2) The Bible and the Greeks, p.247, of pp 119 ff. (3) The Johannine Writings, p.312.

suggestions which not only provided material for the solution of the first problem but also provided a scheme of thought into which the person of Jesus could find a place without too violent a break from the rigid monotheism of the Hebrews.

As Prof. F. C. Burkitt points out "no one could begin a work with <sup>2</sup>ἐν ἀρχῇ without at once carrying ~~the~~ back his Christian or Jewish readers to the first words of Genesis." (1). We will later consider the parallelism between the prologue and Genesis, at the moment I only wish to draw attention to the familiar desire on the part of the author of Genesis to describe the creation of the world without involving God in too close a contact with actual matter. In Genesis it was the creative word which called the universe into being. He spake and it was done. That the word of the Lord should be used to describe the exercise of divine power is a familiar characteristic of later Hebrew literature. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made", said the Psalmist (xxx, 6). "Shall not my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I shall please." (Is. iv, 11).

It has been customary to find in the Targums a further illustration of this special use of the "word" to denote the presence and activity of God. The Targums were most probably

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(1) Church and Gnosis, p. 94. The LXX begins as follows: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν

not committed to writing in the shape we have them now until some time after the Christian era had begun; but all evidence goes to show that they embody what was orally current from a much earlier time. It is especially in the Targum of Onkelos on the Pentateuch that the action of God is constantly, though not consistently, referred to "His Word" (Memra). Thus it is said that "the Lord protected Noah by His Word" (Gen vii.16). In Deuteronomy the Word of the Lord appears as a consuming fire to His people and fighting for them against their enemies (Deut. i.11.2; iv.24). This use of the word Memra has often been regarded as almost a personification of the O.T. conception of the "Word". But this is denied by G.F. Moore who says that Memra is not an intermediary nor a hypostasis, but only a formal substitute for the sacred tetragrammaton (1). If this is true then we must confine ourselves to the O.T. and not appeal to the Targums for a special use of the term "Word", where it is used as the word of power and of revelation. As John interpreted salvation in the terms of revelation, the Life of God becoming the Light of men and producing life in them, the term "Word" must have appeared most appropriate for his purpose. And as revelation reached its full climax in the person of Jesus the identification of Jesus with the Word of

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(1) Judaism, i. pp 417 ff.

Revelation, the union of the O.T. term with the N.T. conception, must have been attractive.

(d) There are however other converging lines of thought in the O.T., which, if John had thought of them, must have influenced his choice of the term Logos. In addition to the use of the "Word of the Lord" to avoid involving God in too close a contact with the material world, we can see in the development of the word Wisdom a similar desire. In the course of time the word Wisdom gradually acquired a half-defined personality and in Proverbs viii very definite functions are ascribed to Wisdom. She is the organising energy of the universe, the intellectual principle of the visible world, the bond of the social order, the unseen power by which Kings reign, the rule by which princes decree justice. She was in the beginning with God and is ever at His side in the joy of creation.

Because of ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> striking parallelism between the Greek of the Septuagint in Proverbs viii and the Greek of the prologue, especially if Sophia be substituted for Logos in the prologue, Dr. Rendel Harris has argued that it is here that we must look for the origin of the Logos idea. (1). He thinks that the Logos of the Fourth Gospel is a substitute for a previously existing Sophia. The transition would be an easy one, he says, as it would mean little more than replacing a feminine expression by a masculine one in Greek.

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(1) The Origin of the Prologue to S. John's Gospel. Dr. A. J. MacDonald, in The Incarnation: Spirit & Human Life, pp 131ff, identifies Wisdom with the Divine Spirit.

He fortifies his argument by showing that the title "Wisdom of God" may have been claimed by Jesus Himself. Certainly in early Christian literature such as the *Testimonia adversus Judaeos* Christ is equated with the wisdom of God, and Justin in the Dialogue with Trypho speaks of the Word of Wisdom "being begotten from the Father of the Universe". The prologue is therefore in Dr. Harris' opinion based on a previously existing hymn in praise of Wisdom and afterwards adapted to the conception of the Logos and His incarnation in Jesus.

It is possible therefore that John seeing the close parallel between the function of Wisdom in Proverbs and the person and Work of Jesus adapted it for his purpose. His preference for the term Logos to that of Wisdom may be explained by the use of the word in both pagan religion and in the O.T. literature.

(e) There is another line of evidence which points in the same direction. If Christians saw in Jesus the Wisdom of God the Jews had already identified Wisdom with the Torah. In the Book of Wisdom we read, "Without deceit shall the law be fulfilled, And Wisdom is perfect in a mouth that is faithful" (xxxiv.8); "He that keepeth the law controlleth his natural tendency, and the fear of the Lord is the consummation of Wisdom" (xxi.11); "All wisdom is the fear of the Lord, And all wisdom is the fulfilling of the law" (xix.20). The Torah was then more than a code of commandments it was, in the words of

C.G.Montefiore, "the middle term between Israel and God" (1), and therefore fulfilled the same purpose as Philo's Logos and the O.T. Word. The things which the Rabbis said about the Torah were surprisingly like the things said about the Logos (Wisdom) in the prologue. I set them out in parallel columns(2)

THE LOGOS

THE TORAH.

In the beginning.

Seven things were created before the world was created; namely, the Torah.....

The Logos was with God.

The Torah lay on God's bosom, while God sat on the throne of glory.

All things were made through Him

Through the first born God created the heaven and the earth, and the first born is none other than the Torah.

In Him was life.

The Words of the Torah are life for the world.

And the life was the light of men.

For the world is set in darkness and they that dwell therein are without light, for Thy Torah is burnt, therefore no man knoweth the things that are done by Thee.

Full of truth.

Truth, by this the Torah is meant.

It would appear that John was aware of this identification of the Torah with Wisdom, and <sup>if</sup> ~~as~~ he was moulding his prologue on a previous existing hymn in praise of Wisdom, he makes it quite clear that the Logos is superior to the Torah: "For the Torah was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"

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(1) Peake's Commentary, p. 620. (2) I owe these quotations to W.F.Howard, Christianity according to S.John, he in turn derived them from Strack-Billerbeck, Commentar zum N.T. aus Talmud und Midrasch, ii.pp 353,355,357,361, iii.p 131 and Kittel, Theol. Worterb. z N.T. iv. p.139.

We find therefore in Jewish literature "the Word", Wisdom, and the Torah, all fulfilling to some extent the purpose which Christ came to fulfill. Wisdom, in particular, assumed a semi-personal independence. Such was the way John's first problem was met in Hebrew thought and <sup>the</sup> knowledge at the same time contained a hint as to how the second problem might be solved without too great a break with Jewish monotheism. (1) His actual choice was no doubt prompted by its presence in both Hebrew and Hellenistic literature. At certain points his conception of the Logos coincided with both Hebrew and Hellenistic ideas but in the historic Jesus he found both the completion and fulfilment of the gropings towards the truth on the part of both these groups of people. All that the Jews had believed about God as proceeding forth by His Word and Wisdom to create and govern nature, and to reveal Himself to men by His prophets belongs to Jesus and in Him is consummated. All that the Greeks had imagined of a divine activity in the world, all their speculations about a divine mediator between the immutable and timeless God and the created world, find in Jesus their justification, their fulfilment and their correction.

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(1) cf W.L.Knox, Some Hell. Elements in prim. Christianity, p41  
 "It remains possible that S. Paul arrived independantly at the equation of the Messiah with the Logos ~~of~~ the strength of ideas current at the time when he wrote. It is probable that ~~that~~ equation was decisive for the preservation of monotheism. Jesus as the creative Logos-Wisdom of Judaism could be represented as one with the supreme God."



We are now in a position to consider John's own distinctive contribution to religious thought in his conception of the Logos, limiting ourselves in this chapter to a discussion on the relation of the Logos with God: in another chapter we will consider the relation of the Logos with men. We will begin by studying the first three verses of the 1st Epistle: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life ( and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

It is a matter of discussion in the first place whether "the Word of life" in this passage is used in the same personal significance which it has in the prologue, or merely in the sense of life giving revelation which Christ brought. Westcott (1), Brooke (2), and Moffatt (3) interpret *λόγος τῆς ζωῆς* "the revelation of life". Bernard (4), Hoskyns (5) and Robert Law (6) take Logos as in the prologue

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(1) The Epistles of S. John, p.6 (2) The Johannine Epistles (I.C.C.) p.5 (3) I.L.N.T. p. 591 (4) ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΕΓΚΑΙΝΑΡΧΟΥ, p.660 (5) St. John (I.C.C.), p.lx. (6) The Tests of Life, pp 44 & 370

of the Gospel. The difference of opinion shows how readily this expression might rise from the designation of Christ's saving revelation to the name for Revealer Himself.

According to N.T. usage, "the word of the Lord", "the word of God", or simply "the word", denotes the powerful life-giving revelation of the Gospel (Heb.iv.1c); it is not applied to the O.T. as a whole, but only to such sayings as contain a prophecy of the Gospel, or are actually the expression of God's own words to the prophets. With John especially all the words of Christ are a powerful revelation; all Christ's sayings are thought of as a unit (1 John ii.7); it is the truth and as such sanctifies (xvii.12); its reception delivers from death (viii.51) and from judgement (xii.47); the words (λογος) of Christ are spirit and life (vi.63). Compare also: v.24.28; vii.31.37.43.55; x 34; xiv.22 xv.3; xvii.6.14.21-22. In all these passages the "word" expresses the real, essential mind of Jesus. Those who have this have eternal life. Men do not understand the "speech" of Jesus because they are not in accord with His mind. The "Word" reveals the mind of Jesus.

When we notice how closely "the Word of life" in 1 John seems to be related to this usage we can realise how natural it was for John to use the name Word both in a personal sense and as the revelation of life. Nevertheless the expression in 1 John means something much more than the revelation of life. For if that is all it meant we would be unable to explain

the extraordinary grammatical construction, and in particular the change from the relative construction to the prepositional phrase "concerning the Word of life". The verb of the whole sentence is "we declare" ( $\alpha\pi\alpha\upsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon\nu$ ) and if it was simply a question of the message which he had heard from Jesus John must inevitably have construed it as the direct object of the verb, as in verse 5. Furthermore the content of this clause is defined by the relative clauses which precede it, "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, seen, handled etc". He cannot mean by these clauses the Son of God Himself, or <sup>why</sup> which should he express himself so strangely in the neuter? Moreover we should in this case have in 1 John 1.1 something different presented as the object of his declaration from that which is named in verse 2. Substantially at least the content of the first <sup>verse</sup> ~~words~~ must be the same as that eternal life which, in the second, is declared to have been with the Father and to have been manifested unto us - only in form it is then not thought of as the concrete representation of eternal life, but abstractly, metaphysically, as that which constituted the eternal nature of the Son, and yet was, at the Incarnation, revealed in sensible, historical manifestation.

The Son of God was the subject of the saving message of the Gospel precisely in so far as in Him was, and was manifested, that true and eternal life, which being mani-

fested became light (1.4). It seems that John is grappling with the second problem which I set out above and it is this essential nature of the Son of God which he would represent as the content of his declaration. In order to embrace this in one word, he breaks the relative construction with this clause "concerning the Word of life". Therefore the Word Himself was not the subject of his declaration but that which had been manifested as His essential nature. The essential nature of the Son is marked not only by the fact that He has eternal life in Himself, but that He is able to impart it to men. Hence in the relative clause the fact of His existence in the beginning is associated with His historical manifestation; and the life is spoken of as that "which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." The conclusion to which I arrive is that in the first verse of the Epistle the term "word", though it is strictly a personal title of Jesus, designates Him not so much according to His personality, as according to His essential nature, in virtue of which He is one with the Father (*ἵπρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἡ αὐτὴν*)

In the prologue we find the term "Word" employed in the same way. In both cases the "Word" is an expression of an essential characteristic of God. In the second verse of the Epistle it was the life that was *ἵπρὸς τὸν Πατέρα* in the prologue it is the Word that is *ἵπρὸς τὸν Θεόν*

Many attempts have been made to translate the phrase *ἵπρὸς τὸν Θεόν* Bernard thinks we cannot better "the Word was with God".

Westcott paraphrases it as : "The personal being of the Word was realised in active intercourse with and in perfect communion with God". Abbott urges that the phrase carries with it the sense of "looking towards God". Lock says that it implies one who has the values of God Himself". The phrase is so difficult that Dr. Rendel Harris would reject it altogether and substitute for it the easier preposition  $\tau\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$  (1). According to all these commentators the general sense is that of union with God conveying also the impression of a distinction within the Godhead.

Dr. Burkett however interprets the phrase in such a way as to obliterate the idea of distinction (2). He paraphrases the verse as follows: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was addressed to God and the Word was divine". Thus "the evangelist introduces us to no new theology, but the familiar, though lofty, conception of Genesis, viz., that of the One only God producing the creation by consulting Himself, yet bringing forth into visible form nothing without announcing His formulated intention." Thus the unity of the Hebrew conception of God is safeguarded which was John's problem. But if the suggestion of distinction is at this point obliterated by this particular interpretation it arises later when (following

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(1) The Origin of the Prologue to S. John's Gospel, p  
 (2) Church and Gnosis, pp 94 ff.

Dr. Burkitt's translation) John goes on to say, "I mean to say the Word itself became human and we saw Him". The point I wish to emphasise is that both in the Epistle and in the prologue of the Gospel the Word is so identified with God that there can be no suggestion of a *δεύτερον Θεόν*. John has succeeded in describing the relation of Jesus to God in a way which maintains the monotheistic belief of the Jews.

The next verse in the prologue indicates that however close was the relationship of the Word with God in the eternal sphere, He possessed an independent activity in the world of space and time. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made" It is further stated "and the life was the light of men". This is in harmony with the second verse of the Epistle: "In him was life". The prologue affirms that the Word is also the medium of revelation. This will be discussed more fully under a later topic. We now notice that the same thought is continued down to verse 14: "The light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not" (1.5) (1). The Baptist as a mere witness is distinguished from the true light (1.6-8). The true light, which lighteth every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world

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(1) *interprets* W.L. Knox suggests that *κατελαμβάνειν* as understanding God, "the darkness had never succeeded in understanding the light", Some Hell. Elements in Prim. Christianity, p 55

knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not (i.9-11) It is here affirmed that corresponding to the universal relation which the Logos has to the world as creator, he is also universally the mediator of revelation. The continued action of the light upon the world provided men with the opportunity of knowing the truth at all times. The Jewish people are called "his own" on the ground of His special revelation to them through the O.T. prophets, but all who accept the revelation which He personally brings become truly the children of God (i.12).

The above exposition has shown how appropriate the choice of the term Logos was to express (a) the oneness of nature with God; (b) participation of the Logos in the creation of the world ;(c) and Jesus as the Logos the medium of revelation. The Word which was in the beginning with God, and which for the Hebrew expressed the activity of God in creation and the work of the prophets, and for the Greek supplied the intermediary between God and creation, has been shown to be at one with God Himself and is now brought into relation with the historic Jesus in the affirmation **ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο**.

With this statement we pass from the contemplation of the Logos with God to the Logos in relation to the world. But before considering this we must first discuss John's conception of the world into which Jesus came.

## IV.

## THE WORLD LYING IN DARKNESS.

## THE WORLD AS THE SPHERE OF HUMAN LIFE.

John conceives very vividly the contrast between the divine nature and the created world. As God is light, and in the light; so is the world characterised by darkness. But though this contrast is strongly marked it has no point of contact with metaphysical dualism. Indeed Irenaeus says that the main purpose of the Gospel was to refute such gnostic teaching. "In the course of preaching this faith, John the disciple of the Lord, desirous by preaching of the Gospel to remove the error which Cerinthus had been sowing among men; and long before him those who are called Nicolaitans, who are an offshoot of the knowledge (gnosis) falsely so called; to confound them and persuade men that there is but one God, who made all things by his word, and not, as they affirm, that the Creator is one person, the Father of the Lord another, and that there is a difference of persons between the Son of the Creator and the Christ of the higher Aeons, who both remained impassible, descending on Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and glided back again to his own pleroma; and that the Beginning is the Only Begotten



and that the created system to which we belong was not made by the First Deity, but by some power brought very far down below it and cut off from communion in the things which are beyond sight and name. All such things, I say, the Lord's disciple desiring to cut off, and to establish in the Church the rule of truth, viz., that there is one God Almighty, who by His Word hath made all things visible and invisible; indicating also that by the Word whereby God wrought creation, in the same also He provided salvation for the men who are part of creation; thus did he begin in that instruction which the Gospel contains (here follows John i. verses 1-5). In the next section he quotes verses 10, 11, and 14 against Marcion and Valentinus and other gnostics who held that the world was made by angels or demi-gods (Adv. Haer. lib. iii. chap xi. Oxford Translation. pp 229 ff). Irenaeus emphasises the full significance of the phrase "all things" in verse 3 when he says "Now from 'all things' there is no subtraction made; but the Father made all things by him, whether things visible or invisible, sensible or intelligible, temporal (on account of a certain character they possess) or eternal; not by angels or any powers separated from his sententia... but making all things by His Word and Spirit (i. xxii. 1) (1)

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(1) cf J.N. Sanders, The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church, pp 72 ff.

We have seen that John needed no intermediary to bridge the gulf between the invisible God and the sensible world. The Word which became flesh was God. The reason for this is that human nature itself as it is physically constituted is not evil. God through the Logos created the world, and there is nothing which is excepted from the relationship between the created <sup>world</sup> ~~world~~ and the Creator. There is therefore no radical opposition between the world as such and God; and even the world of human existence which has fallen into rebellion against Him is the object of His love and saving effort.

The world in the Johannine writings means that system which ~~which~~ answers to the circumstances of man's present life. The phrase  $\tau\alpha \epsilon\nu \tau\omega \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omega$  shows that  $\delta \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$  carries with it a wider significance than humanity fallen away from God. But generally speaking it is limited to men and society as organised apart from God. "It is the whole system considered in itself apart from its Maker, though in many cases the context shows that its meaning is narrowed down to humanity." (1).

This conception of the world as fallen away from God involves the writer in a strong religious dualism. The Gospel is, according to Dr. E. F. Scott, "pervaded from end to end by one grand antimony" (2). At first sight the world

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(1) Brooke, Johannine Epistles (I.C.C) p.47; see also Westcott, St John pp 31 ff and R.H. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, p 100  
 (2) The Fourth Gospel, 12

appears as something wholly evil. Without Christ it is darkness and not light (i.9; viii.12). It has refused to know the Word, its creator (i.10). Its ruler is the devil, and it appears to tolerate his rule with equanimity, so that both together are destined to suffer the same fate (xii.31; xvi.11; 1 John v.19). Everything that is in the world, being lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes, is of the world and not of God (1 John ii.16). The world has given birth to false prophets; they speak of the world and the world heareth them (1 John iv.3-5). Christ cannot or will not pray for it (xvii.9); and its hatred is focussed on Him (vii.7; xv.18), and His disciples (xv.18; xvii.14; 1 John iii.13). Though Christians are bidden to love one another they are ~~not~~ ~~commanded~~ ~~to~~ ~~love~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~ commanded not to love the world, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii.15). The business of the <sup>Christian</sup> world appears to be not to save the world, but to overcome the world (1 John v. 4.5).

Over against these passages there are others which speak of the world as the object of God's peculiar favour and love. Though the Christian, as we have just seen, is not to love the world we are told that God so loved it that He gave His only begotten Son, that the world should be saved through Him (iii.16,17; i.29; xii.47; 1 John ii.2) The life of the world is God's special interest; to give life to the world is the purpose of the Son's coming.

And the Samaritans confess that in Jesus they find one who is "indeed the Saviour of the world" (iv.42).

Attempts have been made to resolve the difference between these two attitudes to the world. Bauer, for example, commenting on iii.16, says that John is not here expressing his own mind; that is to be found in 1 John iv. 9 where it is said that God sent His Son into the world that we (not the world) might live through Him (1). Bauer would also take away the force of the phrase "Saviour of the World" by saying that it is just a hackneyed title taken over from the Graeco-Roman emperor worship of the cults of the heathen gods (2). On the other hand A.D.Nock comes to the conclusion that "the application of Soter to Jesus is not in origin connected with non-Jewish religious use of the word" (3). Odeburg quotes extensively from current Jewish and Hellenistic literature to show that in contemporary belief there was a similar dualistic attitude towards the world. And he says that "it is evident that John is merely adopting the language of the times in his use of the word *σωτηρις* . Hence there is in the Johannine use of the word no indication of the meeting

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(1) Das Johannes Evangelium, p 54 (2) op.cit. p.71  
(3) IN Essays on the Trinity and Incarnation (ed.Rawlinson) pp87-94. of W.L.Knox, Some Hell. Elements in prim. Christianity pp 37-42.

of two incompatible lines of thought as peculiar in John. He simply adopts, and finds appropriate, the duplicity in the current use of the word".(1) As these opposite interpretations of the universe are found in John's most fundamental conceptions they must be allowed their full weight. The dualism is however an ethical dualism and is neither absolute nor final. The opposition is already abolished in the sphere of spiritual reality to which the faithful spirit rises when it freely turns away from the darkness to the true life and light.

Dr.W.R.Inge commenting upon this characteristic of John's religious thought says: "The intense ethical dualism of the Fourth Gospel is another perplexing phenomenon to those who look for philosophical consistency in a religious treatise,....Although the Logos is the immanent cause of all life, so that "without Him nothing whatever came into being", the "darkness" in which the light shines is no mere absence of colour, but a positive malignant thing, a rival kingdom which has its own subjects and its own sphere." "The sources of this ethical dualism may be found partly in the spiritual struggles of an intensely devout nature, but to a greater extent probably, in the furious antagonism of Judaism to nascent Christianity." (2). Hence the ethical dualism in the

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(1) The Fourth Gospel etc, p.129 (2) Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, i. p 889. cf W.F.Howards, Christianity According to S.John, p.85

Fourth Gospel is in a sense accidental; it may have affinities with fundamental Christian thought, but it was by the accident of circumstances that led the writer to emphasise it. Had his life and environment been otherwise there might have been no dualism in his teaching at all.

But his experiences being what they were led John to see in this contrast between light and darkness, between God and the world, a matter of prime importance. Both heaven and earth are represented in Genesis 1.1 as equally the creation of God; and John doubtless comprises both in the third verse of the prologue. He does not however think of them so much as constituting one universe, but rather as exhibiting the moral contrast that has come about within God's creation. He thinks of the world as an object requiring salvation out of the evil and darkness into which it has fallen. Darkness, as an ethical condition could not have been the original and necessary character of the world; it came about as an historical development and in no other way than that which is represented in the book of Genesis, namely through sin. But however it came about darkness is the character of the world as Jesus finds it. It is into a realm of spiritual darkness and death that He comes to bring light and life. John conceives this darkness after the analogy of the chaos which preceded the material creation: it is the object of God's saving work, the matter of a new creation.

PARALLELISM WITH GENESIS.

As this parallel with Genesis furnishes luminous points of suggestion for the construction of Johannine thought I will examine in some detail the features of this parallel. (1)

This first hint of this relation of thought is of course the very first phrase of the Gospel, "In the beginning". This could scarcely have been written without a reminiscence of the first words of the O.T. Scriptures; and it obviously suggests that the author is about to write a second book of Genesis. Different meanings have been given to the verse, "In the beginning". According to Westcott John lifts our thoughts beyond the beginning of time and dwells on that which "was" when time began its course (2). With this Bernard agrees, "Before anything is said about creation, he proclaims that the Logos was in being originally." (3) Hoskyns and Davey, on the other hand, identify it with the moment of creation, The Word of God was not made first audible when Jesus first spoke and acted. The Word made known then is the Word audible in the whole creation: "In the beginning was the Word." (4) If however ~~za~~ in the prologue

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1. Most commentators draw attention to this parallel, but few draw it out in detail. I have found suggestions by the following most useful: Burney, Aramaic Origin of The Fourth Gospel, pp 43 ff ; Burkitt, Church and Gnosis, pp.94 ff ; C.H.Dodd draws an interesting parallel between Genesis and the Cosmogony of the Poimandres in The Bible and the Greeks, pp99 ff Even if the Hebrew of Genesis 1.1-3 be translated strictly according to the Syntax the parallel is not materially affected, see Skinner, Genesis (I.C.C.), p.13. (2) St. John, p.2  
 (3) St. John, p.1 (4) The Fourth Gospel, pp 135, 136

we have a parallel with Genesis, the phrase must in the two instances denote not the same, but a different time. It refers rather to the beginning of the new creation. And it is worth while observing that the word "beginning" commonly refers to the commencement of the Gospel dispensation, to the time of the appearance of Christ ( xvi.4; 1 John ii.u. 24; 2 John §.6 ).

The several ideas which are common to the first chapter of Genesis and to the prologue are: The creative Voice - the Word; Light and darkness; and the various manifestations of life. "The Spirit of God" in Genesis 1.5 may be another point of contact with the Gospel recreation; and it is at least not improbable that Christ's act of breathing out the Holy Spirit upon His disciples (xx.22) was associated in John's mind with God breathing into man the breath of life as recounted in Genesis 11.7. "Jesus as the Logos is the instrument of a new spiritual creation, the Church, of which the assembled disciples are the nucleus." (1). We may account it likely that John's idea of eternal life was associated with "the Tree of Life"; and it is possible that his close association of knowledge and life has some connection with the two trees in the Garden of Eden.

These common ideas in the two accounts are worked out as follows: In Genesis we are directed to God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Before us lies a

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(1) Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, p. 329.



material chaos enveloped in darkness; into which presently at the utterance of the creative Word shines the light which appears later in concrete manifestation as "lights". The creation proceeds by the instrumentality of the Word to effect a still further division, of the waters from the waters, and of the waters from the land. The first part of creation is thus effected by means of simple mechanical separation; further development is wrought by the introduction of the various stages of life - from the green herb to the beast wherein is a living soul. Man is not only the climax of this order of living souls; but he is constituted a different kind by the breath of God. This supreme and unique product of creation proceeds, according to the divine command, to multiply and fill the earth.

The world for John, as we have seen, is considered to be for the most part simply as the dwelling place of mankind, the sphere of human souls. This psychical sphere has been thrown by sin into a state of spiritual chaos; it is under the power of darkness and of the Evil One; and hence it is the object of Salvation, which John thinks of as a new creation. Accordingly, quite parallel with Genesis, his description takes for its beginning the commencement of the new creation. As in Genesis, the Only God is represented as consulting Himself (1) In Genesis "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the

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(1) ἄρὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ

See Burkitt, Church and Gnosis, pp. 94

deep" (1), so in the Gospel there lies before us a spiritual chaos which is enveloped in spiritual darkness. As in Genesis the first moment of creation is the creative Word "Let there be light", so in the prologue the Word is the personal creator, and He also was light - a spiritual light, the light of men. By Him a separation is effected between the different elements of the world, and order is brought out of chaos. But not only was he light; "in Him was life". He brings eternal life to men and this is thought of not as mere prolongation of physical existence, but as an entirely new and superadded gift, which has its beginning in the new birth. This new birth ("not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (2) ) is parallel to the first divine gift of psychical life in Genesis 1.7. This life consists in the knowledge of and fellowship with God (3); it is truly possessed from the moment of new birth, but there is a development of it corresponding to the growth in knowledge. The detailed process of physical life recorded in Genesis has its counterpart in the development of this spiritual life described in the Gospel. Furthermore the separate moments of creation in both accounts are blended in the

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(1) It should be noticed however that the Hebrew <sup>תהו ובהו</sup> suggests indiscriminate monotony rather than confusion; barrenness rather than beauty. (2) "The variant <sup>ἐκ νεκρῶν</sup> implied in the Latin versions may be due to a desire" to "eliminate the Gnostic suggestion of the text" Knox, Some Hell. Elements in Prim. Christianity, p 57. (3) see <sup>ph 2.11</sup> of Charles, Eschatology etc. p. 369: <sup>Eschatology</sup> "consists in a growing ~~knowledge~~ personal knowledge of God and of His Son".

continuous operation of the personal Word. These thoughts set out briefly in the prologue are expanded and developed in the rest of the Gospel so that it may well be called the second book of Genesis. The exposition which follows will have this fact constantly in mind, and, first, we must consider in greater detail what constitutes the darkness in the Johannine scheme of re<sup>3</sup>creation.

#### THE DARKNESS.

Important as ~~is~~ this antithesis between God and the World, between light and darkness, certainly was in the mind of John, the absoluteness of the antithesis must not blind us to the presence of light in the world even before Jesus came. Although the "darkness apprehended not the light" (1.5) "and his own received him not" (1.11); there were nevertheless those who did receive him (1.12), and before they became His they belonged to the Father (xvii.6). There were in fact already at His coming two classes of men; those who hate the light because they do evil, and those who come to the light, because they do the truth (111.20,21). John also recognises that the world had in the Jewish scriptures a revelation from God, (1), and in the Jewish nation a chosen people who have a special knowledge of God.

The ninth verse of the prologue means that the Logos is the medium of God's universal revelation of Himself to the

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(1) For the use of the O.T. in the Fourth Gospel see Bernard S. John pp cxlvii ff and Westcott, S. John pp vi ff & lxvi ff; for the use of the O.T. generally by Jesus see B.H.Branscombe Jesus and the Law of Moses.

world. "From the first He was so to speak on His way to the world, advancing towards the Incarnation by preparatory revelation, He came in type and prophecy and judgement." (1). Hence "Isaiah saw his glory, and he spake of him" (xii.41); Moses wrote of Him (v.46) and also the prophets. The divine mission of John the Baptist (i.6) is specially emphasised in the Fourth Gospel; though not the light (i.8) he nevertheless was himself "the lamp which burneth and shineth" (v.35). John's interpretation of the counsel of Caiaphas (xi.51 ff) shows very strikingly his conception of prophecy as the official distinction of the Jewish nation even in the moment when they were ~~examining~~ consummating the disruption of the covenant relation. . The gift of prophecy in primitive days traditionally belonged to the priesthood and that the prophet should be unconscious of his prophecy is an idea found in Rabbinic writings. For example in the Midrash on Exodus known as Mechilta the commentator says on Exodus xv.27 : "Our fathers prophesied and knew not what they prophesied" (2). This incident and its interpretation suggest a much deeper view of O.T. prophecy than was conceived by the other writers of the N.T. It is difficult to understand Dr. Scott's conclusion that "his allusions to it (the O.T.) are comparatively few and of a somewhat perfunctory and superficial nature." (3) For if we find

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(1) Westcott, St John, p 7. (2) see Strachan, The Fourth Gospel pp 244, 245 and 174 ff. (3) The Fourth Gospel, p 197

in the Fourth Gospel fewer references to the O.T. than in, say, St. Matthew, "we must also observe" as Dr. Rendel Harris points out, "that when they do occur they betray acquaintance quite clearly with the method and the contents of the primitive Testimony Book" (1) which contained the so-called Messianic proof-texts from the O.T.

The O.T. is frequently quoted to establish a fact, or to clinch an argument, or to illustrate something that has been said. In particular John reveals his knowledge that the Jews believed that the O.T. scriptures pointed forward to the Messiah. He represents the people as expecting that the Messiah would come one day, because the prophets had so predicted and they expected him to be born in Bethlehem (vii.42); that he would vindicate himself by wonderful works (vi.14,30); and that he would abide for ever (xii.34). The disciples are represented as applying Messianic scriptures to Jesus both before (ix.17) and after His resurrection (ii.22;xii.16). There can be no doubt that John sees in Jesus the fulfilment of the O.T. scriptures which prophecy the coming of the Messiah. "Moses wrote of me" and the Scriptures "bear witness of me" (v.39,46; cf Deut. xviii.15; Acts iii.22; vii.37).

The Scriptures of the O.T. possess a value as a revelation of truth quite apart from any particular words spoken by the prophets. The various writings are thought of as a unit, as the scripture, ἡ γραφή, a term which is used to denote the O.T. as a whole (vii.38) and its individual

(1) Testimonies, ii, p.71. cf. Dr. Todd's remark quoted on p. 15 above.

utterances (xix.37), and this scripture cannot be broken (x.35). The Scriptures as a whole testify of Christ (v.39); and this witness is found not only in those passages which are expressly prophetic, but in the psalms (xix.24,28,37). So complete was the witness to Jesus that had the disciples really known the Scriptures they would have known what must happen to Him (xx.9). We may agree with Westcott that without accepting the O.T. basis for the Fourth Gospel it remains an insoluble riddle (1). That the Scriptures were fulfilled in Jesus is a fundamental conception of the Fourth Gospel.

The term Law, or Teaching, is used to describe the Scriptures in respect to their significance for the Jewish nation. Christ in addressing the Jews speaks of "your law" (viii.17;x.35), and of "Moses' law" (vii.23), whereas in His use of the word Scripture there is no such narrowing of meaning. Dr.H.Odeburg offers the following explanation of the term "your law" (2): "Jesus declares himself expressly in both contexts (x v.30-47 & viii.14) to be a celestial being, the Son of His Father. God never says "our law", but either "my law" or "your law". Jesus stands in the same relation to the Tora as his Father. The Tora is secondary to Jesus, and this was especially the case with the Tora as manifested in writing and tradition to the Jews. Jesus' position in regard to the Tora is similar to his position

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(1) St. John p 1xix. (2) The Fourth Gospel, p.292

in regard to Abraham or Moses. He certainly does not reject Abraham or Moses.....but: "before Abraham was I am" "

Nevertheless this distinction between the Scriptures and the Law does not mean that Jesus repudiated the obligation and the law for Himself or for His disciples; for when He says "which of you convicteth me of sin?" (viii.46), He must be understood as challenging comparison between His conduct and the Law, which was the presumed basis for the accusation. In the alleged cases of Sabbath breaking He justifies His actions by a right interpretation of the Law (vii.22). Nor is it to be supposed that John sharply distinguished between the two principles divisions of the Scripture, the Law and the prophets; for in Philip's call to Nathanael (i.45) the two are intimately combined: "of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets did write." John did not, like S. Paul, think of the Law as being in fundamental conflict with the Gospel (Rom. iv.16; vi.14,15; Gal.v.4). The contrast expressed in i.17 is Pauline in form only: "For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Here the Law is supposed to be a good thing in itself, or else the particular excellence of the gift of Christ would not be made to be better by comparison. The point of comparison is suggested by the preceding verse, "of his fullness we have all received, and grace for grace." It is as the inexhaustible gift of God that the Gospel is contrasted with the Law, which in the opinion of the Jews was static and complete. In the

Rabbinical schools it was "an uncontested axiom that every syllable of the Scripture had the verity and authority of God....The notion of progressive revelation was impossible; the revelation to Moses was complete and final." (1). In Rabbinic literature the Law was regarded as the source of Salvation and Life. "This is the book of the commandments of God and the law that endureth for ever. All they that hold it fast are appointed to life, ~~but such as leave it shall die.~~" (1 Baruch iv.1.2); "If food which is your life but for an hour, requires a blessing before and after it be eaten, how much more doesthe Torah, in which lies the world that is to be, require a blessing." (Rabbi Ishmael, c.135); "He who has gained for himself the words of the law has gained for himself the life in the world to come." (Aboth, ii.7). These quotations show that for the Jew the Law was the predominant note of religion; the essence of religion was to be found in the Law. But John shows that nearly everything which was ascribed to the Torah has now been transferred to Christ; that the scriptures find their fulfilment in Him(2).

- The Jews had therefore in the Scriptures a light shining in the darkness, a veritable witness to Jesus. Because of them/<sup>the</sup>Jews could be presumed to have some knowledge

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(1) G.F.Moore, Judaism etc, i.p.239. (2) cf Hoskyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel, p 305 and also above p. 91.



of God even before Christ came. And in the Fourth Gospel such knowledge is allowed. Christ affirms that Salvation is of the Jews and that they possessed a belief in God which was distinguished from other contemporary religions in that it demanded a worship which combined in a unique way both religion and morality (iv.22) (1). He asserts that if they were truly Abraham's children, they would do the works of Abraham (viii.39). If they had believed on Moses they would have believed on Him (v.46). There is frequent reference to belief among the Jews extending even to the highest circles (xii.42). The resurrection of Lazarus leads many Jews to faith in Jesus (xi.45). Even the covert faith in Nicodemus and of Joseph of Aramath~~ea~~ comes finally to public expression (iii.2; xix.38,39). John recognises that it is primarily in "this fold" that Jesus finds His sheep (x.16).

But side by side with these individual expressions of faith in Christ the Jews are regarded in the Fourth Gospel as the representatives of the darkness of this world. There are about 25 instances in which the term is used in this hostile sense. From beginning to end John's representation moves along the line of opposition between Christ and the Jews. So prominent is this that one Jewish writer has called it "the Gospel of Christian love and Jew hatred" (2). It should be noticed however that there is nothing in the Fourth Gospel to match the "woes" recorded by the Synoptists.

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(1) cf W. Temple, Readings in the Fourth Gospel, p 64 ; see also E.F.Scott, The Fourth Gospel, pp 70-77 (2) Jewish Encyclop. vol.ix. p.251.

The Synoptists make it clear that the Jews were less ready to believe than the Galileans, who were not so directly under the influence of the scribes and priests who gave the dominant tone to Judaism. Jewish opposition naturally comes in for more extended notice in the Fourth Gospel as the author dwells particularly upon the episodes of Jesus' ministry in Judea.

Nevertheless the tone of the controversial passages in the Fourth Gospel suggest that John saw in the attitude of the Jews the epitome of the opposition of the world to Christ. And it was probably a subordinate aim to bring out the opposition as clearly as possible. But it must not be supposed that the attitude of the Jews in Jesus' day was alone responsible for this emphasis upon their unbelief. (1) It was probably provoked by the great body of organised opposition in the Hellenic Judaism of the Dispersion. The Martyrdom of Ploycarp reveals the intense hatred of the Jews in Asia Minor. From 50-150 A.D. the real battle ground of Christianity was in Asia Minor and among all the inimical forces, Judaism was the chief instigator of the persecution of the Church. The dialogues and discourses in the Fourth Gospel reflect a situation which the earliest Christian preachers would meet when brought into contact with the Jews

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(1) cf F.C.Burkitt, "It is quite impossible that the historical Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels could have argued and quibbled with opponents as he is represented to have done in the Fourth Gospel." The Gospel History and its Transmission pp 227 ff.

of Ephesus and elsewhere. The writings of Justin Martyr indicate what were the subjects of controversy between the Jews and the Christians. His Dialogue with Trypho the Jew deals with such subjects as : the obscure origin of Jesus (viii; cf John vii.27); His birth place (cviii; cf John vii 41 ff); Sabbath observance (xxii,xxvi f ; cf John ix.14 f ; vii.19); the coming of Elijah (xl ix f; cf John i.21); Jews and Samaritans (lxxviii ; cf John iv.1 f ; vii.48) (1). If the above references are compared they will show that the same subjects were debated in both works.

Yet it was of the Jews of His own time that Jesus affirmed, "Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His face " (v.37) - specifying the two forms in which God's revelation came in old time: by visions and by voice. They do not even understand the scriptures which they have inherited and which they study (v.39,40), and hence they do not receive the witness which the Father bears to the Son ( v.37), because God's word finds no abiding place in them (v.38). As they are unable to perceive God's witness, so they cannot understand Christ's speech, because they cannot hear His words (viii.43). The Jews are therefore characterised as darkness, not because the light has not shone upon them but because they have not apprehended the light (1.5)

Christ's coming into the world was itself a judgement, and the decision which men make for or against Him

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(1) see Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, p.50 f

lays bare the inmost disposition of the heart. In the opinion of Dr. E. F. Scott "sin" in the Fourth Gospel "is conceived not as a positive principle, but as a privation, a limitation.....To the mind of John, sin in itself involves no moral culpability....Sin in itself is a mere privation, and only assumes the darker character when <sup>the</sup> freedom offered through Christ is refused." (1) It is true that unbelief is not a category which includes all sins; but it is the test which cuts deepest, and which most conclusively manifests the bent of the heart. "The virtuous man fulfills the law of his own being" (2); so do men's reactions to Jesus reveal their moral state. Hence the incapacity of the Jews to know Jesus reveals the essential evil in their nature (iii. 20, 21). On two occasions John traces this unbelief to the *σοφία* of men; seeking their own opinion rather than God's glory (v. 44; xii. 43) So predominant is this idea of sin as unbelief that Jesus says: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done the works which none other did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father" (xv. 22, 24) And when at the last He promises that "the paraclete will convict the world in respect of sin" He defines sin in the clause "of sin because they believe not in me" (xv. 8, 9). The sin

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(1) The Fourth Gospel, p. 219-221. (2) Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, ix. 42

of anti-Christ is variously stated in the denial "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1 John iv.2), "that Jesus is the Christ" (1 John ii.22), or as the denial "of the Father and the Son". In the same way we must understand the "sin unto death" (1 John v.16,17). We cannot understand it as anything other than a deliberate~~y~~ apostacy from Christ which involves a definite crisis of the soul. It is the sin not of the outsider, but of the "brother" who has seen Christ and hated Him. "In the author's view any sin which involves a deliberate rejection of the claims of Christ may be described as 'unto death' " (1).

John does not however confine himself to the consideration of the sin of unbelief. In the last passage quoted above he contrasts sin unto death with sin in general: "All unrighteousness is ~~is~~ sin; and there is a sin not unto death." The expression, "sin is lawlessness" which we find in 1 John iii.4 shows his fundamental adherence to the O.T. conception of sin. In the O.T. deliberate and wilful transgression was opposed to sins committed unwittingly (Num.xv.30), and the former were punished by the sinner being cut off "from among his people". And according to John sin is not limited to those who are guilty of deliberate and wilful rejection of Christ (xv,22); even those to whom the manifestation of Christ's light has not come are in a state of sin; for it is into a world already sinful that Christ comes

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(1) Brooke, Johannine Epistles, p.146

"to take away the sin of the world" (1.29) (1 John iii.5). It is a world completely sinful; for sin is co-extensive with darkness, and it is expressly stated of the world, after the Christian community has been separated from it, that it lieth all of it in the Evil One" (1 John v.19). The condition of sin is compared to bondage (viii.34). Sin is in a negative sense the absence of life, and it is only by faith that we pass out "of death into life" (v.24; 1 John iii.14). It is out of a perishing condition that Christ saves us (~~xxx~~<sup>iii</sup>.16). In a certain sense it is natural for men to sin; for in a way quite familiar to the O.T. the pleasures of the world are regarded as enticements away from God, "for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but of the world." (1 John ii.16). Flesh, however, is not thought of as an evil principle, any more than is the eye. Christ's sentence in iii.16 "that which is born of the flesh is flesh", is not to be taken to mean the essential sinfulness of mankind. It means that the earthborn is unable to transcend the earthly sphere without a begetting from above. Flesh is contrasted with spirit in vi.63, where the property of "quickenings" is ascribed to spirit, while flesh has no such quality, where eternal life is concerned. "Sarx" in the N.T. means more than material flesh. It means that part of human nature which belongs to the world. It is an essential constituent of man and as such a part of Christ's nature (1 Peter iii.18). While not being evil in itself, if the

flesh is made supreme and sufficient it is almost certain to become the occasion of sin. "Ye must be born anew" (iii.17).

ΣΕΒΕΣ John uses the phrase ἁμαρτιῶν ἔχειν and the verb ἁμαρτάνειν in two senses: to denote the power or principle of sin, and to denote concrete acts of sin (1). The latter sense he generally expresses by the plural, sins; but it is not always possible to distinguish which idea is uppermost in his mind. This distinction helps in part to explain how in the epistle he can denounce the claim to sinlessness ( § John 1.8), and yet assert that "he that sinneth hath not seen him, hath not known him" (1 John iii.6) The Christian even is often guilty of particular sins for which confession and forgiveness <sup>are</sup> required; but he has been freed from the bondage of sin( viii.36), and is no longer under its slavish control, he cannot habitually practise it, nor abide in it, still less can he be guilty of sin in its superlative form - the denial of Christ. The same distinction is found in xiii.10. The suggestion is that he that has been bathed by the waters of baptism λέλουμένος λουτρῷ <sup>πεντηκονταετηρίως</sup> ~~καθάρσει~~ ( Titus iii.5; Eph.v.26; Heb.x.22) is wholly washed. His affections are however sullied by contact with the world, he must therefore constantly wash his feet by repentance (2). Strachan, however, rejects any reference to Baptism in this incident. He interprets the washing of Peter's feet as showing that although Peter has yielded himself

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(1) see Brooke, Johannine Epistles, p 17; cf Westcott, Epistles of St. John, pp 37 ff (2) cf Hoskyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel, pp 519 ff

in spirit to Christ, i.e. he is bathed in love, he must further yield himself in action and allow life's travel stains to be washed away (1). But in view of the distinction we have already seen to be characteristic of John, the former interpretation seems to fit more easily into the Johannine system of thought.

We have already seen that sin, according to John, is lawlessness (1 John iii.4) and in this expression there is to be found a deeper conception than at first appears. The Law, for John, is no longer contained in a number of precepts, but is summed up in Christ's example of love (xiii.14) As sin against God is thought of chiefly as rejection of His light, so sin against man is included in the idea of hate, the transgression of the law of love. This sin is traced back to Cain "who was of the Evil One, and slew his brother" (1 John iii.12). It is not likely that John thought so much of the unity of the sinful race as derived from Adam in the Pauline sense, but rather of the moral contrast within the race, between the children of God and the children of the devil; of this contrast Cain was the representative, and his sin was for John the antitypal sin.

But even Cain's sin is traced to the fact that he was of the Evil One, who himself "was a murdered<sup>y</sup> from the beginning" (viii.44) (2). "He that doeth sin is from the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (1 John iii.8)

(1) Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, p.267. (2) For the meaning of *ἀποκτείνω* see Stevens, Theology of the N.T. p.195; Brooke Johannine Epistles, p.88; cf Bernard. S.John. pp 313 ff.



"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do" (viii.44). As to the origin of the devil himself John shows no sign that he ever speculated about it. But we may assume that he did not intend to represent the devil as in any sense co-ordinate with God, as the eternal principle of evil. There is no sign of metaphysical dualism in his writings. And although John dwells upon the contrast within the human race between the children of God and the children of the devil, and often represents this difference as something <sup>which</sup> antedated their conscious choice of Jesus (x.3,5,16) we must not read into this a fatalism which necessitates their relation to Christ (1). For, though this difference is traced to God's choice and they were His before they were Christ's (xvii.6), yet their own choice remains one of perfect freedom. It is because men love darkness rather than light, that they reject Christ and are therefore justly judged (iii.19).

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(1) But cf Bernard on John ix.3: "The doctrine of predestination is apparent at every point in the Fourth Gospel, every incident being viewed <sup>sub specie aeternitatis</sup> as predestined in the mind of God". cf pp. cliii ff.

## V.

## THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

We have now before us the two great generic ideas of darkness and light, which represent the contrast between the human and the divine, between the world and God. We have been able with reasonable certitude to deduce even from John's indirect utterances, his view of the nature and disposition of God, and of the condition of the world. But fundamental as these topics are, they are only the introduction to the themes with which John most expressly and predominantly deals. Light and darkness, as we have come to understand them, are in a sense the postulates of John's theology; they are the colours with which his picture is painted. The contrast involved in these two facts represent also the problem which John's doctrine solves. But the all-absorbing fact to John is not that the world lieth in darkness, nor even that God is light; but that the divine light has actually come into the darkness. He sees the world perishing in darkness and death; he sees God as One who is light and in whom is no darkness at all: but he does not speculate upon these facts, he does not strive to delineate them, he is content to name them in two words. What he does minutely describe is the process by which the light overcomes

the darkness and saves the world. And the first step in this process is the manifestation of the light in the world. It is upon the fact of the Word made flesh that eternal life, the new birth, the conditions and fruits of divine Sonship depend. It is with these themes that John is constantly occupied; and upon them that the majority of his utterances in both epistles and Gospel directly bear. This is the point round which all other themes circle. This is the region of Johannine thought with which we have yet to deal; and here it is that we find the most obvious as well as the most interesting of the Johannine peculiarities. But before we proceed to study more closely these things it will help us to appreciate the distinctive teaching of John if we examine the contemporary desire to see God, the content and means by which this desire was sought.

#### THE VISION OF GOD IN CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT.

(a) The Metamorphoses of Apuleius has already been referred to in connection with rebirth (1) and this is also our chief authority for the experiences which were encouraged by the Mystery Religions. In the xi th book of the Meta<sup>ph</sup>oses Lucius sees the goddess in no less than three different ways: sometimes in contemplation of her sacred statue; sometimes in dreams at night, and at the culminating point of his initiation in the mystic ritual of the ~~the~~ shrine (Met.xi.18,19,20,24; 19,26,29,30).

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(1) p. 52 f. above.

He describes his vision of the goddess as follows (1): "Whenas I had ended this oration, discovering my plainys to the goddess, I had fortun'd to fall again asleep upon that same bed; and by and by (for mine eyes were but newly closed) appeared to me from the midst of the sea a divine and venerable face, worshipp'd even of the gods themselves. Then, little by little, I seem'd to see the whole figure of her body, bright and mounting out of the sea and standing before me; wherefor I purpose to describe her divine semblance, if the poverty of my human speech will suffer me, or her divine power give me a power of eloquence rich enough to express it" (Met. xi.3). Then follows a long and detailed description, based no doubt upon the conventional features and ornaments of the statue he came to love so well.

In the last chapter of the book (Met.xi.31) the Great Osiris appeared to him "which is the more powerful god of the great gods, the highest of the greater, the greatest of the highest, and the ruler of the greatest." The revelation given, however, is singularly inept and shows how difficult it must have been for the ancient world to keep upon the highest planes of religious exaltation for long.

A further illustration may be found in the Mythras Liturgy (2). This is a magic papyrus of the beginning of the

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(1) The Loeb Classical Library, No.44, translation by W. Adlington, revised by S.Gaselee (1919). (2) The relevant portion is printed in The Vision of God by K.E.Kirk, pp473 ff.

Fourth Century but contains earlier material. It professes to give an account of the appearance of the great God Helios Mithras and the stages which lead up to the vision. The final stage is described as follows:

"When these have set themselves hither and thither in order, look up into the air, and <sup>thou</sup> ~~then~~ shalt see lightnings flashing down, and the gleams of lights and the earth quaking, and a great god coming down, with a shining countenance, young and golden ~~haired~~ headed, in tunic white and golden crown and busking, with golden-shoulder-blade of an ox in his right hand....Then shalt thou see lightnings glance from his eyes and stars from his body.....Then gaze upon the god and bellow long, and greet him thus: 'Hail, Lord, Master of the Water; hail, founder of the earth; hail, ruler of the spirit. Lord born again am I, and so in my exaltation depart; and being exalted die. Born in life giving birth and dissolved in death, I go my way as thou hast ~~ordained~~, as thou hast commanded and hast made mystery.' "

(b) What the mysteries did for the eye, the Hermetic tracts professed to do for the ear. By word of mouth, by exhortation by instruction, rather than by religious ecstasy, they proposed to bring men to the vision of God. W.Scott says, "If one were to try to sum up the Hermetic teaching in one sentence, I can think of none that would serve the purpose better than the sentence, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (1)

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(1) Hermetica, 1. p.14

The agent by whom the knowledge of God was conveyed to people was in Greek, Hermes, and in Egyptian, Thot, the messenger of the gods. The message derived from him was passed on to disciples by the anonymous writers of the Hermetic tracts.

It is not difficult, one writer says, "to contemplate God in thought, or even to see him. Look at the arrangement of the universe and its orderliness. Look at the necessity which governs all that is presented in our sight, and the providence shown in what has been and in what came to be. Look at the material world filled to the brim with life, and see this great God in movement in all things." (Corp. Herm. xii.21,22; Scott, Hermetica, 1. p. 236)

From the beginning to the end of the Corpus Hermetica purity of heart and moral rectitude are represented as the essential conditions of seeing God. "there is but one way to worship God, my son, and it is to be devoid of evil....you must cleanse yourself of irrational torments of matter....ignorance incontinent desires, injustice, covetousness, deceitfulness, envy, fraud, rashness, vice" (Corp. Herm. xiii.7ff; Scott 1. p 238) "To be righteous is to see God" (Corp. Herm. ix 4a; Scott 1. p. 180) (1).

There are some passages which suggest that the vision of God must be deferred until the soul has entered the eighth and

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(1) cf The Bible and the Greeks, pp 173 ff, where Dr. Dodd discusses the ethical vocabulary of the Poimandres.

highest sphere of heaven, it is then that the soul "sings together with those who dwell there, hymning the Father..... and with them in turn mounts up to the Father, giving itself up to the powers and itself becoming a power, and so enters into God." (Corp.Herm. 1.26 ; Scott, i.p.128) Other passages are more optimistic. "Man is more immortal than aught else that lives, for he can receive God and hold intercourse with God" (Corp.Herm.xii.18 ; Scott, i.p.234)

The vision itself is accompanied by ecstatic experiences, "Father/God has given me a new being, and I perceive now not with bodily eyesight but by the working of the mind. I am in heaven and in earth, in water and in the air; I am in beasts and in plants.....I am present everywhere. Father, I see the whole, and myself in the mind," (Corp.Herm. x.6; Scott, i.p.190). In one tractate however ecstasy is not considered as the test of the vision. "The vision of God is not a thing of fire, as are the sun's rays. It does not blaze down upon us, and force us to close our eyes. It shines forth much or little according as ~~as~~ he who gazes on it is able to receive the inflow....It cannot harm us, it is full of all immortal life." (Corp.Herm.x.4b,5; Scott, i.pp.188, 190.)

(c) This desire to see God in pagan circles is more than equalled in the writings of Philo. To see God was his aim, and he thought of this vision as a "vision of peace"; for "God alone is perfect peace." (de somn.ii.38). No physical eye can

see God, that can be achieved only through the eye of the soul (de conf.ling.20). The name Israel meant for him "seeing God" ( mut.nom.12). The title "sons of Israel" means "hearers of him who saw" ( de conf.ling.28). Philo writes to encourage the people of Israel to "aim at the vision of Him who is, to go beyond the visible sun, and never to leave the road that leads to perfect happiness" (de vit.cont.2)

In one of Philo's finest passages he expresses the doubt whether men will ever see God, "Whether by seeking thou shalt find God in uncertain, for to many he has not made Himself known and their labour seems without reward. Yet the bare search avails to the attainment of good; high aspirations, even though they fail, bring joy to those who pursue them." (leg. alleg.iii.15). Yet generally he is more optimistic, "When God perceived how fruitful it would be to the creature to know its creator ( for this is the sublimity of all joy and blessedness) He breathed into it some spark of His divinity from above, which working invisibly, sealed with its impress the soul invisible....so that it no longer received mortal but immortal thought....and now it comprehends the very ~~bounds~~ bounds of earth and sea of air and heaven....The universe itself is too narrow for its soaring ambitions. Further it penetrates in its striving, to grasp the incomprehensible nature of God, if it can." (de pot.ans.24).

The nature of this vision is ecstatic, "A Bacchic frenzy has filled me with ecstasy; I knew no more the place where I



sat, my company, myself - nay even what I said or wrote. A flow of exposition comes upon me at such seasons, a delectable light, the vision of the keenest....Then is revealed to me that which is most worthy to be seen and contemplated and loved - the perfect Good, which changes the soul's bitterness to honey." (migr. Abr. 7 ).

It will be clear from the foregoing that John was writing in a world which desired passionately to see God. It was encouraged in this by the belief that some men had attained the vision and had found therein the sum of human happiness. This stimulated the hope that the same vision might be attainable <sup>by</sup> ~~to~~ all who sought it. It is against this background that we can understand the significance of John's declaration that the "Word was made flesh". The Gospel is, in the words of Loisy, "a perpetual theophany." (1)

It is true that John reminds us that "no man hath seen God at any time" (i. 18; vi. 46; 1 John iv. 12) and he looks forward to a day in which we shall see Him as He is (1 John iii. 12). But what is implied here is a difference of degree and not of kind. Already it is the case that "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (xiv. 7.9). "One who is God, only begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (i. 18) (2). The vision of God makes the Christian like the

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(1) Le Quatrieme Evangile, p. 104. (2) For translation see p. 82 above. "Verse 18 is added to make it clear that Christianity has not abandoned the claim of Judaism to have the true revelation of the 'invisible' God." W.L.Knox, op cit. p.58 note.

Father ( 1 John iii.2); and the resemblance to Him is shown in mutual love (1 John iv.12,16). When the Word was made flesh we beheld His glory, that is His manifest presence, "the glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (2.14)

We agree therefore with the conclusion of Heitmüller: "The gospel is to show by what means Christians saw the Divine majesty of the Logos - by His miracle working power, His supernatural knowledge, His physical inviolability, the spiritual efficacy of His preaching, and - not least of all by His voluntary suffering and death, and His resurrection."

(1). The manifestation of God in Christ is contrasted with the earlier and contemporary manifestations, and shown to be different, not only in degree but in kind. Every other manifestation has now been superceded in the great Christian declaration that the "only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father" , that is admitted to God's inmost counsels and participating in His very nature, "He hath declared Him."

(2). It is with this fact in mind that we proceed to examine in more detail what is involved in the statement that "the Word was made flesh."

#### THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH.

This is the corner stone upon which the whole structure

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(1) Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments, vol iv. pp45,46.  
 (2) cf E.F.Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p. 211

of Johannine thought depends. The visible historical Jesus is the place in history where the glory of God was manifested. John was faced with the dangers of a false spirituality. Some of his contemporaries were convinced that any materialistic notions in religion would clog the movement of the spirit. John succeeds in a remarkable way to hold the tension between a false spirituality and a gross materialism. He does not say that the spirit is reduced to the level of the flesh and therefore become profitless; nor does he say that the spirit has become something that is visible to the naked eye. But he does mean men to understand that it is in the man Jesus that the spirit is encountered, and through belief in the historic Jesus that eternal life is received. (1).

Ignatius tells us that the chief exponent of this false spirituality was Cerinthus. He informs us that Cerinthus separated Christ, the Divine Aeon, from Jesus, the good but mortal and finite man. The two, he said, met at the waters of Jordon, upon the day of <sup>united</sup> Baptism, when Christ/Himself to Jesus for a few years, to leave the man Jesus for ever. Before the passion the Divine Ideal Christ withdrew, the man Jesus suffered, while the impassible immortal Christ was far away in Heaven. (adv. haer. i.26). In the words of Jerome: "While the Apostles yet remained upon the earth, while the blood of Christ was almost smoking upon the soil of Judaea, some asserted that the body of the Lord was a phantom." (adv. Lucif. xxiii)

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(1) cf Hoskyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel, pp56 ff

Further encouragement for this depreciation of the flesh of Jesus would no doubt be given by certain aspects of pagan thought. The Mystery Religions and the Hermetic Sects believed in a world of visions, ecstasies, secret revelations, and deification. Communion with God was only possible by way of the temporary annihilation of sense perception and worldly experience. The body is the prison house of the soul. The aspirant must purge himself of the "irrational torments of matter". No aspect of terrestrial existence had any good in it. (see esp. Corp. Herm. vii.). Even Philo lent himself to this kind of thought. The body to him was a "foul dungeon", a prison cell, a cage, a burden, a fetter, a coffin. It was to oppose this conception of a purely spiritual religion that moved John to place so much emphasis upon the flesh of Jesus.

In the sixth chapter, for instance, the Jews are confronted in the crudest possible manner with the flesh of Jesus. To them this seemed blasphemy, but so important was the point that Jesus faced the disciples with the same test and the Apostles alone remained. In the Epistle John condemns "spirits false prophets, anti-Christis" ( 1 John iv.3) Christians must learn to distinguish between true spirits and false spirituality. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits." ( 1 John iv. 1). No spirit that refuses to confess Jesus in the flesh can be of God ( 1 John iv.3). To deny the incarnate Son of God is to deny the Father also and to usher in the last hour (1 John 11.22,23).

"The Fourth Evangelist saw clearly that, unless historical reality was to be surrendered to religious speculation, the perplexities apparent in the minds of his hearers must be met as to the relationship between the historic Jesus and the risen Christ. Disastrous compromise with the thought of the time must not take place. The only hope for the Christian faith was to restore it to the assurance of the abiding significance of the earthly life of Jesus." (1).

That this was no passing danger to the Church is made evident by the same emphasis which we find in the Epistles of Ignatius. He writes to the Trallians of the Christ who "was truly born, ate and drank; truly suffered; truly was crucified and died; truly rose"<sup>2</sup> then, playing upon the name

Docetists of *Ἐδδακῆ*, he says: *λέγουσιν τὸ δοκεῖν πεπονθέναι αὐτὸν αὐτοὶ*

*ὄντες τὸ δοκεῖν* (ad Trall. ix. 10). In the Epistle to the Church of Smyrna we find this form of error stigmatised as not confessing that "Jesus bore real human flesh" (*μὴ ὁμολογῶν αὐτὸν σαρκοβόρον*). This heresy about the reality of the flesh of Jesus was logically bound to involve an anti-sacramental view and docetic Christians eventually ceased to observe the Eucharist (ad Smyrn. v. 8). Herein lies the significance of John's declaration that Jesus came by water and blood, "not by water only, but by water and blood." The water centres in the Baptism

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(1) E.F.Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p. 372. cf Inge in D.C.G. p. 886: "The author of this Gospel interposed his powerful influence to save Christianity from being swamped in a mythology or sublimated into a theosophy."

(iii.5), and the blood is symbolised, exhibited and applied in the Holy Communion (vi.); and the Spirit, by His divine power, perpetually makes them effective. The water and the blood warn the church not to spiritualise the material. The Spirit saves the Church from materialising the spiritual.(1)

John was aware that the flesh of Jesus in itself "profiteth nothing". The Jesus of history could not exhaust the Christian message. Historical knowledge by itself was "from below", and could be appreciated as such by both Jews and Christians (iii.1-5). This had been the draw back of the portrait of Christ drawn by the Synoptic Gospels. True these earlier narratives revealed that their authors saw something more than history in the ministry of Jesus. The voice from heaven at the Baptism, the narrative of the Transfiguration, the appearance of the Angels reveal that they were trying to convey spiritual or absolute truth through the medium of an historical life. But the narratives as a whole fix the attention upon the historical and earthly side of Jesus' life. The Synoptic Gospels are filled with homely details - Jesus mixing with publicans and sinners and blessing little children. He is represented pre-eminently as one who "went about doing good". And John was aware that if the minds of men were limited to this conception of an historical, earthly, Christ

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(1) see Additional note in Speakers Commentary on 1 John v.6 p. 348 and cf what was said on p. 28 ff. above.

they would never perceive the full significance of the Incarnation. They would never rise to the belief in Jesus as the "Saviour of the World". He therefore proclaimed that "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." Only in relation to the Spirit are the words of Jesus significant (vi.63). His actual words require for their ~~significance~~ understanding the interpretation that the Spirit of Truth alone can provide(xiv.16). His words, His actions as merely historical episodes are trivial and meaningless (vii.16-18). For the same reason important historical events are omitted from the Fourth Gospel - the Baptism and Transfiguration, His temptation and agony in the Garden, the narrative of the Institution of the Last Supper. Not that they are unimportant, but because they are so important, so pregnant with meaning, that no historical event can contain their full significance. "The Fourth Gospel is less an apostolic witness to history, than an apostolic witness to that which is beyond history, but which is, nevertheless, the meaning of the Jesus of History, and therefore the meaning of all History" (1). It is in this sense that we must understand the words of Clement of Alexandria as quoted by Eusebius: "John, last of all, perceiving that what had reference to the body <sup>in</sup> ~~of~~ the Gospel of our Saviour was sufficiently detailed; and being encouraged by his familiar friends and urged by the Spirit, he wrote a spiritual Gospel." ( Eccles. Hist. vi.15)

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(1) Hoskyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel, p.66

## THE SON OF MAN.

In spite of the fact that John in the prologue lets us into the secret of Jesus' divine nature, and that he composes his Gospel with the distinct purpose of establishing belief in Him as the Son of God ; he nevertheless dramatises Him before us as a man. It is not altogether true to say with Dr. Scott that the humanity of Jesus is different in essence from that of the men around Him (1). He is nearer the mark when he says "behind all his speculative thinking there is the remembrance of the actual life which had arrested him as it had done the first disciples, and been to him the true revelation of God. His worship is directed in the last resort not to the Logos, whom he discovers in Jesus, but to Jesus Himself." (2) As we have seen it is impossible to attempt to separate the historical and the spiritual aspects in the Fourth Gospel. The two sides of his thought must be given their full weight without suggesting that one or the other predominates. If we approach the problem from the spiritual side we are led inevitably to the material; if we approach it <sup>from the</sup> material and historical side we are led just as inevitably to the spiritual. I propose to follow the latter course and we shall see how the Incarnation implies and involves the

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(1) The Fourth Gospel, p. 163

(2). ibid. p. 174.



manifestation of the glory of the Logos.

As a man Jesus appears in the family relations of family life: with His mother and His brethren He attends a wedding, and evidently within the circle of His friends or relatives (ii.12) ; He abides for a time in the family circle at Capernaum (iii.12); His brethren even undertake to lecture Him about His conduct (vii.3-8); and from the Cross He displays His care for His mother (xix.25,26). As a man Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus (xi.35); He was troubled in soul at the thought of death (xii.27); and shows even a momentary hesitation whether He shall not pray to be delivered from this hour. In viii.40 He actually calls Himself a man. But His truly human consciousness is nowhere so clearly expressed as in His relation to God. Notwithstanding the exalted ~~self-witness~~ character of His self-witness, in His human existence He bears even to the Father the relation of a man to God (xx.17); He prays to His Father (xii.27;xvii.); He thanks Him for His gifts (vi.11) and also for hearing His petitions (xi.41). Though John thinks of the Logos as the creator of all things, He represents the miracles of Jesus, not as proceeding from His own power, but as given Him by the Father, in answer to His prayer, and for a special occasion (xi.22,41;v.36;xiv.10). When Jesus says He seeks not His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (vi.37;v.30) He postulates the double possibility of following His own will, or the will of God. When He says

that He seeks not His own honour, but that of His Father (viii.49-50), He implies that the mastering of self-will and self-gratification was for Him, as for other men, a moral task. The Father's will is expressed for Him, as it is for other men, as an external will, as a commandment (xi.49,50); and His life therefore like that of other men lies under the stress of obligation; He includes Himself with the disciples under the ethical "ought": "We must work the works of Him that sent me" (ix.4). This, however, is no irksome duty, for the fulfilment of the Father's will is His greatest joy (iv.34).

To express the fact of Christ's truly human condition, John, like the Synoptists, uses Jesus' self-chosen name "Son of Man". "The expression understood in the natural sense of the word, denotes one who, though a man, holds nevertheless a unique position among men....The title....designates Jesus as the man in whom human nature was more fully and deeply realised and who was the most complete exponent of its capacities, warm and broad in His sympathies, ready to minister and suffer for others, sharing to the full the needs and deprivations which are the common lot of humanity, but conscious at the same time of the dignity and greatness of human nature, and destined ultimately to exalt it to unexpected majesty and glory. " (1).

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(1) S.R.Driver, H.D.B. vol.iv. pp 579 ff.

Though this may be the natural sense of the words, the title in a technical sense is a great deal more significant: it is indeed one of the most difficult and complex problems of the N.T., and the amount of agreement in regard to its meaning and origin is very slight as compared to the amount of research which has been made on the subject. No attempt therefore can be made here to discuss fully the many questions involved. To do so would be to throw the rest of the essay out of proportion and exaggerate the importance of the title in the scheme of John.

It is clear that John understood the title in the same way as the Synoptists, we must turn therefore to the Synoptic Gospels and examine them in order to understand the meaning of the term. In the first three Gospels the passages which contain the words fall into three classes: in one group the title is used with reference to Jesus' earthly life; in the second group it is associated with the sufferings of Christ; and in the third group it is used in connection with the parousia. Not all of the instances however where the words occur are used in any special sense. After an exhaustive examination of the instances where the title occurs before the confession of Peter both Dr. Gould and Dr. T. W. Manson (1) agree that "in the instances in which our Lord's designation appears in the Synoptic Gospels prior to their recital of

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(1) G. P. Gould D.C.G. vol. ii. p. 659; T. W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, pp 211 ff

peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi there is not one which can on examination be held to afford proof that this Messianic title was used by Him to be the Messiah or to invalidate the assumption that the use of the title by our Lord began at the time of that declaration not earlier." (1) We are therefore limited to the following passages in our discussion of the meaning of the technical term: Sayings referring to the passion, Mark viii.31; ix.9; ix.12; ix.31; x.33; x.45; xiv.31; xiv.41; Luke xxi.69; xxiv.7. Sayings referring to the parousia: Mark viii.38; xiii.26; xiv.62; Matt. ~~xxiv~~<sup>xxiv</sup>.30; xxv.31; xix.28; Luke xii.8; xii.40; xvii.24; xvii.26; xvii.30; xxi.36; xii.69.

When these passages are examined and we ask for a definition which will embrace them all a great variety of answers are given by scholars. Meyer (2) thinks it means simply the Messiah and that it was derived directly from Daniel vii.13. Neander (3) takes it to mean the ideal representative man. Wendt (4) regards it as being primarily connected with the O.T. representations which emphasise lowliness and weakness. Charles (5) combines the O.T. conception of the servant of Jehovah and the notion of

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(1) Gould, op.cit. p.663. (2) Commentary on Matthew viii.20  
 (3) Life of Christ, p.99 (4) Teaching of Jesus, ii.p.139  
 (5) The Book of Enoch, appendix B.

majesty found in Daniel. "These two conceptions", he says, "though outwardly antithetic, are, through the transformation of the former, reconciled and fulfilled in a deeper unity in the New Testament Son of Man." (1) Dr. Rudolph Otto prefers to think that the Similitudes of Enoch rather than the Book of Daniel influenced the teaching of Jesus (2). Dr. T. W. Manson, basing his exegesis on Daniel, finds in the Son of Man not a personal title but a designation of the Remnant. The Son of Man is "an ideal figure and stands for the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth in a people wholly devoted to their heavenly king." The mission of Jesus is to "create the Son of Man", that is the Kingdom of the Saints of the Most High. (3)

These references reveal the very great difference of opinion among Biblical Theologians on this matter. And none of them appear to explain adequately the use of the title in all the passages under review. No doubt each definition contains an element of truth, but none of them seem to be comprehensive enough. A simple and apparently adequate definition is that Jesus used the title in those circumstances when he conceived Himself as the Head and Founder of the Kingdom of God. The sources which may have influenced Jesus accord with this definition, In Daniel it is the theocratic

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(1) The Book of Enoch, p.315 (2) The Kingdom of God and The Son of Man. (3) The Teaching of Jesus, p.227

king who is likened to a Son of Man. In Enoch the Son of Man appears as the glorious founder and head of God's kingdom. The extreme novelty in Jesus conception of the title is His association of the Messianic dignity with the Suffering Servant of Jehovah in Deutero-Isaiah. But there is nothing inconsistent in the combination of the two ideas. "Suffering and death for the actual possessor of the Messianic dignity are in fact unimaginable according to the testimony of the prophets.....But the 'One like unto the Son of Man' of Daniel vii.13 has still to receive the sovereignty. It was possible that he should also be one who had undergone suffering and death." (1)

There are therefore these two broad conceptions, one derived from Daniel or Enoch (or both) which depicts the Kingdom of the Saints of which the Son of Man is the glorified head. This idea of glory and exaltation is repeated in those passages which refer to the Parousia in the Gospels, e.g. "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mark xiii.26). The other conception is derived from the Suffering Servant of Jehovah as presented in Deutero-Isaiah and which is reflected in such passages as "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark xiii.31). These two conceptions are united in the person of Jesus as the head and founder of the New Israel.

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(1) Dalman, The Words of Jesus, p.265.

It has been claimed by some scholars that Christ's claim to be the "Son of Man" carries with it the idea of pre-existence. For example Dr. Rashdall quoting Weiss says: "Wrede and Bruchner have conclusively shown that Paul before his conversion held the belief, as a pharisee, that the Messiah existed from all eternity with God in Heaven" (1). Similarly Dr. Stanton says: "that the pre-existence of Jesus was inevitably suggested by the identification of Jesus with the heavenly Son of Man." (2) On the other hand we must reckon with the verdict of Dalman who says: "Judaism has never known anything of a pre-existence peculiar to the Messiah, antecedent to his birth as a human being." He denies that Judaism knew anything of a pre-existent ideal man (3).

The only pre-Christian ground for such an idea appears to be the Similitudes of Enoch. And in relying upon this document much care is required for our existing version is greatly interpolated (4). All that can be safely assumed is that the pre-Christian author of the Similitudes borrowed from Daniel the idea of a celestial figure "like unto a Son of Man". This celestial being was conceived as pre-existing, and the idea would have been known to the people who were familiar with the Similitudes. This circle does not

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(1) The Idea of Atonement, pp 127-129 (2) The Gospels as Historical Documents, vol. iii. p. 171 (3) The Words of Jesus, pp 128-132, 248 & 252. (4) see Charles, The Book of Enoch pp 64, 65.

appear to have been a large one. The conception of a pre-existing man does not appear in the New Testament. We cannot claim therefore with any certitude that John intended his readers to include the idea of pre-existence in his ascription to Jesus of the title "Son of Man".

Dr. C. J. Wright denies that the title has any technical or theological associations in the Fourth Gospel (1). It is used by John, he says, "to express the real, though exceptional humanity of Jesus". Sonship means "partaking of the nature of", and the evangelist would have us understand by this title that the Eternal Word has spoken in one who was truly man; and not as the Docetists were beginning to say, in one whose humanity was but an illusory garment. No doubt the title is intended to convey the idea of the real humanity of Jesus as in the Synoptic Gospels, and we have already seen that John emphasises to the full the human characteristics of Jesus. But it would be to over simplify a most pregnant term to limit it to this one meaning. An examination of the use of the term in the Fourth Gospel shows that the references fall into the same categories as in the Synoptic Gospels. Those which refer to the passion are as follows: iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 23, 24; xiii. 31. And the following have reference to eschatological ideas: i. 51; iii. 13; v. 27; vi. 62. It is as One who is Founder of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth that Jesus brings eternal life to

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(1) The Message and Mission of Jesus (Ed. Major, Manson, Wright) pp. 683 ff



men and provides them with spiritual food (vi.27,53). We may reasonably claim therefore that the testimony of Jesus concerning Himself which stands connected with the title Son of Man is in substance the same in both forms of our Gospel tradition. It is hardly likely that John would have simplified the meaning to this extent without some good reason.

#### THE GLORY OF THE LOGOS.

There is however one important difference which reveals an essential characteristic of the Fourth Gospel. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is represented as saying that after His death He would be exalted to the throne of power and glory whence He would come to judge the world (Matt, xxiv. 31; xxv.31) In the Fourth Gospel the sufferings and death of Christ are the glorification and not merely preliminary to it.

This revelation of the glory of the Logos through humiliation is suggested when John speaks of the lifting up of the Son of Man (iii.14; vii.28; xii.32). It raises the mind at once to the Cross and to the Heavenly Throne (1).

In the first reference (iii.14) the immediate context deals with the New Birth. Hence the primary meaning is no doubt connected with a spiritual experience such as being lifted up in the thoughts and hearts of men. But John himself goes further and associates the lifting up with the Cross. In xii,32 Christ says "And I if I be lifted up

(1) cf Bauer, Das Johannes Evangelium, p.53 and Loisy, Le Quatrieme Evangile n. 166

from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" and John adds the comment, "But this he spake signifying by what manner of death he would die." There is here an unmistakable allusion to the crucifixion. The other reference (vii.28) "When ye shall have lifted the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am ", refers clearly to the Jews as the agents by which the Son of Man shall be "lifted up".

The great difficulty in regard to iii.14 is the reference to the Serpent. From the Jewish point of view the Serpent could not possibly be connected with the idea of salvation. In Rabbinic literature the serpent is the symbol of envy (T.B.Sanh. 29a ); he introduced evil seed into mankind (T.B.'Ab Z 22b ); he is the symbol of evil inclination (Tanh.Ber.7). There were however interpretations current which regarded the serpent as the symbol of a saviour. For example Hippolytus describes the speculations of the Ophitic sect, called peratae, as follows (1): "The gods of destruction....are the stars which bring upon those coming into being the necessity of mutable generation. These ....Moses called the Serpents of the desert which bite and cause to perish.....Therefore to these Sons of Israel who were bitten in the desert, Moses displayed the true and perfect Serpent those who believed on which were not bitten in the desert, that is by the Powers. None then....can save and set free those brought forth from the land of Egypt,

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(1) Hippol.Refut.v.16 \*

that is from the body and from this world, save only the perfect serpent, the full of the full." The symbolical use of the Serpent of Moses for the Logos is also found in the well-known allegorical interpretation of Num.xxi.78 in Philo's Leg.Alleg. ii.20.79. Here the Serpent of Eve is contrasted with the Serpent of Moses, the ἡδονή with the σωφροσύνη, the βῶμα with the νοῦς

But the difficulty in regard to the Serpent in the Fourth Gospel is not so great as might be imagined. The emphasis in John iii.14 is actually upon the elevation and not on the Serpent which takes a secondary place. The elevation of the Serpent is paralleled with the elevation of the Son of Man, the Serpent itself is not paralleled with the Son of Man. The point I wish to bring out at the moment is that the elevation in John's mind included the elevation upon the cross.

Such was also the general interpretation given by the Fathers of the early Church. For example in the Epistle to Barnabas the reference to Moses and the Serpent in John iii. 14 is clearly understood to refer to the Cross. He says (xii) that Moses made a brazen serpent the τύπος of Jesus, and set it up conspicuously (τίθησιν ἐνδόξως), and bade any man that had been bitten to "come to the serpent which is placed on the tree (ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου ἐπικείμενον) and let him hope in faith that the serpent being himself dead can yet make him alive (αὐτὸς ὢν νεκρὸς δύναται φωτισθῆσαι)

and straight way he shall be saved." Origen (Exhort. ad Martyr  $\frac{1}{2}$ ) argues that death by martyrdom may be called  $\psi\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$  Cyprian also applies John iii.14 to the crucifixion of Jesus. Westcott gives other examples from the Fathers which interpret the lifting up of the Son of Man as referring to the Cross (1)

Other associations of the verb  $\psi\omega\upsilon\nu$  suggest the idea of exaltation. The verb may have been borrowed from Isaiah liii.13 where the Servant of the Lord is said to be exalted and glorified ( $\psi\omega\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\ \sigma\beta\acute{o}\delta\omicron\rho\alpha$ ) This is followed almost immediately by predictions of suffering and contempt and death, which are to be crowned with triumph and division of "the spoils". The same word is used by Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost when he said that Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God ( $\eta\ \delta\epsilon\lambda\iota\chi\ \sigma\upsilon\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\ \psi\omega\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  ) Elsewhere he says that "the God of our Fathers raised up Jesus....Him did God exalt ( $\psi\omega\sigma\epsilon$ ) with His right hand to be prince and a Saviour (Acts v.30).

Bernard, however, denies that  $\psi\omega\upsilon\nu$  is used in the Fourth Gospel in the sense of exaltation as at the time of the ascension (2). And Burkitt argues that the Hebrew word meaning "to exalt" ( $\text{גָּדַל}$ ) cannot also mean "to crucify," and that the Hebrew word meaning "to crucify" ( $\text{קָרַע}$ ) cannot

(1) St. John, pp 63 ff

(2) St John, p.113

also mean "to exalt" (1). This is the weakness of Abbot<sup>E</sup>'s argument that the Aramaic word which is rendered by <sup>C</sup>ϕοῦν may actually have the double meaning to exalt and to crucify(2). But whatever may be the result of the linguistic argument we cannot confine the thought of John to such narrow dimensions. Every great and original thinker uses current modes of speech but it would be a profound mistake to imagine that the use of current modes of speech also indicates the acceptance of current modes of thought. John constantly struggles with the language of his day to express ideas which transcend the ideas of his contemporaries. In the mind of John the exaltation of Jesus does not take place at the ascension, but in the death on the cross. This is such a novel idea that no verbal arguments should be used to tie down his thought to a literal and prosaic interpretation. Certain it is that John elsewhere combines the two ideas of exaltation and crucifixion, of glory and humiliation. In close connection with the passion he represents Jesus as saying "the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified (xii.23); "now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him" (xiii.31). Furthermore the Judgement which in the Synoptic Gospels is associated with the parousia and is deferred until the coming of the Son of Man in glory is in the Fourth Gospel exercised here and now by the

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(1) J.T.S. July 1919, p.337. (2) The Son of Man, par 3402; Johannine Grammar par 211. 6.c; 2642 b.

attitude of men to Christ. In v.27 Jesus says that the Father gave the Son authority to execute judgement "because he is a son of man". The judgement which is here spoken of consists in this, that some hear, while others do not hear, Christ's word (vi.24,25). This characteristic thought of John will be discussed more fully later, but it illustrates the idea that the conception of glory and majesty and judgement which are derived from the Jewish Apocalyptic writings are in the Fourth Gospel considered as something present and not future.

To these references we may add iii.13. Dr.W.Lock says that the words "who is in heaven" may be understood in two ways: ~~(a)~~ as our Lord's own words<sup>d</sup> "who while on earth still has heart and home in heaven or (b) by the Evangelist "who (while I write) has returned to heaven and is there" (1). In my opinion (a) is to be preferred as being in complete harmony with the Johannine conception of the eternal and spiritual world. "The spiritual world is not to be thought of as something beyond space and time; it must be admitted that the Spiritual world, according to John, is manifested in some kind of space, allowing the application to it of spiritual terms in a literal sense" (2) The Son of Man descends from the spiritual world and lives in the spiritual world and carries about with Him the Glory of

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(1) New Commentary, iii. p.251.  
Fourth Gospel, p 114.

(2) Odeburg, The

Heaven because the spiritual world and the plane of history are embraced in one complete unity. (1) It is this which enables us to see in the historical person of Jesus the supramundane glory of God.

Prof. Manson thinks that this bringing into the present what in the Synoptic Gospels was deferred to the future was brought about by the obvious fact that Jesus did not return in glory and power to judge the nations within the life time of the first generation of Christians (2). I believe however that John here more accurately represents the actual teaching of Jesus in regard to the ideas associated with the current Apocalyptic imagery; that in the words of Wendt, we have here, "an interpretation and explanation of the inner meaning which these ideas had for the consciousness of Jesus Himself" (3).

And this is the general outlook of the Fourth Gospel. The Incarnation is not only the manifestation of life, it is also the manifestation of the glory of God. In the Word Incarnate "we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father" (1.14). In the historical person of Jesus we see the spiritual glory of God. It was in the man Jesus that John learned to know what God is like, and His earthly manifestation was not regarded as the obscuration of

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(1) This also explains the apparently contradictory statements of xiv.10 and xiv.12. The journey to the Father is intended to be taken realistically yet it is implied that there is no separation between Father and Son. (2) The Teaching of Jesus p.278. (3) Teaching of Jesus, ii. p.307.

divinity, but as the only means whereby the divine character could be adequately manifested to men.

In this connection the phrase ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (i.e.) is of particular interest, for it suggests the Shekinah, the glory with which God Himself appeared among His people in the tent in the wilderness. In contemporary Judaism the "Word" was used in the Targums to denote the invisible presence of God, and "the glory" for the visible presence of God. But "Shekinah" stood for both the visible presence and the invisible. In the words of Dr. I. Abrahams it "applied to both as a continuous religious experience....to local and universal, to earthly and heavenly, to visible and invisible, manifestation of the Holy Spirit" (1). Hence "glory in this gospel is God in action through Jesus Christ, bringing the whole 'weight' of riches of the love of the Father to bear on the world of men." (2)

The very fact that Jesus revealed God in His own person not so much in terms of might as of love, is proof that this is the most exalted attribute of God, His peculiar glory, and the very character of His nature as light (1 John 1.5). Because therefore the love of Christ was shown supremely in just those moments which from another point of view might be regarded as the very depths of His humiliation—

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(1) The Glory of God, pp 51 ff. Fourth Gospel, pp 6 & 183. 106

(2) Strachan, The



His menial service (xiii.3-17), His betrayal and death - John regards them as the highest expression of His glorification among men;- which was at the same time the glorification of the Father (xiii.31).

We see then the close connection between sacrifice and glory in the "lifting up" of the Son of Man. And in the Fourth Gospel the Son of Man is lifted up whenever He performs what men of the world would call an act of condescension, and most of all when He performs the special act of "lifting up" implied in the offering of Himself upon the cross. In the Synoptic Gospels the disciples are called the light of the world insofar as they manifest their good works to the world. They are bidden to let their light shine before men (Matt.v.14 £) Similarly Christ as light of the world (viii.12) reveals His glory in acts of condescension and supremely when He is raised up on the cross. Then it is that light shines from the cross, the glory of God is revealed to all the world. If it is the case that the Book of Revelation were written by a disciple of John the Apostle, and there appears to have been some personal contact between the two men (1), then it is no coincidence that we read of the New Jerusalem that "the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it;

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(1) cf Charles, The Book of Revelation (I.C.C.), p xxxvii, "The Evangelist was apparently at one time a disciple of the Seer, or they were members of the same religious circle in Ephesus".

for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb" (Rev. xxi.23). And the Lamb is the Lamb that hath been slain in virtue of which He is worthy of glory (Rev. v.12; cf John i.36.)

THE MESSIAH.

We have seen how John represents Jesus as having fulfilled the yearnings of contemporary pagans to see God. The vision of God which they sought to attain in philosophy and the ecstatic rites associated with the Mystery Religions is given once and for all in the manifestation of Jesus in the flesh. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (xiv. 7.8.9.). We have also seen in our discussion on the Logos that John wished to prove to his contemporaries who had remained in the liberal and philosophical Judaism of the Diaspora, that, in Jesus Christ, the revelation of the Logos, admitted by them in the O.T., has its full and definite fulfilment (1). It now remains for us to consider whether John regards Jesus as having likewise fulfilled the Messianic <sup>hope</sup> of the Jewish people.

I have already pointed out in the discussion on the Johannine use of the O.T. that John finds in Jesus the fulfilment of the O.T. prophecies of the Messiah. "Moses wrote of me", and the Scriptures "bear witness of me". Yet it has been charged that John has suffered the idea of the Messiah,

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(1) cf W.R.Inge, D.C.G. p.886

and its corollary the Kingdom of God, to fall into the background; and has superseded it with the higher conceptions involved in the terms, Logos and Son. Dr. E. F. Scott, for instance, asserts that "in the Fourth Gospel the Messianic idea is replaced by that of the Logos", and that "throughout the Gospel the Messianic title denotes nothing more definite than the higher nature and dignity of Jesus as the Son of God" (1). On the other hand Archbishop Bernard claims that the idea of Jesus as Messiah is fundamental to the thought of John. "This thesis is continually present, while we might antecedently have expected that it would be kept in the background by one who had reached a more profound doctrine of Jesus as the Logos of God. Yet that Jesus is the Christ was for John, as it was for Paul, the essential germ of a fuller belief that He was the Saviour of the World" (2). And this seems to me to reveal a deeper insight into the complex nature of the Fourth Gospel. I have already had occasion to comment on the way in which ideas are generally developed and enriched as the Gospel proceeds. We have a further illustration of this in the gradual unfolding of the Messianic idea in conflict with popular expectations.

There is a great division of opinion among scholars as to whether the title Son of Man was a current title for the Messiah. Dr. S. R. Driver in an article in the Dictionary of

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(1) The Fourth Gospel, pp 6 & 183. (2) St John, 1xxx1.

the Bible (1) gives a long list of the opinions of scholars for and against it being a Messianic title. Dr.Driver himself decides against the supposition that it was a popular description of the Messiah (2). On the other hand Dr.G.P.Gould says emphatically that "the multitudes are familiar with the title "the Son of Man"; to them it is a designation of the Messiah; their difficulty is to reconcile Messiahship with exaltation through death." (3). On the whole it seems that it cannot be called a popular designation and if the title was traditional it awaited final interpretation. We shall not therefore employ this as evidence that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah in the Fourth Gospel.

After the prologue the Gospel opens with the testimony of John the Baptist in consequence of which some who had been the disciples of John followed Jesus. At this period there are several confessions of belief in the Messiahship of Jesus. Andrew tells his brother Simon, "we have found the Messiah" (1.41). Philip again says to his friend Nathaniel, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write" ; and Nathaniel acknowledges Him as the Son of God, the King of Israel, and Jesus accepts the homage. (1.45-51). The Fourth Gospel at the very outset places into clearest relief the consciousness of Messianic vocation possessed by

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(1) vol.iv. pp 586 ff. (2) op.cit. p.586.  
 (3) D.C.G. vol.ii.p.659.

Jesus; this is emphasised by the three declarations by John the Baptist that he is not the Messiah. In the Synoptic Gospels the Messiahship is not confessed until the crisis at Caesarea Philippi ( Mark viii.29; Matt.xvi.16). But when John wrote it was an "open secret" and he would have his readers know that Jesus was aware that He was the anointed of the Lord from the beginning. He wishes us to understand that the whole life of Jesus was controlled by this sense of divine vocation. That which the disciples came only slowly to realise was known to Jesus from the earliest days of His ministry. This shows how fundamental the Messianic idea was to the author of the Fourth Gospel. It is that which dominates the whole ministry.

Next we find Jesus making Himself known directly as the Messiah to the woman of Samaria (iv.26). That Jesus should reveal Himself in this manner so early in His ministry is probably to be explained, as I have already said, by John reading the end into the beginning. But in this case there are other extenuating circumstances which make it possible that Jesus did actually proclaim His Messiahship to these people. The Samaritans were cut off from the general life of the Jewish people, and there would not be any reason to fear that dangerous consequences would follow from proclaiming that He was the Messiah. There is reason to believe that the Samaritans regarded the Messiah as fulfilling a prophetic

role rather than being of kingly character (1). Their Messianic hopes would not therefore be such as to encourage a revolt against the civil power (2).

We again find Jesus using language which can hardly fail to have been understood to involve a claim to be the Messiah at Jerusalem at the time of the Jewish feast to which chapter five relates. The words appear to have been addressed to His opponents and they may have been heard by them and His disciples only. In chapter six there is narrated the crisis which involved the disciples in a decisive act of faith in Jesus as "the Holy One of God" (vi. 69; cf Mark viii.27 f; Matt,xvi.31 f; Luke ix.18 f.) This confession is of the highest significance for the understanding of John's mind. "Words which had been spoken before (chap.i) have now a wholly different meaning. To believe in Christ now was to accept with utter faith the necessity of complete self-surrender to Him who had finally rejected the homage of force." (3). John here penetrates below the external office of Messiah to the essential nature of Jesus. Jesus is the Messiah not because He is a wonder worker, but because He is Holy. Holiness is the true sign that Jesus is

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(1) see Stanton, The Jewish and the Christian Messiah, pp127ff  
 The Samaritans rested their expectations of the advent of the Messiah upon Deut. xviii.15-18, he would therefore be above all things a "teacher of righteousness", cf John iv.25. (2) cf Westcott, S. John pp lxix f. (3) op.cit, p lxx.

the Lord's anointed. In contrast Judas desires to find not holiness, but power in the Messiah; not the light of truth which is self-luminous, but the thunderbolt of authority which compels men to acquiesce.

The importance which the Messianic hope had for John is shown generally by the constant conflicts between Jesus and the Jews which he reports. When Jesus appeared in Jerusalem He created a division among the people (vii.30 ff; 43). Some thought that He was the Christ because of His works (vii.3), others because of His teaching (vii.26,37 ff, 46). But He did not satisfy their popular expectations of the Messiah (vii.27,42,52). In the end they asked Him plainly: "If thou art the Christ tell us plainly" (x.24). And Jesus' reply is, "I told you, and ye believe not" (x.24,25), implying that this had been all along the substance of His claim. In the same manner He acknowledges Pilate's question, "Art thou a king then?" (xviii.37).

The reason why Jesus' familiar word "The Kingdom of God" only occurs in two passages in the Fourth Gospel (iii.3,5 xviii.36) may have been the fear of rousing the ready suspicion of the Roman Empire against the Church as a political faction (cf xix.12). There may also have been a deeper reason in harmony with what we have already seen to be the character of this Gospel. A king requires the service, if not of slaves, at least of servants. This was not the kind of service which Jesus desired (xv.15)<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) cf Hoskyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel, p 228

When John speaks of "Jesus Christ" it is always with the significance of Jesus the Messiah: Christ never becomes for him a mere personal name, the adjunct of the name Jesus. Although it is true that the confession which is made in the Epistle is a test of orthodoxy - that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh - and is directed especially against the gnostic denial that the heavenly aeon Christ was identical with the man Jesus; yet it ~~is~~ at least includes the assertion of His real Messianic character. Jesus does not expressly say to the world "I am the Christ"; but neither does He do so in the Synoptic accounts.

We may reasonably claim therefore that John fulfills his purpose in writing the Gospel, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"(xx.31). John shows how Christ satisfied the hopes and aspirations of the people of Israel, though they were both fatally at variance with the current and dominant Judaism. Especially in one respect does John emphasise the difference between the Jewish and Christian conceptions of the Messiah. John never refers to Jesus as "the Son of David". The national aspect implied by such a title was too narrow a conception for the Christ who in the mind of John was "the Saviour of the world".



## VI.

## SALVATION.

## THE WHOLE WORLD AS THE OBJECT OF SALVATION.

One cannot fail to be struck with the universal reference which John's language attributes to Christ's saving work in the world. Not only is He in the world as Saviour; but He is sent as the "Saviour of the world" (iv.42; 1 John iv.14). Loisy says that this formula belongs neither to the Jewish nor to the Evangelic tradition; rather its style and mysticism shows that it is pagan in origin. (1) We have already pointed out that there is no foundation in fact for this statement and that there is evidence that the title was not unknown in Jewish circles (2). In the words of Hoskyns, "The theory that the Fourth Evangelist has simply borrowed a phrase from Philo <sup>or</sup> transferred it to Jesus a current Hellenistic title underestimates his capacity for crystallizing the meaning of Christian tradition into a short and pregnant phrase" (3). This universalism is a characteristic of the

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1. Le Quatrieme Evangile, p.128; cf Bauer, Das Johannes Evangelium, p.71. (2) see page 104 of this essay. There may even be a conscious reference to Joseph's new name (Gen.41.45) Zaphenath-paneah, the Vulgate translation of which is Salvator Mundi. (3) The Fourth Gospel, p.272.

Fourth Gospel, see, e.g. x.16; xii.32; xvii.2; the fourth chapter is probably the most universal chapter in the whole of the N.T. W.L.Knox suggests that the infrequency of the title "Saviour of the world" in the earlier books of the N.T. is probably due to the fact that if Christ had been preached as such He would have been in danger of being reckoned as only one of the many saviours recognised in the Hellenistic world (1). The language of John is remarkable in this respect that there is no saying in the Synoptic Gospels which asserts with the same directness the universal effect of the work of Jesus. There are utterances in the Synoptic Gospels which if pressed might involve such universalism. But it was the Fourth Evangelist which gave clear expression to the belief. This was no doubt due to the pressure of the Hellenistic environment.

There is evidence from contemporary Rabbinical literature for such a saving attitude towards the whole world. For example the palestinian R.Hanina bar Hama, commenting on Genesis 1.31, pictures God's concern for the world as follows:"It may be likened unto a king who built a palace; he looked at it and it pleased him; he said: palace! palace! O that you might always obtain

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Hellenistic  
 (1) Some/Elements in primitive Christianity, p. 41.

favour before me as you obtain favour before me at this hour; so the Holy One, blessed be He, said to His world: O my World! my world, would that thou mayest always obtain favour before me as thou obtainest favour before me in this hour." Dr. Odeburg commenting on this passage says: "The underlying idea is that the Holy One loves His newly created world, and wishes that it would remain in such a state that it would always find favour in His sight. The implication is that with man's sin the whole world is defiled. Yet it always remains His world, the object of His pleasure." (1) It is not surprising therefore that John should claim similar universality for the saving work of Christ and make explicit what was implicit in the Synoptic tradition.

But the language is also remarkable, because according to John's predominant use of the word "world" in both Epistle and Gospel it denotes not the totality of human existence, but the evil remnant which is left after the Christian community has been gathered out. It is the evil world power, in contrast to the Church; it is not merely an unbelieving world, but a persecuting world (xvii. 14; 1 John iii. 13) which openly and violently displays its antagonism to Christ and to all who are His. John

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(1) The Fourth Gospel etc., p. 115

beholds the whole world lying in the Evil One (1 John v. 19). This indicates more than that subjection to darkness and sin that characterised the world at the coming of Christ; it has already seen and rejected Christ; it is therefore ripe for judgement (xii.31), for the reproof of its sin of unbelief (xvi.8.9); and Christ's attitude towards it is only that of conqueror (xvi.33); in the last hour He even forbears to pray for it (xvii 9), although He still looks forward to an ultimate turning of the world to belief through the ministry of His disciples (xvii.20.21).

It is of course not in this exclusive sense, denoting particularly the evil residue, that John uses the word when He speaks of the Logos coming into the world, and of Christ as Saviour of the world; but it is in a sense which includes also this evil ~~part~~ element; for it is the whole world. This universal reference is put beyond doubt when He says, "he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii.2). It is not as though He were Saviour of both the good and the bad; for the whole world was in darkness and sin, and the discrimination of the two classes was subsequent to His manifestation, and a result of it, though not the purpose of it. Although Christ's manifestation in the world is actually a judgement, and although that which He actually accomplishes is in ix.39 represented as the purpose of His coming; there is really nothing in John's representat-

ion to contradict the solemn assertion, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world should be saved through him" (iii.17;xii.47). For Christ's judgement of the world consists simply in this, that God's loving gift of light to the world has as its inevitable consequence the revealing of the darkness, or rather, it presents the test which reveals the fundamental bent of the heart. "And this is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light" (iii.19). It is this figure of the light which makes John's meaning clear and consistent. Jesus proclaims Himself the light of the world (viii.12; xii.46), and in ix.5 He represents that being in the world He must be its light (1). It is this perfectly objective mode of thought which explains John's meaning. Just as the light shines in the world, and shines none the less because the darkness apprehendeth it not; so, in the simplicity and directness of His thought, he beholds Jesus lying objectively before the world as the sacrifice and

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(1) With the Johannine conception of judgement we may compare the Hebrew usage of  $\text{דָּן}$ , judgement which is defined as consisting of two divine relations to man. (i) That of  $\text{דָּן}$  or  $\text{לִשְׁפֹּט}$  judgement or justice and (ii)  $\text{דָּן}$  or  $\text{לִחַן}$  love of mercy, in which also  $\text{אֱמֶת}$  the truth figures prominently. He who by his correct attitude towards God has put himself under the attribute  $\text{דָּן}$  is not judged. This Jewish usage may have been in the mind of John and applied to man's attitude towards the light. See H.Odeburg, The Fourth Gospel etc, p.147

"propitiation" for its sin; and none the less for all - intended for all, available for all - that some do not accept the gift which He offers. As the Baptist in the early days pointed to Jesus as "the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" so finally he saw Him hang upon the cross, "lifted up" before the eyes of the world, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness" "that every one that believeth on Him may have eternal life" (iii.14.15).

#### THE DIVISION AMONG MEN.

The Fourth Gospel records no more striking saying of Jesus, considering the circumstance of its utterance, than that before Pilate and the rulers of the Jewish Nation: "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (xviii.37). At this word the apparent relationships in that Hall of Judgement are dissolved, inverted, and Jesus appears as Judge for the condemnation of His judge and of His accusers, who thereby proved that they were not of the truth, because they heard not His voice.

It is characteristic of John that He represents the apostacy of the nation as culminating in the official act of its chiefs in delivering Jesus up to the Roman power. He does not record the extenuating words from the cross, "they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii.34), nor in any wise admit that the rulers and people were acting in

ignorance, (cf Acts iii.17): it was the clear rejection on the part of the nation and its rulers of the Messianic King. It is rather Pilate whose conduct is pityingly extenuated on the ground that he exercises his power only subordinately (xix.11), and under the dread of offending his master (xix.12); whereas it is Jesus' own nation and the chief priests who have delivered Him unto him, who have the "greater sin" (xviii.35; xix.11). This as we have seen is in accordance with John's constant representation, that the very manifestation of the Truth (which is the light) is in itself the judgement of the world. In viii.43 Jesus says, "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my ~~spoken~~ word". This however is not a necessitated deafness, although it is traced back to the fact that the Devil is their father; for it is expressly said, "The lusts of your father it is your will to do" (viii.44). Consistent with this claim that He is not in the world as Judge, though a judgement is accomplished by His presence, He says, "If any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him at the last day" (xii.47.48). The judgement which is ascribed to Jesus' word, His truth, and His light, is in the above instances represented as a judgement of condemnation, for John uses the word almost always with this

implication. As Loisy remarks in the term judgement there is always present the threefold meaning of discrimination, verdict and condemnation (1). In the third chapter for example, where Jesus speaks of the judgement accomplished through the light, although the word is used simply in the sense of condemnation (iii.18 cf iii.9), he nevertheless notices the double effect of the light: upon them who come to it, as well as upon them who hate it (iii.20.21). In another place he uses the word judgement in the sense of mere discrimination; and denotes that the judgement which Christ is actually accomplishing in the world is one which includes blessing as well as ban: "that they which see/<sup>not</sup> may ~~not~~ see; and they which see may become blind" (ix.39). This is parallel to the saying recorded in Luke: "not to ~~be~~ give peace but division" (xii.51 ff). This reminds us that also according to the Synoptic tradition Jesus' earthly manifestation in some sense forestalls the final judgement. But it is a peculiar characteristic of the Fourth Gospel that the blessings of the Gospel (salvation and eternal life) are regarded as substantially present here and now, and therefore that the judgement must also be realised in the present. This does not merely mean

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(1) Le Quatrieme Evangile, p.168.



that the final judgement has only to pronounce upon works already done on earth; but the division itself, the segregation of good and evil (cf Matt. xxv. 32), is in some sort accomplished by Christ's manifestation on earth.

This idea of division accomplished by Jesus amongst the men who heard His words, is one which to a very marked degree conditions the composition of the Fourth Gospel. It is apparent not only in the passages upon which I have been commenting, but we see that the whole Gospel is arranged with a view to demonstrate the diverse effects which the word of Jesus had upon His hearers, and to display the division which from the beginning of His ministry <sup>it</sup> began to accomplish ~~it~~ amongst men. It is hence expressly mentioned after many of His notable sayings or works that "there arose a division among the multitudes concerning him" (vii. 43; ix. 16; x. 19; cf vii. 12). This division proceeded even to the sifting of His own followers (vi. 66); Judas finally "went out" and left Jesus at the last hour alone with His friends (xiii. 31). This sifting continued in the Apostolic Church; and the apostacy of its members was regarded as a sign that they had never really belonged to the community: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but that they might be made manifest how that they all are not of us (1 John ii. 19).

This division which is thus accomplished in the world is not a mere incident in Christ's manifestation; it is as regards the children of God an essential step in the work of salvation. It has already been suggested that we may perhaps find here a parallel to the Genesis account of the creation, according to which the mechanical division of the elements of the world preceded the production of life. In the Fourth Gospel it is regarded as a matter of real importance that the children of God should be separated from the evil elements in the world. It is especially in Jesus' final discourse with His true friends, and in His prayer for them, that the contrast between the disciples and the world is expressed. Just as surely as they are "in the world" (xiii.1; xviii.11), just so surely are they "not of the world" (xv.19). "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world" (xvii.16). And this is explained by the fact that He has chosen ~~some~~ them (or that God has given them to Him, xvii.15.) "out of the world" (xv.19).

At the end of his Epistle John expresses the vivid consciousness which the Christian community had of its separateness from the world: "We know that we are of God; and the whole world lieth in the Evil One" (v.19). There is more than a negative advantage in this separation of the children ~~children~~ from the world; or rather this very act includes the formation of a Christian community, which

can oppose itself as a unit to the world, which itself is thought of as a unity represented in the person of the prince of this world, and constitutes both a tempting and a persecuting power. The formation of a community out of the darkness scattered abroad in the world, is expressed in the saying, "that he might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (xi.52). This <sup>is</sup> expressed also in the tenth chapter in Christ's parable of the Shepherd. There too it is the voice of Christ which collects the flock (x.5), and there are other sheep besides those of the Jewish fold which He must bring, and they shall become one flock and one shepherd (x.16).

This idea of unity is profoundly emphasised in Jesus' prayer, in which, looking into the future and beyond the circle of His present disciples, He entreats "for them also who believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (xvii.20,21). We see from this quotation, and in general by a reference to the whole prayer, that this unity of the disciples is of the highest importance in manifold directions. In the first place, it is a positive good in itself, and the condition of fellowship with one another, and with God in Christ. It is further of importance, not only for protection against the world, and as a means of overcoming it; but as

a means of gaining disciples out of the world and even winning the world itself to faith. In this is seen the reason why, though Christ leaves the world, the disciples must remain in it; why they must be in it, though not of it; for Christ has sent them into the world, even as the Father sent Him into the world (xvii.18; cf 1 John iv.17).

We see therefore that this division which is brought about by the shining of the light of truth in the world, thereby gathering together into one the scattered children of God as against the collective might of darkness, is the first and fundamental effect of Christ's work of Salvation, as regards both the individual and the community. Notwithstanding the mystical element in John's thought, and his vivid sense of personal communion with Christ and God, , salvation is not be thought of apart from the community, which is the expression of separation out of the world and of adherence to Christ.

THE DOOM OF THE WORLD.

We have seen how slight a stress John lays upon the developments of the future; that he does not dwell upon the conceptions of now and then, but of here and there, above and below, heaven and earth. But nevertheless there lingers in his expression, "this world" (ὁ κόσμος οὐτως) the implication of another and future world (1). He looks

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(1) ὁ κόσμος οὐτως is probably a literal translation of *הַיְהוּדָיָה* in contrast to *אֶרֶץ הַיְהוּדָיָה*, the future world. John may also be distinguishing between the world of Domitian with its impermanence, and the real life of the Kingdom possible here and now.

forward to Christ's coming again (xiv.3), which can only be understood in the common New Testament sense, of the parousia. This of course is denied by many modern scholars. For instance Dr. C.J. Wright says: "The Evangelist is using the language of time to convey that which is not of time." "What he means when he speaks of the 'last day' is the quality of finality. The life which belongs to the spiritually regenerate man has in it a quality of eternity; and that quality will be completely sifted from every trace of evil in a consummation which indwells the thought and purpose of God." (1). "Jesus did not mean what we mean by 'coming' and 'going'. What He says is that the divine Spirit which constitutes His own essential life will be their guide and stay." (2). Other scholars regard all references to the 'last day' as interpolations into the text. Wendt adopts this view and he is followed by Dr. Charles who believes, for instance, that v. 27,29 is at variance with its context and in fundamental conflict with the general tendency of the Gospel (3)

It seems to me however that John's references to the 'last day' and to the 'Day of judgement' are too emphatic to allow us to suppose that they are merely occasional lapses into the language of the current representation which had no place in the scheme of his own thought. The language which we considered above concerning Christ's own

(1) The Message and Mission of Jesus, p.696 f (2) *ibid.* p.880  
 (3) Wendt, Die Lehre, 1. pp.249ff; Charles, Eschatology, p.429

judgement as in a sense already accomplished, is very far from excluding a future day of judgement. I believe that it presupposes such an event. When Jesus asserts that He has come not to judge, but to save the world, He is expressly contradicting the Jewish expectation that the Messiah at His coming was to judge the world; in particular, to right the wrongs of His people, and execute vengeance upon their enemies. Jesus repudiates this interpretation of His mission, but He by no means denies the necessity of a definite judgement of mankind. The decisive sundering of the wicked from the righteous is essential to the idea of completed salvation; Christian theology as a whole retained the Jewish idea of the Messianic judgement, only it deferred it, as the developed situation demanded it, to a second coming of the Messiah. When the Fourth Gospel represents that Christ by His very manifestation accomplishes a judgement which is not only a sentence upon, but in some measure a separation of, the faithful and the unbelieving; it cannot be supposed that a future act of judgement is thereby rendered superfluous; it is rather supposed by the whole character of this representation that Christ, who is not now here to perform judgement - although His very manifestation does in effect accomplish it - will perform it hereafter. For notwithstanding His denial that His present ~~function~~ *mission* is one of judgement, Christ

confirms the Jewish doctrine in so far as this, that judgement is a Messianic function.

He claims that "the Father hath committed all judgement unto the Son"(v.22); and again "he <sup>gave</sup> him ~~to~~ authority to execute judgement, because he is the Son of Man" (v.27). Even the special blessing which Christ imparts, the eternal life which John thinks of predominantly as a present possession, is not complete in itself, but requires still a special exercise of Christ's power in raising up the body at the last day (vi.39-41; cf xi. 24,25). In v.27.29 the judgement which is committed to the Son of Man, is expressly associated with the resurrection, "in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement." Dr.Wright interprets this saying to mean those that are spiritually dead, not the physically dead. He sees the same symbolism in the story of Lazarus in chapter xi. "What he is saying is that it is the mission of Jesus to bring the eternal life of the Spirit to man" (1)

This double attitude towards the judgement has caused Dr.E.F.Scott to postulate "two lines of thinking"(2)

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(1) The Message and Mission of Jesus, ad loc.  
(2) The Fourth Gospel, p.367.

But it should be noted that a similar duplicity in thought is also characteristic of the Mandaean literature. For example we may quote Gīngā R. V.2. 183.11 : "By their own blows they shall be stricken and my blow shall not need to come upon them." The judgement here consists of self-judgement. Nevertheless the final judgement is assigned to "that day, the day of ~~resurrection~~ judgement." The "day of judgement and hour of deliverance" is also called "the great day of resurrection." (Gīngā L.1.2.3).

Such duplicity of meaning in the Fourth Gospel is not limited to whole conceptions such as judgement, but also extends to single words. For example *εἴρην* to build up and to raise up from the dead (ii.19.21); *ὑπάγειν* to go away and to go home (iii.33;xiv.28); *ἀνωθεν* again and from above (iii.5.8); *εἰς τέλος* to the end and to the uttermost (xiii.1).

Because of the prominence of this characteristic it is impossible to simplify difficult questions by denying certain elements in his thought which appear at first sight to contradict other elements. The mind of John is so broad in its range that apparently contradictory elements are harmonised and resolved in a higher unity. And in order to understand the full complexity of John's thought an effort must be made to attain the same breadth of vision and to contemplate the various strands of thought from that point of view. A very diluted version of Johannine doctrine will emerge if we deny what appears



to be incompatible with modern thought or even with other parts of Johannine literature because we are unable to see the higher unity in the various strands of thought. It is better to hold the different elements at tension with one another until some flash of insight reveals the organic connection between them.

The belief therefore in a final day of judgement seems to be uncontestably clear in the Johannine writings and to be in harmony with the general <sup>e</sup>tnor of his thought. Far less clear is the nature of the punishment which is meted out to the unbelieving world. John, whose interest is engrossed with the positive accomplishment of salvation, does not dwell with predilection upon the reverse side of the picture. It is in general sufficient to know that the world is judged: this judgement is however further expressed by the fact that "the prince of this world shall be cast out" (xii.31; cf xvi.11). Christ has "overcome the world" (xvi.33) and John as he writes his epistle sees the world as a power which is indeed still able to persecute and tempt the church, but which the Church can overcome by the superior might of Christ (iv.4), and which is already passing away with its lusts (ii.17). In His parable of the vine Jesus says, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (xv.6). The very phraseology of this verse recalls the saying, likewise parabolic, of Matthew xvii.40

according to which the gathering and burning of the tares occurs "in the consummation of the age". Both Jewish and Christian theology represented the last judgement as a partition of life and death, and "the resurrection of judgement" which John contrasts with "the resurrection of life" (v.29) would seem to indicate the same conception. As eternal life was the specific gift which Christ brings into the world, we can hardly conceive that the punishment of the wicked could consist in anything but the deprivation of this gift, namely in abandonment to death. This would seem to accord peculiarly well with the characteristics of Johannine thought. The "sin unto death" of which John speaks in his Epistle (v.16) refers primarily to the Jewish discrimination between sins, the legal penalty of which was death, and such as admitted of ritual atonement: but doubtless John thought of eternal death which is God's final punishment for sin. As the immunity of believers from judgement is founded upon the fact that they have already "passed out of death unto life", so the doom of him that loveth not is simply expressed as an abiding in death (1 John iii.14). The condemnation of the world, so far as it concerns the positive completion of salvation, is satisfied in this, that every evil thing opposed to God is abolished.

THE ELECTION OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

We have seen that the division which is brought about by Christ's appearance among men results, on the one hand, in the dissolution of the previous covenant relation of the Jews by their own rejection of the Messiah; and, on the other hand, in the establishment of a new family of God's children upon the ground of their believing reception of Him. The company which is thus drawn together, separated from the world, and drawn to God, by their loving reception of the light, is nothing less than a new covenant congregation which steps into the place vacated by the old. They also are Jesus' own (cf i.12 with xiii.1); and being His, they are the Father's possession and the people of God (x.14,26,29; xvii.10). But no people can by its own choice become God's possession: it is only by God's free grace that men are called into His fellowship. It was a maxim of Israel that God had not chosen the nation on account of its excellence or its might, but because He loved His people. In the O.T. it is always looked upon as an act of condescension and love of God for Israel that He ~~received~~<sup>received</sup> them from bondage and purified them from sin (Deut. vii.8; x.15; Isaiah xlii.21,22). It was not otherwise in the new covenant relation: it was Jesus' choice and not their own which constituted the disciples His possession (xv.16,19); and in the last resort it was God Himself who separated them from the world and brought

them to Jesus (xvii.6); they were His because they were the Father's and were given to Him (vi.37.39; x.29; xvii 2.). This time however God's election was not a national one but an individual one. It was indifferent to the question of race (9.13); the Jews themselves were accorded no privilege above other peoples, but as many of them as were truly Christ's flock were "put forth" (x.4; cf ix.34), in order that they, as well as the children of God who were scattered throughout the world, might be gathered together as one flock under one shepherd (x.16; x 52).

John's use of the word "flock" emphasises highly the unity of God's people. They are even more thoroughly sundered from the world, more radically contrasted with the world, than were the covenant race of old. Because they are not of the world, God's people must expect the world's hatred (xv.20); while they are in the world they must endure persecution, but they may nevertheless be of good cheer for Jesus has "overcome the world" (xvi.33); or as John says in his Epistle, "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John iv.4).

This separation of the people of God from the world is not a nominal one, but a real one: they are not only called the children of God, but such they are (1 John iii.1) They are "in truth" what the people of the old covenant were in a figure. The Christian is God's child because he is actually begotten of God. This relation

manifests itself by ethical likeness to God (1 John ii. 29; iii. 9; iv. 7) which in heaven will be perfected (1 John iii. 2), and which on earth constitutes a family in which brotherly love is perfectly spontaneous and natural (1 John v. 1. 2.). Israel was called God's vine (psalm lxxxix; Jer. ii. 21; Hos. x. 1), but Christ is the "true vine" and His disciples are the branches (xv. 1 ff ). In contrast to the Jews - whose worship is nevertheless an intelligent one - the Christians are the true worshippers and "worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (iv. 23). Instead of the figurative temple, Jesus' body is the true temple (ii. 21), because it more really represents God's presence among men. The essential importance of the Temple is that it represents God's presence among men. In the Christian community as in the Heavenly Jerusalem, there is no temple needed "for God Himself and the Lamb are the Temple thereof". Even when Jesus has ascended to heaven, it is still true that God is in the midst of His people (1 John iv. 4); and the idea of the temple is completed, fulfilled, in the mystical union of the believer with God, in His taking up His abode in each disciple (xiv. 23), of which we are assured "by the Spirit which he gave us" (1 John iii. 24; iv. 13).

The people of God, who in reality do not belong to the world, are sent into the world, even as Christ was sent into the world (xvii. 18); and for the purpose of

this mission they must be sanctified "in truth", as Christ sanctified Himself (xvii.19). They are to be a holy people as Israel was of old, set apart and consecrated to God. This sanctification is wrought by God (xvii.17) and by Christ (xvii.19); but it requires also on the part of the believer continuous ethical effort to preserve himself from all the contamination of the world (1 John iii.3m of xv.2). Christians are engaged in an ethical struggle with the world. They must keep themselves pure, not only from idolatry, but from every such relation with the world and to the things that are in the world, as would prove essential relation with it. They may not love the world, nor the pleasures which it affords, "for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (1 John ii.16,17). The result of this struggle is not doubtful, for in the last resort it is God's might and not man's which gains the victory. Christ has overcome the world, and His victory is the ground of the disciples' confidence (xvi.33). The victory of the children of God over the world is grounded in the fact that "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John iv.4). "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God (Jesus) keepeth him, and the Evil One toucheth him not" (1 John v.18). It is clear from this last verse that John cannot

think of the possibility of a true member of the family of God falling into apostasy. The more decidedly man's relation is traced back to God's own choice and work, so much the more difficult is it to think of the continuance of this relationship as dependent upon human fickleness. The very fact however of the extension of the Christian community in the world, brings with it the possibility that heterogeneous elements may mix with it. Deceivers (1 John ii.4), and deceived (1 John i.8), Christians only in tongue (1 John iii.18), false teachers and lying prophets, even children of the Devil (1 John iii.10), can for a time appear as members of the community, although they are of the world, and finally return to the world where they belong and where they find a hearing (1 John iv.5). The community like the individual, must continually purify itself from the contamination of the world; and John sees in the severing of these false members from the church, the proof "that they all are not of us" (1 John ii.19).

Not only is the final victory assured for the children of God; they are altogether kept from sin. Upon this point John's statements are clear and emphatic, but they seem to be involved in a radical contradiction. On the one hand he says: "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (1 John iii.9). It is only in appearance that this contradicts 1 John i. 7 - 10, for this is in a sense the continuation of the

Baptist's preaching of repentance, and may perhaps be specially referred to sins committed before the cleansing ~~of the~~ of the blood of Jesus(1), which is received upon entrance into the Christian community, and he goes on to warn those who have become Christians against sin. This requires him however either to leave quite hopeless the brother who does nevertheless commit sin; and with his absolute, "he that sinneth hath not seen Him, neither knoweth Him." to cut him off from communion with God; or to point out to him some still further possibility of forgiveness. This latter he does by pointing to Jesus and His priestly intercession with God (1 John ii.1). Jesus's sacrifice was made once and for all (1 John ii.2), but His priesthood is perpetual and eternal (2). The contradiction which is here involved in John's expression, is only partly resolved by distinguishing between sin as a habit, and particular acts of sin (3), for John's language does not consistently observe this discrimination. For John, as for the Jews, sin is transgression of the Law (*ἡ νόμος* 1 John iii.4). The old covenant of

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(1) This limitation of ~~pre-Christian~~ *pre-Christian* sins is denied by Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, p.16. Westcott understands the singular to signify the spring of the principle of sin in contrast to separate manifestations, *The Epistles of St. John*, p.22. (2) The present of the verb "to be" is used in John to signify not an isolated fact, but an abiding and present reality e.g. I John iii.3.5.7. cf Westcott, op.cit. p.44. (3) cf 1 John iii.9 with 1 John ii.1. The aorist is used of isolated actions, but the pres. infin. is generally employed to express an action frequently repeated, see Westcott, op.cit. p.42. For a summary of the different explanations given for I John 3<sup>6</sup> see R. Law, *The Text of Luke*, pp 223 ff.



discriminated between sins of ignorance, for which pardon might be had through ritual atonement (Num. xv.27), and sins done "with a high hand", for which there was no forgiveness (Num.xv.30.31). So also John distinguished between the wilful breach of God's covenant, which irretrievably forfeits that eternal life which is to be had only within the Christian community, and sins for which a brother's intercession may still avail to obtain restoration to communion in the brotherhood, and to participation in life (1 John v.16).

The distinction is not quite the same, however, in the two cases, for the Christian law is no longer expressed in external ordinances, which a man in ignorance transgresses, but in the principle of likeness to God, of love; therefore as so inward an affair that it is at bottom impossible to conceive of any transgression of it which is not a presumptuous breach of the covenant, a manifestation of radical subjection to the darkness and to the dominion of the Devil, to whom all hatred is traced.

But sin is a broader conception than this: "all unrighteousness (*ἀδικία*) is sin (1 John v.17); every instance of yielding ~~to~~ to the temptations of the world, of straying away from absolute rectitude, although it does not involve a radical deflection of the heart from God, is sin - "and there is a sin not unto death." This as we have already pointed out is explained symbolically in the

Gospel when Jesus washed the disciples' feet, "He that is bathed needeth not ~~be~~ save to <sup>a</sup>wash his feet, but is clean every whit." (xiii. 10). The Baptism of the new covenant cleanses perfectly and for ever, there is needed no second radical cleansing, but only a washing of the feet from such contamination as is inevitable to all who walk in the world (1)

There is however one instance in which even the necessity of confession and forgiveness for the Christian is quite left out of account. In 1 John iii. 18-20 it is said, "Children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth. Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him, whereinssoever our heart condemn us; because God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." In the consciousness of fulfilling God's commandment by a genuine love of the brethren, the Christian need not be for ever per~~tu~~rbed by his own conscience convicting him of particular delinquencies, for God who knoweth all judgeth according to the inward disposition of the heart. It was in this thought that Peter found relief, when after his fall Jesus examines him: "Lovest thou me?" - his own heart testified against him, accusing him of denial, but in the assurance of true love, he appeals to the superior

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(1) see page 123 f above.

knowledge of Him who knows all, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." (xxi.15-17) (1).

The foregoing discussion will have shown how readily John applies to the Christian Community the ideas of covenant relationship which were familiar to the Jews. It

(1) This may be called the "soothing" interpretation. It is an antidote to what moral theologians call a scrupulous conscience. It is adopted by Brooke, Johannine Epistles p.98, and Westcott, The Epistles of S. John, p.118. A different interpretation sees in the passage an appeal to awaken the conscience. If we cannot in God's sight "persuade" our conscience, how can it be supposed that we can succeed in persuading God who is greater than conscience itself? Therefore we ought to examine our conscience thoroughly so that the verdict of conscience and God coincide.

The critical questions involved in this passage are five in number. (i) Whether *καὶ ἐπιπροσθεν αὐτοῦ* begins a new and independent clause, so that the future *πιστοῦμεν* is so co-ordinated with the future *γνωσόμεθα*, or whether *πιστοῦμεν*, like *εὐμέν*, still depends on *ὅτι*; and in the former case, whether *ἐν τούτῳ* is to be referred to *γνωσόμεθα*, or also to *πιστοῦμεν*. (ii) Whether *πιστεύει* means to convince, or has an object following; or whether it means to persuade and stands absolutely. (iii) Whether *ὅτι* is generally a particle, and then also *εἰ* a conditional particle, the second *ὅτι* being a resumptive of the first; or whether *εἰ* stands for *ἄν* and *ὅτι* must be read. (iv) Whether God is called *μείζων* because He is more merciful than our heart, or because He is more rigorous in judgement upon us. (v) Whether in verse 21, by means of the words *εἰ ἐν καρδίᾳ κτλ* a second proposition is introduced in opposition to that contained in verse 20; or whether, rather, this *εἰ* stands in the sense of "if then now", and introduces a deduction from what is said in verse 20.

These problems are fully discussed in Commentary on St. John's Epistles, by J.H.A. Ebrahard, pp 258 ff

is therefore suprising that he does not use the word covenant, nor does he expressly contrast the Jewish community with the Christian. This seems to indicate that although he felt for himself a personal necessity of constructing his theology in the terms of Hebrew thought, he did not find in the idea of the covenant the highest expression of salvation brought by Christ; and that in this instance as in so many others he avoided the use of words and ideas which were alien to his Hellenistic environment.

How unservicable the word was for the expression of the idea of salvation to the Gentiles we can see from the devices by which S. Paul (Gal. iii. 15) and the author of the Hebrews (ix. 16 ff) sought to adopt it to their modes of thought.

It is also a ground for some surprise that he also omits the name which designates Christ's people in their organised unity, as the people of God. The word ἐκκλησία occurs only in the third Epistle, and then only in relation to the individual congregation (222 111 John, 6. 9. 10) There was of course no reason for its use in the Gospel and the omission in the Epistle may be an accident. At any rate no one could lay more emphasis than does John upon the conceptions which were most fundamental to the Christian idea of the Church; in particular upon the unity of the whole brotherhood, the very idea which the

name church in its universal reference was meant to express. The pre-eminence of the Apostles is also clearly recognised ( xiii.20; xv.16; xvii.18; xx.21; 1 John 1.3; iv.6; 11 John 10; 111 John 9 ff ). It is recorded in xx.23 how Christ bestowed upon the Apostles plenipotentiary authority; though their unique function in the Church is more commonly referred to the fact that they are true witnesses of the historical manifestation of Jesus, having been with Him from the beginning ( xv.27; xix.35; 1 John 1.5). As however it is God's power which protects the disciple from evil, and as direct fellowship with Him is the highest Christian ideal; so too it is the distinction of the people of the New Covenant as the prophet foretold (Jer. xxxi.34) that "they shall all be taught of God" (vi.45). It is no longer necessary for every man to teach his brother, for the Holy Spirit directly teaches them all things (xiv.26). In the same way it is said in the Epistle: "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 11.20). Even the Apostolic teaching is not indispensable to God's children who are thus gifted with the prophetic inspiration of truth: "And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one should teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it is taught you, ye abide in him" (1 John 11.27).

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

We have studied a number of traits in Johannine thought which mark the Christian community as God's covenant people; but we have still to discuss the most important element in the covenant. If a company of sinful men gathered out of the world was to be brought into real communion with God, it could be accomplished, according to the ideas of the O.T. only by doing away with that which on the part of men constituted an absolute impediment to such communion. This condition, determined the conception of the foundation of the Old Covenant: it also determines the ideas associated with the foundation of the New Covenant, hence the presence of the ideas of purification and expiation in the Johannine writings. It is the more necessary to emphasise this point because it is sometimes asserted that the idea of atonement has absolutely no place in these writings, and that Christ's death has importance only as a manifestation of His love.

As an example of this way of thinking we may quote Dr. E. F. Scott: "He accepts the fundamental idea of a redeeming sacrifice, with the difference that he connects it with the incarnation instead of with the death." "His appearances in the flesh constituted His sacrifice. The death at the close could not add to it anything that was essential". "In the true Johannine doctrine there is no

logical place for the view of the death of Christ as an atonement." (1)

It is readily admitted that the idea of the atonement does not, as with S. Paul and the writer of the Hebrews, occupy the foremost place in John's representation; that indeed it recedes before the dominant representation of the moral efficacy of Christ's revelation (2). Nevertheless there are <sup>to be</sup> found in the Gospel and the Epistle distinctive expressions of the objective significance of Christ's death, and evidence that it is an organic part of the work of Christ.

In the first place we notice that John perceives a rational necessity in the death of Christ. The Son of Man must ( $\delta\epsilon\iota$ ) be lifted up if He is to save those that believe (iii. 14). The corn of wheat must ( $\delta\epsilon\iota$ ) fall to the ground and die if it is not to abide alone (xii. 24). Oneness of purpose with the divine will is indicated when Jesus says: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again" (x. 17). This is in harmony with those references to the "hour" of Jesus in which he indicates an unfolding of the divine purpose (xii. 23; xvii. 1).

The death of Christ is also an essential element

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(1) The Fourth Gospel, pp 208 and 225. (2) For a discussion of the limitations of the Johannine conception of the atonement as compared with the rest of the N.T. see Vincent Taylor, The Atonement in New Testament Teaching, pp 226 ff.

in the defeat of Satan. It is with death and its consequences that Jesus says: "Now is the judgement of the world; now shall the prince of the world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (xii.31 f). As His hour draws near He says: "I shall no longer speak much with you, for the prince of the world cometh, and in me he hath nothing." (xiv.30). In the description of the work and power of the Holy Spirit the same conception ~~επιτιμασει~~ occurs: "He when he is come will convict the world...of judgement because the prince of this world is judged" (xvi.11). The idea contained in these passages is that Jesus demonstrates by His death that the prince of this world has no right in it at all; he has nothing in Christ, he is judged, he is cast out. Through the death of Christ the Kingdom of this world is taken from him. It is the chief point in Aulen's book "Christus Victor" that the idea of the conquest of Satan by the death of Christ is rooted in the Gospel tradition, and the above passages show that it is a prominent idea in the Fourth Gospel.

The death is regarded as the means by which Christ enters into His glory. This has already been discussed in an earlier chapter, but the relevant passages may be recalled here. "The Spirit is not yet" because "Jesus was not yet glorified" (xvii.39). The disciples remembered what was written of Him (xii.16) when Jesus was glorified.



When the Greeks came to Jesus He says: "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." (xii.23). When Judas went out into the night to betray Jesus, our Lord rejoiced because "now is the Son of Man glorified and God in glorified in Him (xiii.31). In the High Priestly prayer He says: "Father glorify the Son, that the Son may glorify thee (xvii.1). To the same order of thought belongs those passages which speak of the exaltation of the Son in death (iii.14; viii.28; xii.32). The death of Christ is therefore an integral part in the process of being liberated from the self-imposed conditions of this world: it is the exaltation.

That the death of Christ is regarded by John as being vicarious is seen by the frequency he uses the technical sacrificial word ὑπέρ (1). "The good shepherd layeth down his life for (ὑπέρ) the sheep (x.11; cf 15). "It is expedient for you that one man should die for (ὑπέρ) the people" (xi.50; cf xviii.14). "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for (ὑπέρ) us" (1 John iii.16)

One of the most disputed points in the interpretation of Johannine thought is to be found in the verse where Jesus is represented as the "propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii.2). In 1 John iv.10 this is said to be the purpose of God sending the Son into the world.

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(1) It should be noticed however that in Hellenistic Greek even the original meaning of "in the interest of" is greatly weakened. Compare, for instance, ὑπέρ ὡς ἠβουλόμεθα meaning "as regards those things we wished", in Greek Papyri, by Milligan, p.24.

The word translated "propitiation" ἑλεος, is only used in the N.T. in this Epistle and once in the Epistle to the Romans where ἑλεος is not ~~not~~ actually used but ἑλεος (Rom iii.25). Dr.Driver discusses the meaning of קָפַר, which in the LXX is translated ἐλάσκεσθαι, from the O.T. point of view in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible (1). There he points out that the ritual term קָפַר is usually rendered "covering". In the approach to God the sins committed by the community or the individual were covered. And in seeking an answer to the important question whether in the O.T. the term favours the view that the sinner only felt it impossible to enter into communion with God unless his ~~sins~~ sins were covered or whether it also includes God, so that ~~no~~ no sinner could approach God unless his sins were covered, Dr.Driver points out the complex meanings associated with the word "kipper". The actual word he considers to be colourless, and while admitting that propitiation accentuates too much one particular side of what is involved, he considers that this is on the whole the best rendering.

Prof.C. H.Dodd approaches the question from the point of view of Hellenistic Judaism. And after an exhaustive examination of the general use of the word ἐλάσκεσθαι and its derivatives in the LXX, he says that

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(1) vol.iii. pp 128-132.

"Hellenistic Judaism as represented in the LXX, does not regard the cultus as a means of pacifying the displeasure of the Deity, but as a means of delivering man from sin, and it looks in the last resort to God Himself to perform that deliverance." He says that ἕλασμός should be interpreted in the same sense as καθαρίζω and regards the Johannine use of the term to fall into line with this usage (1). A similar view is taken by Dr. Moffatt (2). This interpretation which appears to be generally accepted by modern scholars serves to show that the barrier against reconciliation is on man's side, not on God's.

Nevertheless we must beware of seeking to interpret Biblical language in the terms of modern thought, and it would seem that the meaning of the word is not exhausted by a purely subjective interpretation. Although John speaks in 1 John i.7 of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus there is no indication in 1 John ii.1 that he is primarily thinking of the moral effects which are wrought by Christ in the consciousness of sinners. John does not say that Christ provides a means of expiation, but that He Himself is the expiation. This is a usage which is not found elsewhere in the N.T., and warns us that lexical research regarding the use of a word cannot finally settle a theological problem. To say that Christ is the expiation

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(1) The Bible and the Greeks, pp 93 ff  
 (2) Love in the New Testament, p.255

is thoroughly in accord with the method of John as a whole. Jesus is represented to us as the Word of God, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Door, Spiritual Food and Drink. The meaning of ἵλασμος would appear to be therefore that in Christ (not merely in the consciousness of sinners) sins are cancelled so that they no longer stand between God and ourselves.(1).

The significance of Jesus' death is thought of particularly with reference to the foundation of the New Covenant congregation. It is not only the Shepherd's voice which gathers together the scattered sheep and constitutes them one flock (x.16); the laying down of His life is also necessary to this end (x.11, 15, 17). And although Jesus's death cannot according to the terms of the parable be represented in a sacrificial aspect; the thought is expressed that it avails not only to save the life of the sheep from the wolf's attack (x.12), but to give them more abundant life (x.10). How important this conception was for John, we see in x1. 50-52: "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. Now this he said not of himself; but being High Priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he might gather into one the children of God that are scattered abroad." He here interprets Caiaphas' astute counsel as a prophecy of Jesus' death as a sacrifice for

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(1) cf Vincent Taylor, The Atonement in New Testament Teaching, p.221 ff

the nation, and more particularly as the covenant sacrifice which constituted the scattered children of God one people.

It is likewise John's own interpretation of Jesus' words, which represents His death as the event which draws all men unto Him (x.32,33). In xvii 19 Jesus represents Himself more expressly as the covenant sacrifice which consecrates His disciples as God's people: "For their sakes I consecrate myself, that they themselves also may be consecrated in truth." In view of the fact that Jesus has already entered upon the way to His death, this saying can only refer to His sacrificial consecration to God; and the consecration of His disciples, which He thereby effects, is a consecration to God's possession as a covenant people. "He is about to establish between God and man a relation which men could never have established for themselves, but into which they can truly enter; and into which they will be drawn once it is established by Him." (1)

This is the equivalent<sup>e</sup> of the pauline doctrine that Christ dies our death that we may be drawn into the fellowship of His death. He establishes the reconciliation, they receive it (Rom. v.11)

Jesus' death as a covenant sacrifice has reference solely to the covenant people. Although we have seen that

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(1) Denney, The Death of Christ, p 195

His saving work is for the whole world it is effectual only for those who stand within the covenant relationship. The O.T. idea of the Covenant was essentially that of peculiar and exclusive privilege: the New Covenant was likewise exclusive, though only those who were excluded were self excluded. The forgiveness of sins was one of the privileges of the old Covenant, and it was prophetically promised as one of the blessings of the New. It is therefore thoroughly in accord with the O.T. point of view when John represents that only he who by walking in the light has come into fellowship with God, and stands thereby in fellowship with God's people, can enjoy the cleansing of his sins through Christ's blood (1 John 1.7). The same conception is postulated in the O.T. phrase, "faithful and just" (1 John 1.9; cf Psalm cxliii.1). It is only in relation to the Covenant that God's mercy in forgiving sins can be characterised as an act of faithfulness and justice; but where the covenant atonement is already provided, and confession of sins is truly made, forgiveness is simply the consequence of God's faithfulness to His promise and His righteousness in observing the covenanted terms.

Christ's sacrifice, like the sacrifice of the Covenant (Ex.xxiv.), was made once for all. Moreover, in the Christian dispensation there was no provision of repeated sacrifices for recurrent sins; for the purpose of Christ's

coming was, both by His sacrifice (4.29) and by His total manifestation (1 John iii.5), "to take away sins"; and we have seen that for God's children, sin and the sinful power is already radically overcome and abolished.

It would indeed be strange if the sacrificial idea were ignored in a Gospel which begins with the Baptist's witness to the Lamb of God (4.29), and ends by representing Jesus' death as occurring on the very day, perhaps at the very hour, when the passover was wont to be slain (1). Dr. E. F. Scott thinks that the phrase Lamb of God is a "vague concession to an earlier doctrine" (2). But it is hardly likely that John would have made a vague concession when first ~~bringing~~ introducing Jesus to his readers. Rather the fact that he brings the phrase to the very forefront of his Gospel shows what importance he attached to it. Dr. C. F. Burney defends it as the actual opinion of the Baptist, though, as <sup>e</sup>ways in this Gospel, it retains the impress of John's own mind (3).

The phrase itself may be regarded in one of five ways (4). (i) As referring to the Lamb at the morning and evening sacrifice (Ex. xxix. 38-46); (ii) as referring to Jeremiah xi. 19; (iii) as referring to the paschal Lamb

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(1) see Bernard S. John p. cvi. (2) The Fourth Gospel, p. 219. (3) The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel, pp 104-108 (4) cf V. Taylor, Jesus and His Sacrifice, pp. 226 f

(Ex. xii; cf John xix.36); (iv) As referring to the Messianic leader of God's people in Enoch; (v) as referring to the servant of Yahweh (Isaiah liii.7, 12). Dr. Vincent Taylor prefers the fifth interpretation on the ground that Isaiah liii 7, 12 easily explains the references to a lamb and ~~sin~~ sin-bearing. Furthermore the identification of the Suffering Servant with our Lord had already been made in the early Church (Matt. viii. 17; Acts viii. 32), and was probably derived from our Lord Himself (Luke xxi. 37; xxiv. 26).

The difficulty is that ἀίρων in i.29 probably means "taking away" whereas φέρειν in Isaiah liii.6 means "bearing sin". In the Fourth Gospel ἀίρων never means "to carry", but always "to lift up" in order to remove something (cf ii. 16; x. 18; xi. 39; xi. 48; xv. 2; xix. 31). And, according to Strack and Billerbeck (1), it is never used in the LXX with the sense of "bearing sin". Hence the primary meaning of the passage must refer to the paschal Lamb, which was not a placular sacrifice.

Nevertheless whatever the phrase meant to the Baptist it is difficult not to believe that in the mind of John Jesus was both the Passover Lamb and the Lamb mentioned in Isaiah liii. In John xii. 38 our Lord is actually identified with the Suffering Servant and as we have suggested this was the interpretation given to His

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(1) Quoted by W.H. Rigg in Atonement in History and Life, p. 158.



person and Work by Christ Himself. "It is not too much to say that the conception of Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin, put thus at the very beginning of the Gospel, is meant to convey decisively the Evangelist's own conception of Jesus and His work. He is here to put away sin - that sums up His vocation; and He does not put it away by denunciation, like the Baptist, but by the sacrificial method, in which it has to be borne." (1)

THE SACRAMENTS.

Jesus Himself represented His death as a covenant sacrifice of atonement when at the Last Supper He took the cup and said: "This is my blood of the Covenant" (2). The phrase is clearly a reproduction of Ex. xxiv.8. Mark xiv.24 adds "which is shed for many", and Matthew still further (xxvi.28), "for the remission of sins". Paul (1 Cor.xi.25) and Luke (xxii.20) unite in calling it the cup of the New Covenant in my blood; and this conception was firmly rooted in the Church. We cannot point to any single sacrifice of the O.T. cultus as the exclusive type of Christ's sacrifice: it fulfilled the idea of sacrifice in general (3). It was in particular the foundation of a covenant; but many of the sacrifices recorded in the O.T. besides that of Ex. xxiv, were of this character. The passover (Ex.xiii), was a covenant sacrifice of an earlier

(1) Denney, The Death of Christ, p 184. (2) see Taylor, Jesus and His Sacrifice, pp74, 136-139. The following authorities omit the word "new" & B.C.D.L etc. (3) cf F.C.N.Hicks, The Fulness of Sacrifice.

date and more primitive type; and many of its inspiring ideas have survived in the Christian Eucharist. It represented not merely a national, but a family covenant, and like every covenant sacrifice its benefits were shared only by those who ate it (1). The passover is also more closely a type of Christ's sacrifice because of its particular reference to deliverance from death.

John, however, does not record the Institution of the Christian passover. The reason for this may have been as Dr.W.F.Howard suggests, because "the upper room was no place for doctrinal polemic". (2) Dr.W.L.Knox suggests that the omission at the Last Supper was in order to comply with the Hellenistic tradition that the actual words of the mysteries should not be made public (3). I believe

(1) Robertson Smith comes to the following conclusion after a comprehensive survey of the idea of sacrifice: "The one point that stands out clear and strong is that the fundamental idea of ancient sacrifice is sacramental communion." "The leading idea in the ancient sacrifice of the Semites....was not that of a gift made over to the god, but of an act of communion, in which the god and his worshippers unite by partaking together of the flesh and blood of the sacred victim." Religion of the Semites (1927) p.439. According to Dr Buchanan Gray, however, all Hebrew sacrifices were primarily gifts to the Almighty, see Sacrifice in the Old Testament (1925).

(2) The Fourth Gospel in recent Criticism and Interpretation, p.214.

(3) Some Hell. Elements in Primitive Christianity, p.66

however that the best explanation is to be found along the lines already suggested in the Introduction. John seeks to guard against any isolation of God's activity in the world. The Word of God is active and present everywhere. The sacraments merely represent a focus for the divine activity which is present throughout the world; and it is this wider truth that John would not have his readers ignore.

Though the Institution of the Eucharist is not narrated as taking place during the Last Supper there is an indubitable reference to it in John vi. The whole traditional Eucharistic terminology is to be found in the chapter: εὐχαριστεῖν (vi. 11, 23), διδοῦναι ἄρτον φαγεῖν πίνεσθαι ὑπὲρ (vi. 51). The fourfold τρωγεῖν (vi. 54, 58) necessitates the idea of real eating. The use of σαρξ instead of σῶμα is probably to be explained, as Bernard suggests, (1) "because he wishes to emphasise the fact of the incarnation as against the nascent docetism of the age".

Doubt is however cast upon certain verses in this chapter which would take away any sacramental reference in the passage. Thus Loisy surmises that vi. 26, 27, 32, 33, 47, 48, and vi. 51, 53-58, which he calls "the poem on the Bread of Life", is independent of the chapter (2). J.E. Carpenter says on vi. 51-58, "I cannot avoid the conviction

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(1) St. John, p. clxx.  
 (2) Le Quatrième Evangile, p. 233.

that in 51,58 language on a very different plane compared with that in 32-50 has been embodied" (1). An entirely different view is adopted by Kreyenbuhl, who according to Dr.Odeburg (2), maintains that the section really speaks of the Eucharist, but not by way of advocating it, but by way of strong rejection of the Sacrament. The object of the Evangelist is, according to Kreyenbuhl, to put against the sacrament of the Church his own spiritual understanding. The real flesh and blood of the Son of Man, which represents the Evangelist, are his teaching, his religion, his life in God and of God, and these only are potent to eternal life. Dr.G.B. Stevens represents another school of thought when he says: "Whatever, therefore, be the exact meaning of "flesh" and of "blood" in our passage, and whatever may be the distinction between them, the discourse as a whole directly relates neither to the Eucharist, nor to the death of Jesus, but to his person ~~and~~ as the medium of the supreme self-revelation of God, from which his teaching is, of course, quite inseparable. Those who spiritually receive him as the bread of their souls, enter into loving fellowship with him and make him their guide and inspiration, thereby attain eternal life"(3). Bauer draws

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(1) The Johannine Writings, p.428 (2) The Fourth Gospel, etc p.237. (3) The Theology of the N.T., pp226 f

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attention to the fact that the idea of the celestial food which nourishes eternal life can be traced to the Greek world as far back as Homer, and is also characteristic of the East. The underlying idea of the Eucharist, he says, which in the sixth chapter is represented as the eating of the Flesh and Blood of Christ, is that by consuming the Deity, embodied in some edible object, man enters into communion with God and thereby becomes a sharer in eternal life. (1)

Those views which reject the sacramental idea as being unworthy of John are based, I believe, upon a fundamental misunderstanding of the Fourth Gospel. They are based upon the supposition that John proclaimed a purely spiritual Gospel and that sacramental notions are therefore upon a lower plane of religious insight. This is not the place to argue the relevance of a sacramental religion in a sacramental universe (2), but we have already maintained that John opposed such a false spirituality and that he maintained an even balance between the spiritual and the material. "The conscience of the Church has been right in regarding the Evangelist as the advocate and apostle of the Christian sacraments. There is in him, curiously intertwined, a keen recognition that after all man is not pure spirit, and that to have full effect spiritual teaching must be ~~spiritual~~ combined with

(1) Das ~~Evangelium~~ Johannes Evangelium, pp 95, 96; cf Jevons Introd. to the Hist. of Religion, pp 214 ff (2) see Temple, Nature, Man and God, ch. XIX ~~(3) see Temple, Nature, Man and God, ch. XIX~~

the visible and material." (1) In the opinion of Dr Nolloth "the true significance of the Eucharist only became manifest when the discourse in the Synagogue at Capernaum was published. The Sacrament is shown to be rooted in the fundamental relations of God and man and to be the application of the principle of the Incarnation to the spiritual needs of the individual." (2)

The discourse is therefore an excellent illustration of that subjective-objective point of view which we discussed in the Introduction. In verse 40 it is "he that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him hath eternal life"; whereas in verse 54 it is "he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood" who hath eternal life. For this reason the sacraments could have been discussed just as appropriately in the chapter where we consider the subjective appropriation of salvation or eternal life. But as Jesus' objective sacrifice is the element which is the ultimate explanation of the life-giving effect of His manifestation, it seems proper to discuss the subject here. It is the eating of the sacrificial flesh which conditions communion with Christ (vi.56); the gift of eternal life (vi.53,58); the resurrection from the dead (vi.54); and escape from death (vi.50). "What the believer receives is Life in Christ glorified and exalted through death (3)

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(1) Gardner, The Ephesian Gospel, p.210 (2) The Fourth Evangelist, p. 142 f (3) V.Taylor, The Atonement in New Testament Teaching, p.223

This chapter shows therefore how fundamental is the notion of the death of Christ in John's estimation.

To sum up: this discourse refers to the Eucharist, to the sacramental eating of the flesh and blood of Jesus. It is not the momentary eating, however, that is of primary importance, but the permanent abiding in Christ. The sacrament is normally necessary, but it is the communion that is vital. This explains why John separates the teaching of the Eucharist from the Last Supper. That believers should "take" and "eat" he does not deny, but the one thing that matters is that we should "feed upon Him in our hearts", for "it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." (vi.63).

It remains to discuss whether John also regards Baptism as a means of obtaining eternal life. We have already discussed in an earlier chapter the teaching about new birth; here we are concerned with the objective necessity of Baptism. The important passage is iii.5., and the crucial words are *ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος*. The predominant view seems to be that we are to read into these words a reference to Baptism. Bauer argues that the rite is an essential element in the new birth and that Baptism is the real point of the argument (1). Dr. P. Gardner sees in this passage a contrast between the Baptism of the

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(1) Das Johannes Evangelium, p. 50 f

disciples of John the Baptist, with the Christian rite which accompanied an illumination of the whole being by means of the Spirit (1). Dr. Carpenter says: "According to the current text the Evangelist recognised the partnership of both water and spirit in bringing it (i.e. the new birth) about" (2).

It is however argued that the introduction of Baptism at this point of the discourse breaks the continuity of the theme, which is concerned, not with contrasting the Baptism of John with Christian Baptism, but with contrasting the birth from above as a condition for entering the Kingdom or eternal life with the birth from below. The supposed difficulties of ~~examining~~ assuming the authenticity of a reference to Baptism here have led some scholars (3) to regard the words ὕδατος καὶ as an interpolation. But it is just as easy to claim that the passage is set in a framework controlled by the significance of water. The mention of Baptism in the section immediately following (iii.22-iv.2), and the contraposition in i.33 of the Baptism of John ἐν ὕδατι and the Baptism of Jesus ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ὕδατι are suggestive. We would agree with Dr. Straughan who remarks: "Just as in the case

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(1) The Ephesian Gospel, p.200      (2) The Johannine Writings, p.417  
 (3) e.g. Bernard, St. John, ad loc.



of the Eucharist the Evangelist has in view, in his interpretation of the conversation, a superstitious view of Baptism. This he corrects by conjoining 'water' with 'spirit'. Submission to the rite of Baptism by itself cannot effect the new birth. There must be present not only the life-giving principle of the Spirit, but conscious experience of it on the part of the believer.... The believer must first have 'seen the Kingdom of God' in the person of Jesus. Thus the sacrament of Baptism is psychologically conditioned, and is raised above the level of a magical, or quasi-magical, communication of divine grace." (1).

Assuming therefore that there is here a reference to Baptism we go on to note that John also brings the water of Baptism into association with the blood of the Atonement "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only but by water and blood." (1 John v.6). Brooke points out (2) that of the many interpretations given to this passage there are only three worthy of consideration (1) that the passage refers to the two Christian sacraments. According to this view the water centres in Baptism (iii.5), and the blood is symbolised and applied in Holy Communion (vi); and the Spirit by His

(1) The Fourth Gospel, pp 93 ff. Straughan also thinks that water may symbolise physical birth. See on this H. Odeburg, The Fourth Gospel etc pp 49 ff. (2) The Johannine Epistles, pp 132 f.

divine power is perpetually making them effective. This interpretation is adopted by many of the greatest divines of the Church of England (1).

(ii) That the passage symbolises the life giving and cleansing work of Christ, (iii) that it refers to the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and the death on the cross by which the work of Jesus was consummated.

I prefer to combine these three interpretations. The Baptism of John and the death on the Cross are referred to in the verse, but in such a manner as to concentrate attention upon the significance of water and blood in general rather than upon particular incidents. This is in harmony with the allusive references to the sacraments elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel. In the context the author is alluding to the way in which Jesus conquered sin and empowered His disciples to share the fruits of victory (cf 1 John 11.13, 14). Water symbolises purification and the blood life released in death. Both the perfect life and the sacrificial death of Jesus were necessary for the victory over sin. Not merely the purity of His life, but also His death upon the Cross are the sources of the victory over sin and the cause of rebirth: "not with water only, but with <sup>the</sup> water and the blood "

(1) e.g. Bishop Hall, Contemplation, book iv., contemp. 32; Bishop Taylor, Christian Consolation, of Sacraments, v. Works 1. xlii.

To this the Spirit bears perpetual witness in the experience of the converted. The Spirit, the Water and the Blood bear witness to the perfect sacrifice of Jesus and to the benefits which are secured by it. They are the means by which eternal life is communicated to men, and of this communication Baptism and the Eucharist are effectual symbols (1). The sacraments are therefore an integral part of the Johannine scheme of salvation (2).

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(1) cf Hoskyns in New Commentary part iii. pp 668 f  
 (2) Father Vincent McNabb in Theology Sept. 1921 suggests that the Sacraments determine the plan of the Fourth Gospel: i.35, Call of disciples - Holy Order; ii. Matrimony; iii. Baptism and Confirmation; iv. and v. penance; vi. Eucharist; xiii. Unction. This seems fanciful, but it is right in principle for it reveals an appreciation of the deeper unity that underlies the Fourth Gospel than mere chronology.

## VII.

## ETERNAL LIFE.

In the previous chapter we considered some of the consequences of the manifestation of the light in the world: the judicial discrimination which was effected amongst men; the doom of the world which did not apprehend the light, and the election out of the world of a covenant people, who through Christ's death enjoy forgiveness and cleansing from sin and access to God. These considerations have to do predominantly, though not exclusively, with the objective aspects of salvation. The predominating emphasis of John's representation lies however with the subjective appropriation of salvation which is also the more positive conception, because it deals not with what man is saved from, but with what he is saved to; with the positive realisation of salvation in the children of God, rather than its mere conditions. Nevertheless we must remind ourselves that, though I have separated the objective considerations from the subjective for the sake of clearness of treatment, they are not thus separated by John, but the subjective appropriation of eternal life is so closely associated with the objective significance of Christ's work that the same fact is at one and the same time regarded from both points of view.

Salvation is a negative term and as such is unsuited from the expression of John's positive conception. He prefers to use the term eternal life, and this is the key note of this chapter; in due course we will consider the whole range of ideas with which it is most characteristically associated. In this chapter we will limit ourselves to a consideration of God's action in making eternal life ~~possible~~ available for men, and discuss in the chapter which follows the subjective appropriation of God's gift. The sequence of John's thought may be summarised as follows: The Son of God, by His essential likeness to God, revealed the Father to men, and made possible for them that true communion with Him which is the very fruition of eternal life. There is no single passage which so completely sums up this message than the penultimate verse of the first Epistle: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know (δεινται <sup>τιν</sup> καὶ γινώσκωμεν) him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

This saying in its most significant part is the reproduction of an O.T. promise: "I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord" (Jer. xxiv.7). In the same verse the consequence of God's disclosure of Himself in the very hearts of men is expressed in this, that "they shall be my people, and I will be their God." This mutual approach and appropriation on the part of God and

His people constitutes a new covenant which rests upon a new and intimate knowledge of God. Another passage, which is in many respects parallel, promises expressly the establishment of a new covenant, in the place of the one which had been broken, upon the basis of the forgiveness of sins, and of such knowledge of God as should make His law an inward revelation, written upon the heart (Jer. xxxi.31-34). We see therefore that the sequence of Johannine thought has its roots in the O.T.

In the very nature of the case, a positive revelation between men and God can only come about by the self-revelation of God. The knowledge of God has to be given to men from without. God is remote and invisible, but makes Himself known in various ways. It was God's revelation of Himself on Sinai which, more positively than the sacrifices there inaugurated, brought Israel into covenant relation with God; and God's covenant with the patriarchs rested upon a new revelation of His Name (Gen. xxxii.29; Ex. vi.3). According to the Hebrew idea a name ought to be descriptive of the object ~~is~~ named. In the words of Giesebrecht (1) a name according to ancient conception means "a something parallel to the man, relatively independent of its bearer, but of great importance for his weal or woe, a something, which at once, describes and influences its bearer." And what was true of a human name

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(1) Quoted by E. Kautzsch, in H.D.B. art. Religion of Israel, extra volume, p. 640.

was also true of the Divine Name. Hence the Divine Name in the Bible gives in broad outline the course of revelation (1). John retains this pregnant Hebraism, recording Jesus' profession of the accomplishment of His mission thus: "I manifested Thy Name unto men whom thou gavest me out of the world"(xvii.6); and His prayer, "Holy Father, keep them in thy Name" (xvii.11). The name by which God has made Himself known to the Church is most adequately expressed by S.paul: "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph.1.3; Col.1.3; 2 Cor.xi.31); and John's idea is substantially the same when he records that unique saying in which Jesus made over to His disciples the conception of the divine Fatherhood which He had hitherto so highly exalted by appropriating it to Himself: "My Father and your Father, and my God and your God" (xx.17) (2).

O.T.prophecy was at one in the expectation that the Messianic age would be distinguished by a more profound and general knowledge of God (Is.xi.9; 1ix.21; Joel iii.1 ff) so that all being taught by God none would need a human teacher (Jer.xxxi.34); and that there would be wrought therewith a radical change in the heart of the nation (Is.1.27; xxix.23; xxxi.1 ff.15 ff; Eze~~x~~xl.19; xxxvi.25 f Zeph.iii.12). But the prophetic ideas differed very much

(1) cf Westcott, The Epistles of St. John, p.243 (2) In view of our identification of the creative Word of God with the Logos the following conclusion by Kautzsch is suggestive: "We are thus entitled....to regard the theologoumenon of the "name of Jahweh" as one of the most significant attempts at distinguishing between the real essential being of Jahweh and His more or less perfect manifestation-

in respect to the means by which this new revelation was to be brought about. Jeremiah thought rather of quickening and deepening of the religious consciousness, which did not require an actual manifestation of God; other prophets expected such a revelation of the divine glory as would surpass even the manifestation upon Sinai (Is.xl.5). The inauguration of the era of salvation would be unquestionably God's work, but, as in the establishment of the old covenant, it would be accomplished through chosen instruments; hence it is a prophet that is expected (Deut.xviii. 15-18) or especially a Messianic King who would realise God's will upon earth by the establishment of God's kingdom (Jer.xxxiii.15.21). This diversity of conception as to the nature of the coming age, explains the variety of views in the Messianic expectation which Jesus encountered among the Jews. It also furnished a problem for Christian theology to solve. For from the beginning the Church was confident that it possessed in Jesus all that God had promised; and it had therefore to show how the diverse lines of prophecy terminated in Him.

It is John's distinction to have solved this problem more adequately than any other writer in the N.T. He

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forms - analagous to the angel, the face, the glory of Jahweh" (op.cit.p.641) Is it possible that John also regarded the Name of God as revealed in Jesus because He was in some way identified with the "Name" of God on the same lines as with the creative "Word" of God ?



represented Jesus not only as prophet and as King. He represented Him as God; the Word of God become flesh, manifesting the divine glory in His own person, and thus imparting the vision of God to men. St. Paul also believed that in Jesus God had revealed Himself; but in his view Jesus was under an eclipse when on earth. It was through the resurrection that Jesus became the Son of God with power. But as we have seen the distinctive thing in John's thought is that he finds in the earthly life of Jesus what S. Paul was compelled to look for in the heavenly life (1). The significance of this revelation of God in Christ is that the knowledge of God thereby made known to men produces in those who believe eternal life. And this conception so far from being a strange departure from the P.T. type of thought, is rather, more than any other representation of the N.T., the most faithful to the prophecy of the Messianic age, which likewise pictured salvation predominantly in the terms of revelation and knowledge of God.

#### THE NATURE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

There is no more compendious statement of John's idea of eternal life than this: "And the witness is this, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John v. 11). To understand what eternal life is, and how it is mediated to men, is to know the whole Gospel. We have already seen that life - or at least deliverance from the common doom of death - is dependent upon men's belief

(1) cf E.F. Scott, The N.T. Idea of Revelation, pp 183 ff

in Christ and upon Christ's death upon the Cross. The gift of eternal life as the positive content of salvation is particularly the theme of this section.

The phrase  $\beta\omega\eta\ \alpha\iota\omega\nu\iota\omicron\varsigma$  ( $\beta\omega\eta\ \alpha\iota\omega\nu\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ) first meets us in the LXX version of the book of Daniel in connection with the coming reign of the Messiah (1). The Kingdom of God is to be eternal, His dominion everlasting (Daniel vii.14). And it is added that in the great convulsions to come the dead shall awake, "Some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Here eternal life as the reward for the good Israelite is clearly life in the divine Kingdom of the future, though it does not necessarily mean life everlasting (2). The word  $\alpha\iota\omega\nu\iota\omicron\varsigma$  is found some hundred and fifty times in the LXX and it usually means "age-lasting" and not "endless" (cf Prov. xxi.28; xxiii.10; Psalm lxxvii.5; Lev. xxiii.14,21,31,41; Gen. xvii.8; xlvi.4) The idea of everlasting life rests on grounds which are independent of the word before us.

When we turn to contemporary non-Christian literature, the evidence for the use of the term is slight. It occurs only once in Philo (Pro-fug. 15): "Is not the flight to true Being life eternal." He compares wisdom, the divine Word, to a well bestowing life (De fuga.97).

(1) For a summary of the evidence see Dalman, The Words of Jesus pp 156 ff; Charles, Eschatology, pp 176 ff; F. Von Hugel, Eternal Life, pp 48 ff. (2) see Charles, Eschatology, p. 181 note.

The parallel phrases ζωή ζωόντων, ζωή αίδιος, ζωή ἀφ θανάτου, are found only rarely (1). The word ζωή often occurs in the Hermetic writings, but in a manner which is very different from the use made of it in the Johannine books. The common features in the two conceptions are that "life comes to man from God, and through a spiritual revelation of God, which at the same time creates an entirely new man" (2)

On the other hand eternal life is a characteristic gift of the Tora. For example in T.B. Ker.iii.a. we read that "every one who makes use of the light of the Tora, him the light of the Tora makes living, and everyone who does not make use of the Tora, to him the light of the Tora does not give life." Also in Sifre, parasa, Equaeb.c.d. "The words of the Tora are likened unto water. Just as water is life to the world, so the words of the Tora are life to the world." (3)

The belief has its origin in the O.T. itself. For example in Leviticus xviii.5 the Jews are promised that if they keep God's "statutes and my judgements: which if a man do he shall live in them." And in Deut.xxxii.46,47 they are bidden "to set your heart unto all the words which I testify unto you this day; which ye shall command your children, to observe to do all the words

(1) see Drummond, Philo Judaeus, Time and Eternity, i. pp292 ff  
 (2) F.Buchel, quoted by F.W.Howard in Christianity according to St. John, p.190 (3) quoted by Odeburg, The Fourth Gospel etc.pp 143 & 158; cf p 91 above.

of this law. For it is no vain thing unto you; because it is your life, and through this thing ye shall prolong your days upon the ~~saxa~~ land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

And Jesus did not deny this, for in John vi.30 He says: "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me." This verse does not mean that because the Jews maintained that the scriptures contained all that was necessary for eternal life therefore they did not think it necessary to go to Jesus for eternal life. But it means rather that the means of the attainment of eternal life is to be found in the scriptures, for they testify of Jesus as the bringer of eternal life. Yet inspite of this witness of the scriptures to Jesus they do not come to Him for eternal life. The Jews' relation to the scriptures is a mere external one: they study and expound the words of the scriptures; but they are altogether deaf and blind to the divine witness of the Tora (1).

The phrase occurs in a few passages in the Synoptic Gospels. In one scene recorded by all three writers (Matt. xix. 16; Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18) Jesus is asked by a wealthy young man what he must do to acquire eternal life. The answer is familiar: "Thou shalt not kill etc". The

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(1) For a different interpretation see Bernard, S. John pp 252 ff.

same question is asked on another occasion (Luke x.25) and the right answer was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God etc" These questions appear to have reference, as the phrase in Daniel, to the future Kingdom of the Messiah. Both eternal life and the Kingdom of God express the realisation of Salvation (1). To enter into life and into the Kingdom of God are treated by Mark as identical expressions (ix.45,47). And in the Fourth Gospel to "see" or "enter into" the Kingdom of God (iii.15,16)<sup>3,5</sup> is the same as to "have eternal life" (iii.15,16) Though the "Kingdom of God" appears only twice in the Fourth Gospel, "eternal life and the Kingdom are correlative and complementary terms" (2).

This identification of the Kingdom with eternal life is significant for in the Synoptic Gospels the general representation is that the Kingdom is in the future whereas the characteristic conception of John is that eternal life may be a present possession. In the words of F.von Hugel: "In Jesus' teaching the emphasis lies upon the future.... in the specifically Johannine passages, it lies upon the Eternal Now." (3).

This contrast may however be exaggerated as for example by Albert Schweitzer who emphasised out of all

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(1) Life according to Charles indicates the good of the individual, the Kingdom that of the Community, see Eschatology, p.315 (2) ibid, p.368 (3) Eternal Life pp 77 ff.

proportion the eschatological elements in the Synoptic Gospel (1). Modern scholarship has revealed the one sidedness of the eschatological school of thought.(2), and it is generally agreed that Jesus proclaimed that the spiritual power of the *ἐσχατο* the final order of the Kingdom had already broken/through His coming (3). For example in the proclamation that "the Kingdom of Heaven has come upon you" (Matt.xii.28), the verb *ἔθινα* in Hellenistic Greek signifies that a person has actually arrived at his goal. Similarly in Mark 1.15, "the Kingdom of God as at hand", the verb *ἔγγεζε* in the LXX means to arrive (4). In the words of Rudolf Otto (5): "What distinguishes his eschatology (i.e. Jesus') from that which had preceded it is, on the one side, that he already lives in the present miracle of the final age, that with clear vision he sees this as something which is already coming into being and growing up around him.....On the other side, by his works, speech, parables, charismatic conferring of power, he mediates to a circle of disciples following in his steps, a contact with this miracle of the transcendent as a personal possession."

(1) see The Quest of the Historical Jesus, Eng.Trans 1910, The grounds for the assumptions made in this volume are set out at length in The Mystery of the Kingdom of God: the Secret of Jesus' Messiahship and Passion, trans by W. Lowrie in 1914. (2) see esp. C.H.Dodd, The parables of the Kingdom and R.Otto, The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man (3) This theory of 'realised eschatology' is criticised in The Historic Mission of Jesus by C.J.Cadoux. (4) see further Dodd, op.cit. Chap.ii, The Kingdom of God. (5) op.cit. p.155.

Similarly in the Fourth Gospel eternal life is regarded as a present possession. The gift which Christ brings is eternal life (iii.15,16): "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life" (vi.47); "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life." (v.24). But just as in the Synoptic Gospels the proclamation of the Kingdom as a present reality must not be overshadowed by the eschatological representations, so in the Fourth Gospel the conception of eternal life as a present possession must not overshadow the eschatological teaching. Dr. C.H. Dodd is right when he says that "in the Fourth Gospel the crudely eschatological elements in the *κῆρυγμα* are quite refined away" (1), but the future bearings of the kingdom or eternal life are not entirely "sublimated into a distinctive kind of mysticism" (2). The attitude of John is very well summed up in 1 John iii.2: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be."

John's most frequent form is *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* (iii.15, 16,36; iv.14,36; v.24,39; vi.27,40,47,54,68; x.28; xii.25 50; xvii.2; 1 John iii.15; v.11,13,20) He also uses *ἡ αἰώνιος* *ζωή* (xvii.3); *ἡ ζωὴ ἡ αἰώνιος* (1 John i.2; ii.25); and *ζῆν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* (vi.51,58). Bishop Westcott in a careful analysis of these forms (3) distinguishes

(1) Apostolic Preaching, p.155

(2) ibid., p.157

(3) The Epistles of St John pp 10 and 243 ff; cf also the suggestive remarks by Loisy in Le Quatrieme Evangile, pp. 151- 199 and 420-481.

ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή the special Messianic gift brought by Christ from the general conception ζωὴ αἰώνιος ; and he says that in the phrase ἡ ζωὴ ἡ αἰώνιος the two elements in the idea are regarded separately. He also sees a shade of difference between ζωὴ and ζωὴ αἰώνιος in John iii.36, but this is perhaps too precise a distinction to make with Hellenistic Greek.

There is general agreement that eternal life in the Johannine writings does not mean "an endless duration of being, but being of which time is not a measure" (1). It is what S. Paul calls ἡ ὄντως ζωὴ (1 Tim. vi. 19) and ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ (Eph. iv. 18). "Eternal life is fulness and richness of being, the realisation of the divinely appointed goal of existence through union with God and likeness to Christ" (2). It is an entirely new gift, superadded to man's creaturely and physical life; it is therefore an intensive conception, representing not an infinite prolongation of life, but an unbounded amplification of it (x.10).

John does not himself define his idea of life anymore than ~~he~~ his ideas of light. The significance of these essentially symbolic terms lies in the fact that they exceed and defy definition. As the figure of light represented to John the totality of the divine perfection

(1) Westcott, The Epistles of S. John, pp 20 & 215

(2) Stevens, The Theology of the N.T., p.233



so did the figure of ~~right~~ life denote the totality of blessings in and through Christ. For this reason in the sentence, "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ" (xvii.3) our Lord is not stating "wherein eternal life consists in its essence, but wherein lies the means of obtaining it" (1). The revelation of the truth in Jesus and the consequent knowledge of God, is at once the means of imparting life to men and one of the peculiar privileges of the children of God. This is sufficiently clear from our study of the significance of Christ's person in general, and in particular from John's conception of faith as the apprehension of the revelation of the divine in Jesus. Both knowledge and faith are constantly associated with life, but chiefly as the conditions of life.

John's whole theology turns on the point that, though God is the source of all life, the Logos being of like nature to God was also the light of the world; the life which He shares with the Father becoming life for the world. In the words of Dr. Scott: <sup>(2)</sup> "The whole teaching of the Gospel is determined by this thought, that the life is bound up

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(1) ~~Wendt~~ Wendt The Teaching of Jesus, 1.p.244. Bernard appears to regard the verse as a definition of life, S. John p.561. The practical difference between the two interpretations is not great, see Stevens, The Theology of the N.T. pp 229 f. (2) The Fourth Gospel, p.283

with the person, and that the work of Christ consists in the last resort in the communication of Himself". The reason for this is that the revelation of God through Jesus' work and word, being appropriated by faith, issues in that knowledge of God which is the condition of eternal life. Hence Jesus is represented unto us as the Way to Life just because He is the Truth (xiv.6) The mission of Jesus is essentially a "witness", a recounting of the "heavenly things" which He had seen with His Father (iii. 11 and 12); and it is His interpretation of the invisible (i.18), His message concerning the nature of God (1 John 1.5) which is for John the chief end of Jesus' manifestation.

We have seen that according to one line of thought Jesus is the medium of life to the world (x.28;xvii.2;1 John iv. 9; v.11.12) owing to the fact of His sacrificial death; along the line of thought we are now pursuing Jesus is the life of the world because He is the revelation of God. He is the life manifested (1 John 1.2), and the revelation of the divine nature which in Him has been brought within the apprehension of human faculties - heard, seen, beheld, handled - is the foundation of the Christian fellowship (1 John 1.3), and the ground of Christian joy (1 John 1.4).

It is not only the total manifestation of God in the Logos, nor the expression of the divine nature as Light which is life giving. Jesus' several sayings, His words ( $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ ) are also life giving (vi.63-69); His

commandment is eternal life (xii.50); and abiding in His word, or keeping it, insures deliverance from death (viii. 51). Walking or abiding in the Truth as it is revealed in Jesus (1 John iii.19; 2 John 4; 3 John 3-4) is the same as walking or abiding in the light (1 John 1.7; 1John 11.10).

There is another term which properly comes in between the knowledge of the truth and life: it is the term fellowship. "Eternal life stands in closest relation to the apprehension of that which is true through fellowship with 'him that is true' " (1). A true knowledge of God is necessary to a true fellowship with Him; but fellowship with God cannot but issue in a fuller knowledge. Fellowship like knowledge, is a condition of life, but it is also and far more adequately than knowledge, the fruition of it. In vi.56 f the life which is to be had by participation in the flesh of Jesus, is associated with personal communion with Him, and through Him with the Father; similarly in the Epistle (1 John 11.24.25), "If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father; and this is the promise which he promised us, even life eternal" (cf 1 John v.20). So also in 1 John 1.3-4, the message of the Gospel is the condition of fellowship with the Father and the Son; and this constitutes the fulness of joy. Next to eternal life, it is fellowship

(1) W.F.Howard, Christianity according to S.John, p.188

with God which most commonly serves to describe the peculiar blessedness of the children of God. There is no conception which John develops more richly than this; beside the expression "to have fellowship with Him" and the whole range of terms which represent God (Son or Holy Spirit) as "coming" and as "dwelling" in men, we have the formula of mystical union "being in him" and "dwelling in him". As Christ's mystical union with the Father is the ground and content of His own life (vi.57;xiv.10,19 ff ) so must His corresponding communion with His disciples impart to them the same life which He possesses through the Father's abiding in Him (xv.1-5). It is for this reason that eternal life may be said to be derived from the knowledge of God, because such knowledge is a condition of communion with God. The revelation of the truth in Jesus is therefore life, because it is the way to the Father (xiv.6) (1).

This eternal life which is enjoyed in communion with the Father through the Son, which is in fact participation in the divine life, cannot be thought of as subject to decay or death. Therefore in the sixth chapter, quite parallel to the expression, "He that eateth my flesh hath ~~eat~~ eternal life (vi.54), we have "If any man eat this bread he shall live for ever" (vi.51,58), and, "that a man may eat

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(1) cf F.von Hugel: "The social organically connected and variously graduated, life of the Spirit, Christ and God, so deeply embedded in our Lord's teaching, and so clearly articulated by St Paul, is here explicitly insisted upon by Christ Himself: "I am the true vine, ye are the branches, and my Father is the husbandman" (xv.1-5) Eternal Life, p.78

thereof, and not die" (vi.50). Eternal life has in itself the potency of continuous existence, it is indifferent to death and the dissolution of the body, and is the earnest of an everlasting existence in plenitude of life (1).

"Eternal life forms a <sup>l</sup>continuum in the mind of the writer"(2) Thus it is said "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live" (xi.25). But as the resurrection of the body is, in Hebrew thought and in N.T. thought generally, essential to the full fruition of Life (3), and as this is not suggested in the idea of eternal life itself, it is therefore added as an independent, though related, conception "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (vi.40; cf 39,54). And whereas in vi.57 the life of the believer is represented as depending upon Christ's possession of life from the Father; in xiv.19 the believer's continuance in life is assured by Christ's triumph over death.

The consideration of the consummation of life after death was of less importance for John because he conceived of it as effecting no change which was not in the nature of mere development of that which the believer already possessed. As he here and now enjoyed eternal life in communion with God, and refers this in turn to knowledge of

(1) On the time factor in eternal life see pp. 78 ff above, of W.F.Howard in Christianity According to S.John, p.124: "The Hebrew approach...seems to involve three propositions: (a) the time process is a reality, (b) closely related to "eternity", and (c) which includes it rather than extends it, still less overshadows it" (2) R.N.Flew, The Idea of Perfection, p.96 (3) This was also a matter of great

God, we have the double consequence: that wherever there is faith in Christ as the Son of God, there is eternal life; but as faith grows deeper and knowledge<sup>4</sup> richer, the possession and fruition of that life becomes ever richer and fuller. From the knowledge which is by faith, to that which consists in beholding God (xvii.24; 1 John iii.2), there is indeed such a progress in the attainment of the perfected life as to make<sup>it</sup> appear almost a new possession; even though here we are not to think of a higher life taking the place of a lower, but eternal life is in its very conception, the same heavenly blessing, in this world and for ever.

#### THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

We have hitherto considered the significance of the Incarnation and the Death of Christ and the close connection between the revelation of God in Jesus and the gift of eternal life. But the same Gospel whose earlier part treats of the Light coming into the world (i.9; iii.19; xii.35,46) treats towards the end of Jesus' departure out of the world. (xiii.1) It would be a poor fulfilment of the prophecy which promised an enduring covenant, and an abiding presence of God among His people, with the consequent possibility of eternal life for all who had faith and knowledge, if, with Jesus' ascension, the newly given privilege came to an end, and remoteness again succeeded to the close relation of

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importance in the conflict between Christianity and Gnosticism, see Nygren, Agape and Eros, part ii, vol.1, pp 64 ff.

fellowship with God which Jesus had established. Jesus' departure from the world was in fact a turning point of great importance. The sensible, visible, manifestation of God before men came thereby to an end. That Jesus was the light of the world as long as He was in the world (ix.5) signifies that for the world at least His departure meant the disappearance of the light and the closing in of darkness (xi.35,36). Because the world has neither recognised nor received God's revelation (xvii.25; 1 John iii.1) it falls back into the dominion of darkness (xi.35). The illumination which is experienced in Christ is however an enduring one for those who by faithful reception of the light have broken the bonds of darkness (xi.46; viii.12), and become the children of light (xi.36). For them the true light continues to shine (1 John ii.8); they are in the light (1 John ii.9), and "walk in the light, as he is in the light" (1 John i.7) (1).

Jesus' departure out of the world had moreover the effect of revealing Him more clearly as the Son of Man from Heaven (iii.13), and of removing the causes of stumbling which were due to an imperfect recognition of His nature (vi.61,62). But above everything else, the "lifting up" of the Son of Man (iii.14) serves to make Him accessible to the faith of all (iii.15). We have seen the double

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(1) <sup>ἦν</sup> in John 1.4, 10 indicates continuous existence. Many Old Syriac texts not realising this replaced <sup>ἦν</sup> with <sup>ἔστιν</sup>.

meaning attached to this expression (1). John finds in it a hint of the mode of Jesus' death (xii.33;xviii.32). He also sees in it a revelation of Jesus' glory and dignity (viii.28), and of His love and obedience to the Father (xiv.31). But above all it denotes His transcendence of earthly limitation and elevation to the spirit world where He can exercise universal rule and make His saving work effectual for all (xii.32). The departure from the world which is accomplished through His death and ascension, is therefore anything but a breaking off of His relation with the world. Only as One who gives His life, in order that He may take it again (x.17;xii.24), does Jesus attain to the universal significance which His mission demands (x.16;x.52). Jesus' revealing work not only continues, but in becoming more spiritual, more inward, it is able to lay aside the restrictions which clung to His earthly teaching (xvi.29). It is precisely as He is exalted to Heaven that Jesus is able to come into ~~that~~ the most inward and direct relation with His disciples: "I in them and they in me".

The conception of Jesus' continued presence among His disciples is founded upon the idea of His "coming again", which John distinguishes as well from His visible reappearances after His resurrection (xvi.16 ff) as from His final return (xiv.3). Jesus will not leave His disciples orphaned. He will come, and though hidden from the world He remains

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(1) see pages 149 ff above.



for them an enduring vision.

Now this coming again of Jesus, and abiding for ever with His disciples is explicitly referred to the gift of the Holy Spirit. For this reason the Holy Spirit occupies an integral part in the Johannine scheme of salvation and justifies the inclusion of this topic under the general heading of "Eternal Life". Dr E.F.Scott, however, thinks that the Johannine teaching about the Holy Spirit is superfluous. "The more closely we examine the Johannine doctrine of the Spirit", he says, "the more are we compelled to acknowledge that there is no place for it in the theology as a whole." The reason for this is that John "regards the spirit as the power of Christ still in action in the Christian life, and pervading it throughout....under the light of His Spirit the whole life of Christ will disclose its inner meaning," and sayings and events which were little thought of at the time will come out in their true grandeur." (1). John, however, makes it quite clear that in his own mind it is "another paraclete" who shall be with His disciples when Jesus separates from them (xiv.16; xvi.7) (2). The judgement of Dr.H.B.Swete seems conclusive:

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(1) The Fourth Gospel, pp 347 & 388 ; cf Gardner, The Ephesian Gospel, p.159 (2) The Sinai Syriac renders, He will give you another, the paraclete."

"It cannot be maintained that Christ is speaking in John xiv - xvi merely of a new operation of divine power in man (cf ps. cxxxix) or of His own spirit as perpetuating itself in the lives of His disciples. For He proceeds to distinguish both from the Father and from Himself....The differentiation is perfect; the Spirit is not the Father, nor is He the Son; as a person He is distinct from both" (1).

In the broader sense, in the sense that was current in the O.T., the Spirit of God was said to be bestowed upon Jesus to equip Him for His work (iii.34; xi.32). John is, however, consistent in his representation that the Spirit, in the special Christian significance, could not be given until Jesus was glorified (vii.39; cf xx.22), and he explains Jesus' earlier references to the Spirit, as prophecies of that which was to be given. The phrase in vii.39 (for the Spirit was not yet) has caused some difficulty from the earliest times, e.g. D. adds the explanation ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ and B. adds διδόμενον. But the difficulty is somewhat mitigated if we understand by Spirit (without the article) a gift or dispensation of the Spirit as an interior motive working in men's lives, and not in the sense of the person of the Holy Spirit. "When Jesus spoke there was as yet no spiritual force in the world such as was brought into it at the Pentecost and afterwards swept like a great tidal wave

(1) H.D.B. article, The Holy Spirit, vol.ii.p.408  
 with the neuter πνεῦμα is connected with the masculines Πατήρ and υἱός, ἐκείνος and αὐτός is very striking.

over the face of the earth. And the reason for this was that Jesus was still in the flesh, was not yet glorified". (1) The same conception is found in Luke who regarded the gift of the Spirit as belonging exclusively to the exalted Christ (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts ii. 33). It was only then (Acts i. 5) that he justified the testimony of the Baptist that He should baptise with the Holy Spirit (Mark i. 8).

John lays greater stress than any other Evangelist, and more clearly than any other Evangelist, he shows what constituted the distinctive operation of the Holy Spirit. The comparative silence of Jesus on the Holy Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels has suggested to some that the prominence given to the doctrine in the Fourth Gospel is a reading back of later experience. But as Dr. Strachan remarks (2) it may have been as difficult for Jesus to speak about the Spirit as about His own Messiahship. The O.T. conception of the Spirit needed to be revised in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus. (3).

Dr. A. J. MacDonald draws attention to a distinction which should be observed between  $\tau\iota\nu\tau\acute{\omicron}\mu\acute{\iota}$  with the article and without the article. (4). An examination of all the relevant passages in the N.T. shows that the article is invariably used when the Holy Spirit is regarded as an agent operating upon man from the outside as it were, or as a

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(1) Swete, The Holy Spirit in the N.T., p. 145 (2) The Fourth Gospel, p. 288 (3) There is also the fact that during the Public Ministry of Jesus He Himself revealed the life of the Spirit. There was not therefore the need to speak about the Holy Spirit. (4) The Interpreter Spirit and Human Life, pp 66 ff

Divine Being. When the article is omitted the Holy Spirit is regarded as an inward inspiration working as an impersonal divine power within men. The Fourth Gospel is no exception to this rule and it is important to notice that in chapters xiv-xvi where the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit is most clearly described, the article is used in every case.

The difference in meaning between the two uses may be illustrated by quoting in full passages where πνεῦμα is used both with and without the article. In iii.5.6.8. we have, "Except a man be born of water and spirit ( πνεύματος ) he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God....for that which is born of the spirit ( τοῦ πνεύματος ) is spirit ( πνεῦμα ) the wind bloweth where it listeth....so is everyone that is born of the spirit ( τοῦ πνεύματος )." As the gift received in Baptism becomes part of the nature of a man and works within him it is described without the article. But when the Holy Spirit denotes the agent by which the New Birth is brought about the article is employed. Similarly ~~σκακζκκκ~~ in vii.38.39 Jesus says, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spake of the spirit ( τοῦ πνεύματος ), which they that believed on him were to receive; for spirit ( πνεῦμα ) was not yet given." Here the contrast is between the Holy Spirit as a personal agent and the spiritual endowment which would proceed from Him.

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 As It is/the paraclete that the Spirit is most characteristically represented by John. The term is used only five times in the N.T., and that only in the Johannine

writings (xiv.16,26;xv.26;xvi.7; 1 John ii.1)., and it is translated in two ways: by Advocate in the sense of pleader or defender, and by Comforter in the sense of consoler (1). According to the strict etymological use of the word it should always be used in "the <sup>2</sup>sense of advocate, counsel, one who pleads, convinces, convicts in a great controversy, one who strengthens on the one hand and defends on the other, meeting formidable attacks". (2)

This is the sense in which the word is used in Philo (3). For example, "I grant forgiveness for all that you have done against me; you need no one else as intercessor (de Joseph 40). "It was indispensable that he who was consecrated to the Father of the world should employ as His advocate the Son, most perfect in ~~δυστυχ~~ virtue, for both the forgiveness of sins and the supply of an unlimited blessings." (de Vit.Mos. iii.14). Similarly in the Talmud and the Targums the Greek word appears in the form פְּרִיָּשִׁיט or פְּרִיָּשִׁיטָא and always in the passive sense of helper or advocate. For example, "R.Eliezer b.Jacob says: He that performs one precept gets for himself one advocate (פְּרִיָּשִׁיט) but he that commits one transgression gets for himself one accuser. Repentance and good works are as a shield against

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(1) see Westcott, S. John pp 211ff; Hastings in H.D.B vol iii pp 665 ff; A Julicher, Encycl.Biblica, 3567 ff.  
 (2) Westcott, S. John, p.212. (3) It should be noticed however that "the Παράκλητος of the Gospels has nothing in common with that of Philo, but the name and the idea of advocacy implied in it. Neither can the conception of πνεῦμα as it is found in Philo be regarded as in any sense parallel to the Johannine Spirit." E.F.Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p331.

retribution" (Aboth.iv.11).

On the otherhand the prevailing interpretation among the Greek Fathers is that of "consoler" (ὁ Παρακλητῶν). For example Origen: "paraclete in the Greek has the two meanings "int<sup>er</sup>essor" and "consoler"....paraclete when used of the Holy Spirit is generally understood as "consoler" (de princ. ii.7.4). Cyril of Jerusalem: Παράκλητος .... διὰ τὸ Παρακαλεῖν (Cat.xvi.20). Gregory of Nyssa: τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Παράκλητου... Παρακλητῶν (adv.Eunom.ii). This interpretation is probably due to the context in which the word appears in the Fourth Gospel. The paraclete is promised to the disciples to console them for the forthcoming loss of their Lord. But this can hardly have been the purpose for which Jesus sent the Paraclete for the disciples needed no consolation in view of the resurrection. Even before the Paraclete came they "returned to Jerusalem with great joy." (Luke xxiv.52).

Mr.Davey in a note on the Paraclete (1) seeks to combine these two interpretations of Advocate and Comforter. He says "the Spirit of Truth, just because He reveals God's love and assures men of it, Himself exposes the blindness of darkness of the world. The consolation of the disciples is consolation in themidst of condemnation, and if the ~~Advocate~~ <sup>Comforter</sup> secures recognition of God's boundless mercy, Advocate secures recognition of the sternness of the issue." Dr Hans

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(1) The Fourth Gospel, Hoskyns and Davey, p.554.

Windisch however finds the matter much more complicated. He has pointed out that there are five paraclete Sayings which together form a unity, namely, xiv. 15-17; xiv. 25-26; xv. 26, 27; xvi. 5-11; xvi. 12-15 (1). And in these five Sayings he distinguishes three different meanings to the word paraclete: (i.) as a vindicating and punishing witness; (ii) as one who assists and supports, and (iii) as a counsellor and tutor. His conclusion is that the paraclete represents the figure of a prophet who bears witness, bestows counsel, teaches and discloses the future (2). This conclusion may be accepted but he says that the paraclete is only the Christ-Spirit which inspires and guides the Christian Church. This weakens the representation of John and seems to me quite contrary to the statement that the Paraclete is "another comforter".

These different interpretations must not be allowed to obscure the primary significance of the paraclete. This is that God perpetuates through another representative the close union with His people which they had enjoyed in the presence of Jesus. "The Spirit is regarded as continuing the action of the historical Jesus as paraclete" (3). His dwelling in the Church is unending *εις τον αιωνα*. The presence of God becomes even closer, for the paraclete

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(1) "The Five Johannine Sayings about the Paraclete", in Festgabe für Adolf Julicher, pp 11-137 (2) *op. cit.* p. 127. (3) W. Michaelis, in Reich Gottes u. Geist Gottes nach dem N.T., p. 31, quoted by Howard, Christianity according to St. John, p. 76 note.

abides not only with His people, but in them (xiv.17). Jesus's departure is therefore an advantage, since it is the condition of the coming of the more, and more universally, effective paraclete (xvi.<sup>7</sup>~~22~~), ~~and~~ who shall guide the disciples unto all truth (xvi.13) and reveal to them what they were unable to bear from Jesus' lips (xvi.12). There is even a beholding of the Spirit<sup>m</sup> which is the special privilege of God's people in contrast to the world. (xiv.17)

It is this conception of the paraclete as the teacher of the truth which constitutes the most important element in John's doctrine of the Spirit, and which brings it into line with his philosophy of salvation. Notwithstanding the mystical note in John's doctrine, namely, his conception of the Spirit as dwelling in the disciples, he does not represent Him as operating upon the will in an irrational manner, but like Christ Himself, through the whole personality by the revelation of the truth. The paraclete as the Spirit of Truth is no abstract moral quality, but signifies the revelation in history of the ultimate truth of God (1). As Jesus' saving work is predominantly represented as a revelation of the truth; so likewise is that of His substitute, God's other Advocate. He is "the Spirit of truth" (xiv.17; xv.26; xvi.13; 1 John iv.6) or, as it is said in 1 John v.6, "the Spirit is the truth". As the Spirit of truth, He is a witness to Christ (xv.26), and a guide unto all truth (xvi.13) and under whatever name He is referred to

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(1) cf Hoskyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel, p.552.



He is constantly regarded as a teacher. In xiv.26 He is called the Holy Spirit, but His work here is likewise expressed in the same terms: "He shall teach you all things." Even when John speaks of the Spirit under the O.T. symbol of an "unction", the effect of this anointing from the Holy One (i.e. Christ) is that we know all things (1 John ii.20.27). As it is Jesus' revelation of the truth which is virtually the inception of eternal life; so it is only by a birth from above by water and the Spirit that one can enter into the Kingdom of God (iii.5) or eternal life. Revelation, Spirit and Life are expressly brought into connection with one another in the saying of Jesus: "It is the Spirit that maketh alive; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life" (vi.63). The "words" of Jesus are of course the means of revelation. Hence according to John's conception of the Spirit's work, Christian Baptism may be viewed as an illumination as it was also called in the early Church. (1)

The association of the Spirit with the gift of Life is very subtly intimated in the Fourth Gospel under the O.T. symbolism of water. John's explanation of one of Christ's sayings as referring to the Spirit who "was not yet" (vii.39) justifies us in seeing this reference in other sayings of the same character. This interpretation of Jesus' words as a prophecy of the Spirit, is connected directly with the

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(1) cf e.g. Justin Dial.61: *καλεῖται δὲ τούτο τὸ λουτρὸν φωτισμὸς* cf Heb. vi.4 & x.32.

saying, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"(vii.38). And John's interpretation is justified by Isaiah (xliv.3; cf Joel iii.18 & Zech. xiv.8), which was probably the scripture Jesus had in mind, and which expresses the pouring out of the Spirit under the image of a pouring out of water upon a thirsty land. It was however directly from Jesus that thirsty souls were called upon to drink (vii.37). Furthermore those whose desires are satisfied by faith in Jesus will in turn become a well of water to others. "He who drinks of the Spiritual Rock becomes in turn himself a rock from which the waters flow to slake the thirst of others." (1). Jesus word's are spirit and life, and they were therefore "living water" (iv.10), "a well of water springing up into eternal life" (iv.14). We can probably see in this another reason why John dwells with so much emphasis and with so great mystery upon the flowing water from Jesus' pierced side (xix.34,35; cf 1 John v.6-8). That well of living water, which in Jesus had begun to spring (iv.14) (2) was not sealed up by His departure, but chiefly then it flowed like a river from His exalted body.

In Rabbinic literature the expression "living water" is seldom discussed, but "water" is sometimes referred to

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(1) Westcott, S. John, P. 123. (2) The contrast between *φρέαρ* in verse 6 which gives the suggestion of shallowness, and *πηγή* in verse 14 which suggests depth and inexhaustibility is suggestive. *Significant.*

as symbolising the Holy Spirit. For example with reference to the House of Libation R. Yehosua b. Levi says: "It is called this, because from there they drew the Holy Spirit" (palestinian Talmud, Sukka 55 a). The O.T. simile of the pouring out of water for the gift of the Spirit is retained in the Rabbinic interpretation (e.g. Targum to Isaiah xlii.3) But the usual interpretation is that water means the Tora. For example, "The words of the Tora are likened unto water, just as water is life to the world, so the words of the Tora are life to the world.... Just as water is priceless, so the words of the Tora are priceless. And just as one may say, does not water make the heart of man glad, so, one may say, do not the words of the Tora make the heart glad." (Sifre, parasa Equaeb. 37.c.d., quoted by Odeberg, The Fourth Gospel ~~et p. 158~~ et p. 158).

In the Jewish Apocrypha water is identified with wisdom. For example, "And in that place I saw the fountain of righteousness which is inexhaustible: and around it were many fountains of wisdom; and all the thirsty draw of them, and were filled with wisdom (1 Enoch xlvi.1). "For wisdom is poured out like water.... because the Elect One standeth before the Lord of Spirits.... and in him dwells the Spirit of wisdom" (1 Enoch xlix). "For he that feareth the Lord doeth this, and he that taketh hold of the Law findeth her. And she will meet him as a mother, and as a youthful wife will she receive him; and she will feed him with the bread of understanding, and will give him the water of knowledge

to drink." (Ben Sira xv.1-3).

Because of the frequency with which water is identified with the Tora and with wisdom in contemporary literature Dr.H.Odeburg thinks that the water given by Jesus as contrasted with the water given by the Samaritan <sup>woman</sup> ~~xxx~~ indicates the teaching of Jesus (1). But as we have seen John himself interprets living water as meaning the Spirit (vii.39). In the words of Dr.W.L.Knox, "The Evangelist takes over the standing equation ~~xxx~~ of wisdom with the waters of the O.T., and identifies wisdom not with the Tora but with the Holy Spirit." (2).

Although the Holy Spirit takes the place of Christ and carries out His work, John does not intend to represent that the revelation given by the Spirit makes a material advance beyond the revelation given by Jesus, or that any other is in the same sense as He the mediator of truth to men. For as in the Epistle the teaching of the "unction" is to the effect that the disciples abide in Christ (1 John ii.27) so in the Gospel the teaching of the Paraclete is simply a witness to Christ (xv.26), a calling to remembrance of His words (xiv.26), a drawing from His fulness, a taking of His things to declare them unto His disciples (xvi.14). The Spirit indeed "shall declare things to come" (xvi.13); but His principle witness is to the past, to the historic fact of Jesus' manifestation, and His witness is in this case co-ordinate with that of the water and the blood (1 John v, 78)

(1) op.cit. p.168 (2) Some Hell.Elements etc, p.64.

and with that also of the Apostles themselves (xv.26).

Thus Jesus Himself remains in a unique sense the mediator of truth and life to believers, and it is thus made possible for those also "who have not seen and have believed" (xx.29), to enjoy a teaching from God, and in some sort a vision of Christ.

In the relative independence which John ascribes to the Paraclete, we see reflected the high significance of the Spirit as the medium of revelation which Jewish theology had already dimly recognised, and which the Christian theology expressed in the Trinitarian formula. To quote Dr. W.F. Howard, "Though with St John we are still in the predogmatic stage of the Trinitarian teaching, the Sayings about the Paraclete carry us a degree farther than any other writing in the development of the New Testament doctrine of the Godhead." (1)

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(1) Christianity according to St John, p. 80

## VIII.

## THE APPROPRIATION OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Hitherto our attention has been directed almost exclusively to the consideration of God's work in the salvation of men. And this is the emphasis which we find in the Johannine writings. Having considered the work of God in Jesus Christ to bring about the salvation of man we must now consider the part which man has to play in the process of salvation - namely how he appropriates the divine gift of eternal life. It is not enough that God's work is accomplished; man too has a work to perform. Salvation is primarily the establishment of a relation between God and man, and this demands a mutual work, because it is a relation between person and person. Hence "the actual impartation of the actual life of God is the core of the Johannine soteriology. It is this that marks the Gospel as a gospel, and Christ the mediator of a real salvation". (1)

KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH IN CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT.

Before however considering the means by which eternal life is appropriated according to the conception of John, it will be well to discuss the idea of salvation in contemporary thought and especially the ideas of knowledge and faith

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(1) R. Law, The Tests of Life, p. 56

as these are also prominent conceptions in the Johannine writings. This will enable us to appreciate the distinctive contribution which John makes to religious thought in this matter.

We have already seen how John refutes the gnostic teaching of Cerinthus in the emphasis he lays upon the "word made flesh". But Gnosticism is also a way of salvation (1). According to the various Gnostic sects salvation consisted in the escape of the spirit from the prison house of the soul, which was the body. The human spirit must somehow break away from the sensible and material world, until, freed from all contamination of sense, it becomes altogether spiritual. This salvation is achieved through ~~gnosis~~ knowledge ( $\gamma\upsilon\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ) which is imparted by a divine being who descends to the earth and reveals the saving truth. In the Hermetica the divine revealer is Hermes Tresmegistos. Some of the Gnostic sects adopted certain Christian ideas and terminology; the Valentinian Gnostics especially made considerable use of the Fourth Gospel in an attempt to commend Christianity to the Alexandrians (2). In this Christian Gnosticism the part played by Hermes Tresmegistos in the Hermetica is taken by Christ. It was in respect of this later Gnosticism that Dean Mansel remarks<sup>(3)</sup> "The

(1) see Nygren, Agape and Eros, part II, vol. I, pp 77ff

(2) see J.N. Sanders, The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church

(3) Mansel, Gnostic Heresies, p. 4

distinctive feature which marks Gnosticism in all its schools as a religious heresy, and <sup>not</sup> merely a philosophical extravagance, is the presence of the idea of a redemption of the world, and the recognition in a perverted form, of the person and work of Christ as taking part in this redemption". The Christ of the Fourth Gospel is of course very different from that of the Gnostics. Because of the inherent evil of matter the Gnostics could not conceive of a Christ who had a real body of flesh such as that proclaimed by John. The death of Christ was of no importance to the Gnostics for salvation was mediated by teaching and revelation and not by death. The task of the Gnostic Christ was to awaken men's souls rather than to save them (1). In absolute contrast to the Johannine conception that a man must be born from above (ανωθεν 111.13 (2) ) Nygren emphasises that the essence of the Gnostic way of salvation was upwards from below <sup>3</sup>κατωθεν <sup>2</sup>νω (Hippol. Elench. vii 22.8).

Owing to the presence of this idea of redemption and of a saviour in Gnostic thought it was once thought to be a peculiarly Christian movement. According to Harnack the Gnostics were the first Christian philosophers who brought about an acute secularising of the Gospel (3). The suggestion was that the Gnostics were mere intellectualists and barren

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(1) Nygren, op.cit. p.85 (2) Westcott supports the rendering "anew", St. John, p.63 (3) History of Dogma, Eng. Trans. i. p.226.



of practical morality. In the words of Dean Mansel, "the motto of the Gnostic might be exactly given in the words of a distinguished modern philosopher, 'men are saved, not by the historical, but by the metaphysical' " (1). Recent research has however served to mitigate the hardness of this view. The appearance of the Hermetic literature and fuller knowledge regarding the Mystery Religions show that gnosticism was not in origin Christian and was in fact world-wide. In particular Norden points out (2) that the essence of gnosticism was not philosophy or speculation, but spiritual vision. "Gnosticism can very easily lose itself in cosmological speculation, speculation about aeons and so on, but it is always speculation on a practical religious basis and with a practical religious aim." (3). The actual ~~translation~~ translation of the word γνῶσις by knowledge "is quite inadequate and misleading for such gnosis is not so much an attainment of human reason as a supernatural endowment communicated from above" (4).

Such a verdict is <sup>borne</sup> ~~borne~~ out by an examination of the instances in which the word γνῶσις occurs in the Hermetic literature. For example, "We thank thee....for thou hast bestowed upon us mind, speech and knowledge....knowledge that having come to know thee, and found salvation in the light thou gavest, we may be filled with gladness" (sc.41 b; Scott 1. p.375). "The knowledge of God is man's

(1) Mansel, Gnostic Heresies, p.4 (2) Agnostos Theos, pp.69 ff. (3) Nygren, op.cit. p.78.  
 (4) Macgregor and Purdy, Jew and Greek Tutors unto Christ p.313.

salvation....and by this alone can a man become good" (libellus x.15 a; Scott 1.p.197). In libellus x.10.a. we have "knowledge is the perfection of science and science is the gift of God". Scott, however, thinks that ἐπιστήμη has slipped into the text from a marginal note (Corp. Herm. ii.p.247; cf also Exc.2.b.2; Scott 1.p.391 and xiii.8.b.& 9; Scott 1. p.245). In the words of a later writer, Clement of Alexandria (Excerpta ex Theodoto lxxviii.2), gnosis is knowledge of "who we are and whither we come; whither we hasten, whence we are redeemed; what our birth is and what our rebirth". We may say therefore that the word is "constantly used....to denote an immediate vision of truth as contrasted with the wisdom that comes by seeking." (1).

Philo implies that life is dependent upon knowledge. In his allegory of Nadab and Abihu true life in God is attained by fleeing from the world and empty opinion (leg.a.leg ii.57). Knowledge of God is the climax of happiness and age-long life (de spec.leg.1.345). Such knowledge is not barren intellectualism any more than it is in the Hermetic Literature, for Philo knows that life is impossible without virtue (de post. Gain. 68; de spec.leg.1.31). With this background of contemporary thought it is not surprising that in Johannine thought knowledge "is never a purely intellectual process. It is acquired by the exercise of all the faculties" (2). According to Sanders (3) the Gospel represented a true

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(1) E.F.Scott, E.R.E. art. Gnosticism, vol.ii.p.231.  
 (2) Brooke, Johannine Epistles, p.29 (3) The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church, pp 65,66



a similar distinction could be made <sup>e</sup> ~~even~~ among Christians. A Christian at the stage of faith clings to the letter of the Scripture, while its spiritual meaning is hid from him. The true gnostic is a Christian of higher rank and may even be called a God (1). But the N.T. as a whole knows no antithesis between faith and knowledge. If any distinction were to be made in the Johannine conception we may say that John's teaching is nearer the credo ut intelligam of the saints rather than the intellego ut credam of the philosophers (2).

We have already seen that in the Hebrew the words ~~אֱמוּנָה~~ <sup>אֱמוּנָה</sup> and ~~אֱמוּנָה~~ <sup>אֱמוּנָה</sup> express faithfulness and reliability (3), we now observe that the same words express even faith itself. Prof. C.H. Dodd points out that in the LXX the words ~~πίστις~~ <sup>πίστις</sup> ~~πιστεύειν~~ <sup>πιστεύειν</sup> nearly always render Hebrew words having the root ~~אֱמוּנָה~~ <sup>אֱמוּנָה</sup> (4). This suggests that in the LXX ~~πιστεύειν~~ <sup>πιστεύειν</sup> contains the idea of trust and confidence rather than mere belief, for the basic idea underlying the root is that of firmness and fixity. This was so even in classical Greek. Dodd illustrates this from a passage in Xenophon (Mem. 1 1 1-5) which makes it clear that ~~πιστεύειν θεοῖς~~ <sup>πιστεύειν θεοῖς</sup> means something more than just ~~νομίζειν εἰναι θεούς~~ <sup>νομίζειν εἰναι θεούς</sup> (5). The conclusion of Dodd is that the N.T. carries over this idea and that the dominant meaning of faith is supplied by the Hebrew ~~אֱמוּנָה~~ <sup>אֱמוּנָה</sup>

(1) see Nygren, op.cit. pp 137 ff (2) cf Bernard, S. John p.222 (3) p.43 above. (4) The Bible and the Greeks, p.70 (5) ibid. pp 66 & 67.

implying faith and trust in God rather than mere belief. We shall see that John is no exception to this rule, and emphasises the fact by using the phrase *πιστεύειν εἰς* <sup>as</sup> ~~πιστεύειν~~ <sup>אֱמַן</sup> being a more literal translation of the Hebrew phrase ~~אֱמַן~~ <sup>אֱמַן</sup> (1).

BELIEVING AND KNOWING IN THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS.

In the Synoptic Gospels when Jesus is asked what a man must do to inherit eternal life the <sup>answer</sup> is given in terms of moral conduct, and with express reference to the Law. (Matt. xix.16-21; Mark x. 17-21). The same question recurs in the Fourth Gospel but the answer is different. Jesus interprets the visit of Nicodemus and His acknowledgement of Him as "ateacher come from God" (iii.1,2), as a request for instructions about the conditions of entrance into the Kingdom of God (iii.3,5), and He answers it by a demand for moral regeneration which is however traced back to belief in the Son of Man (iii.15). This question explicitly recurs in vi.28, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" And the ruling conception of life and salvation is conclusively expressed in Jesus' reply, "This is the work of God that ye may believe on him whom he sent" (vi.29).

This last quotation has the effect of disposing the question which so engrossed S. Paul and S. James (Gal iii.5; James ii.24). For St. Paul it was an alternative between faith and works; for St James it was faith with or faith without works: for John the contrast simply did not exist,

(1) In the LXX neither *εἰς* nor *ἐν* is used with *πιστεύειν* Sometimes *εἰς* is used (Ps 78.22). The usual constr. is with dat.

faith is the work which is required for participation in life. With no writer less than John however is faith viewed as a work meritorious in itself, and deserving of salvation on account of its moral quality as an act. Belief in all its various forms is never regarded as an end or ultimate object. There is no thought of "believing in believing" (1). This striking saying of Jesus does no doubt express the fact that believing is more than passive receptivity. It is with the labour which is required for earthly sustenance that He compares the work required "for the meat which abideth unto eternal life"; but on the other hand this is the meat which is not in anywise to be earned, but "which the Son of Man shall give unto you" (vi.27). Christ's gift to the world is primarily the revelation of the truth; and this of itself produces in man eternal life and its consequent fruits. But it is not enough that the truth which is the light should shine upon men; it must be received into them. In as much as the truth which Christ reveals is not a bare philosophical conception, but is distinctly within the moral sphere, it can be received only by a moral act - by an act of the will - which is the expression of the deepest disposition of the heart. In the words of Bernard (2), "An act of faith in Christ at a definite crisis is a good thing, but a better (and a harder) thing

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(1) Abbott, Johannine Vocabulary, 1549

(2) St John, p. 193

is to keep in perpetual contact with Christ, and nothing less than this is what is needed *εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*. In this sense, faith is a work, it expresses a positive activity on man's part."

Nevertheless, as the condition of salvation, it is regarded with complete abstraction of the intellectual or moral difficulties which have to be overcome, and of the active element of moral choice which it involves; from this point of view the question is simply whether one has the truth; and therefore seeing God and knowing Him are, as conditions of life (xvii.3; 1 John iii.6), precisely on a par with believing on Him. So far therefore is this saying of Jesus from substituting the work of faith for the works recognised by the Law as conditions of life, that it rather does away altogether with the legalistic conception of works. As Bernard points out Jesus will not allow the Jewish enquirers to begin by speaking of the working of the works of God. They must get away from the legalism which counted up good works as meriting from God the recompense of eternal life. There is one *ἔργον τοῦ Θεοῦ* which must precede all others, because it places the man in his true relation with God, viz., faith in Christ. (1) The antithesis between justification by works and justification by faith, which was so radically important in the Pauline system, and which proved itself so liable to misunderstanding, simply does not

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(1) St. John. p. 192.

emerge in the Johannine theology. This is not merely because the idea of justification is completely strange to his thought; but because he was not conscious of the rather barren analyse of faith and works, which so puzzled the readers whom S. James addressed. He did not feel the antithesis between salvation by Law and by Grace. This is no doubt due to the fact that he had not passed through a spiritual crisis such as S. Paul had experienced. Therefore, without thinking of the Law as in any sense the antithesis of the Gospel, he expressed the Gospel in the terms of the Law. Yet as soon as he had come to regard Jesus' revelation of love as the Law, and as the new commandment, the Law in the contemporary Jewish sense was as completely done away as it was for S. Paul.

We see in this instance, as in so many others, how the more mature thought of John resolves the apparent contradictions of earlier Apostolic teaching. S. James' discrimination between faith which is accompanied by works and faith without works, was simply impossible for one who like John conceived of faith as imparting the true life, and producing the appropriate moral fruits of life just in ~~proportion~~ proportion as it was the apprehension of a true knowledge. It did not occur to the mind of John, as it did to S. Paul, the possibility that moral conduct might in any way be divorced from the idea of salvation (Rom. iii.8; vi.1). His system as a whole was so constituted as to render



transparent, beyond the possibility of misconception, the relation of faith to salvation: it is simply the willing reception of the light of life. "He that believeth hath eternal life" (vi.47).

There is a peculiarity of John's language which serves materially to prevent ambiguity in his conception of faith. It is that the word faith itself (πίστις) occurs but once in the writings we are considering (1 John v.4). Instead of the substantive, he uses the verbal forms "to believe" (πιστεύειν) and for the negative, "to believe not" (οὐ πιστεύειν). There are scholars who say that the reason for this is because πίστις had acquired a definite gnostic import from which it could hardly be dissociated (1). It would seem more likely however that the word had come to suggest a fixed deposit of faith, whereas John preferred to use the verbal form in order to lay emphasis neither upon the object, nor upon the act, but upon the fact that the object is appropriated by the subject (2). It is true that he frequently uses the verb absolutely, as far as grammatical construction is concerned (i.7,50;iv.42, 53; v.44;vi.64;xi.15); but it is never used absolutely in sense, an object is always clearly implied, and the more obviously because for John there is but one object of faith namely Jesus.

(1) cf E.F Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p.194 and Bernard, S. John p.lxv. (2) cf Howard, Christianity according to S. John, p.155.

The ambiguity attaching to the word "faith" is seen in the single case of John's use of it in 1 John v.4,5. We are at a loss to decide whether the faith that overcometh the world, is the creed "that Jesus is the Son of God", or the act of moral surrender to Him. In the next verse however John returns to the verbal form, and disposes of this apparent alternative by a conception which in a measure includes both of the ideas which have been mentioned, "And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." The orthodox creed is not a victorious power except as it is received by faith; still less has the act of faith any moral significance apart from its object. Dr.E.F.Scott is therefore very misleading when he says that faith "implies not so much an inward disposition of trust and obedience, as the acceptance of a given dogma. To believe is to grant the hypothesis that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God." (1). The verbal form implies rather that faith is the act of the whole personality by which eternal life is appropriated. It "stands for the active exercise of the higher judgement, with a certain moral force, insofar as it involves the taking up of a personal attitude to Christ." (2).

In order to appreciate the important place which the idea of faith occupies in the mind of John we have only to

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(1) The Fourth Gospel, p.267

(2) Howard, Christianity according to S.John, p.155

recall what was said above about the division wrought among men by the manifestation of the light. The ruling motive of the Johannine narrative is the representation of the reception ~~of the reception~~ which Jesus encountered from the various classes of men with whom He came in contact. John, in striking contrast with the Synoptists, represents this in terms of faith: they believed or believed not. Unbelief is not a mere negative conception, though even from this point of view this consequence can only mean death, because it foregoes the gift of life. But it is more than not knowing God; it is therejection of Him (xv.24). It therefore involved not only the condemnation (xvi.8.9), but justified it, inasmuch as the refusal to come to the light argues an evil life (iii.19.20). We have already seen that for John the sin par excellence is "that they believe not in me". Believing in Him on the other hand is the condition of a begetting from God (i.12.23).

The idea of faith is as simple as it is fundamental. Although he employs the term in manifold relations, although it is a progressive term (1), corresponding at each stage to the believers appreciation of the significance of Jesus' person progressing in steadfastness as well as in content, its fundamental significance is the acceptance of His relation to

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(1) cf e.g. the following stages recorded in the incident of the Woman of Samaria : (a) iv.21 *πιστεύε μοι* (give credance to me); (b) iv.39, "Many of the Samaritans believed on him" *διὰ τοῦ λόγου τῆς γυναικὸς* (c) iv. 42, "Now we believe.... *αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκηκόαμεν καὶ εἶδαμεν*"

to God. The attitude of men towards Jesus is expressed in a variety of ways, although faith strictly has no synonym in the N.T. Men's attitude towards the light is expressed by receiving it or not receiving it (i.5), by coming to it or not coming; by hating it or loving it (iii.20.21); and even by believing in it (xii.36). We have also the expressions, hearing His voice (x.4.5), coming unto Him (v.40; vi.35 37, 44, 45, 55), following Him (viii.12; x.4.5.27; xxi.19, 22), knowing Him (x.14; xiv.17; xvii.3), seeing Him (xiv.9), and, of course, pre-eminently believing in Him.

Jesus as the object of faith is distinguished from all others by a form of expression which is highly significant of John's idea of faith as a personal relation. It is in regard to Jesus alone that men are said to believe in (or unto) Him ( $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu$ ) (1) It is no contradiction to this that men are said to believe in the light (xii.36), for the light is Christ Himself. This phraseology corresponds to the Semitic affinities of John's language and thought:

$\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu = \text{אֲנִי וְאֵלֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$

The construction with  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  makes the Name an object of faith in precisely the same way as Jesus/Himself, for the Name <sup>is</sup> the expression of the person (2). The significance of this

(1)  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\nu\ \text{I}\eta\sigma\upsilon\mu\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\nu\ \text{U}\iota\omicron\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$   
 ii.11; iii.16.18.36; iv.39; vi.29.35.40; vii.5.31.38.39.48; viii.30; ix.35.36; x.42; xi.25; 26.45.48; xii.11.37.42.44.46; xiv.1.12; xv.9; xvii.20; 1 John v.10 etc.

$\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu$  1.12; ii.23; iii.18; 1 John v.13.  
 (2) Abbott is surely mistaken when he interprets "believing in the Name", to mean believing in Baptism, or to say that trusting in His Name is inferior to trusting to Him, Johann. Vocabulary, 1483 ff, cf Kautzch, H.D.B. extra Vol. p.641.

construction is expressed by Dr. Moulton as follows: "It would seem therefore that the substitution of  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$   $\sim$   $\epsilon\tau\acute{\iota}$  for the simple dative may have obtained currency mainly in Christian circles where the importance of the difference between simple belief ( $\epsilon\gamma\omega\gamma\alpha\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota$ ) and personal trust ( $\epsilon\gamma\omega\tau\epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota$ ) was keenly realised. The prepositional construction was suggested no doubt by its being a more literal translation of the Hebrew phrase with  $\epsilon\tau$  " (1).

With reference to God the construction is not so uniform. Either with the name God, or with such a paraphrase as "him who sent me", the construction is usually the simple dative; but there are two exceptions, in which Jesus speaks of believing in God. In both cases the construction is determined by the fact that Jesus would represent the close connection, we might rather say, identity, of faith in Him and faith in God (xii.44; xiv.1).

Even in relation to Jesus the simple dative construction is often used; but in these instances we see that the change in construction denotes a change in sense, and that instead of the profound N.T. idea of trusting we have the simple classical sense of giving credence to one (iv.21; v.46; viii.45.46; x.37.38; xiv.11). Belief in Jesus' words and works is expressed by the dative, though we have one instance of  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$   $\tau\eta\acute{\nu}$   $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\iota\acute{\alpha}\nu$  (1 John v. 10). The construction with  $\epsilon\tau\acute{\iota}$  is not uncommon; but it is false to conclude that the object of faith is, therefore, a

(1) Grammar of N.T. Greek, i. p.68

proposition about Christ, rather than Christ Himself; for it is worthy of note that the content of these object clauses is always a proposition which expresses in the most essential terms what Jesus is, and is therefore equivalent to a definition of what He is as an object of faith - believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (xx.31) (1).

We have finally the expression, to believe through some one or some thing (διὰ τίνος ἢ τε ). The very vision of Jesus as the light ought to be sufficient to elicit faith: but in as much as men are able to see only gradually what He is, He does not discard the testimony of external witnesses. It was in the first place through the Baptist that men believed in Jesus (i.7) (2); it was through His works that they learned to believe in Him (x.38); through the word of the Samaritan woman (iv.39), men were led to a faith which is afterwards confirmed through His own word (iv.42); and finally, He looks forward to the time of His departure from the world when men shall believe in Him through the word of His disciples (xvii.20).

The whole purpose of the Gospel was that "ye might grow in the belief (πιστεύετε ) that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God." (xx.31). The ministry of Jesus was a

(1) see Brooke, Johannine Epistles, p.128 (2) This may mean "through the light", i.e., through Jesus Christ, cf 1 John iv. 9, ἵνα ἑνωμένοι ᾖμεν αὐτῷ and see Abbott, Johannine Grammar Vocabulary, 1482 and Johannine Grammar 2302 - 4

schooling of the disciples in faith; though they attained but slowly to an adequate appreciation of His nature and dignity. Nevertheless even an imperfect recognition of Him is called not unbelief but faith. Every acknowledgement of Him which reveals a movement towards the truth Jesus greets as faith (iv.48). Even the Twelve did not attain to a complete knowledge of the fulness of Christ's person till after His resurrection: it was Thomas the Doubter who made the first adequate confession, "My Lord and my God" (xx.28). There was also a strengthening of faith that went hand in hand with its enrichment. Faith is not attainment, there is constant growth (1). John refuses to consider the possibility that anyone who had really seen and known Jesus could fall back again into sin; but no such finality is involved in faith; it might not only exist imperfectly, but cease altogether or, as in viii.30-40, turn to murderous hate. Not even does the faith of the Apostles continue constant: to their confession of faith just before the passion they say, "By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God" and Jesus answers, "Do ye now believe", not suggesting a doubt in the reality of their present faith but suggesting that the hour approaches when

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(1) The tense of *μη γινω* in xx.27 implies that faith is a process which is continually going on. {2}

they shall no longer believe (xvi.30-32).

This insecure and changeable faith was very far from the goal of Jesus' purpose. It had to attain a fixed and constant quality; and this was only reached after the resurrection. To express this faith as an abiding, though growing condition, rather than a momentary act, the ordinary construction with the verb does not suffice; and therefore Jesus uses a substantative expression, "Be not faithless but believing" (μη γίνου ἀπιστος, ἀλλὰ πιστός) for the first and only time on the occasion of Thomas' recovery to faith (xx.27). With faith thus perfected in content and constancy, the first draft of the Gospel fitly ended (1).

Closely and emphatically associated with the idea of believing is that of knowing. The idea of knowledge is, corresponding to the whole character of the Fourth Gospel, one of John's most important concepts. As in the case of ~~the~~ faith the substantive is never used. The object of knowledge is not a proposition about God or Christ, but the person Himself. John does not speak of knowledge about God, but of knowing Him. It is true that knowing like believing is often expressed with an object clause (γινώσκεις ὅτι ) but the propositions which are thus grammatically expressed as the objects of knowledge are in content identical with

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(1) see Bacon, The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate, pp 190 ff, 211 f. and Moffatt, I.L.N.T. pp 570 ff.



those which are represented as the objects of faith: "that I am" (viii.28), "that thou didst send me" (xvii.25), "that I am in the Father" (xiv.20); as these are believed so are they known. The propositions therefore which are thus expressed as the objects of knowledge, are such as define the essential character of the person known, and John's highest and most characteristic expression remains that with the direct personal object: to know Christ or to know God (xiv.7; xvii.3; 1 John ii.4.13=14; iv.6.7.8; v.20). There is thus a distinctly personal relationship involved. "It is not mere theoretic knowledge, but a knowledge which carries the whole nature with it, so that God becomes the supreme object and ruling power in life." (1). The ethical and spiritual content of knowing is seen in 1 John ii.3-6; iv.7.8.12.13. How far John is of thinking of a mere theoretical knowledge is seen in his characteristic employment of  $\epsilon\lambda\theta\epsilon\upsilon$ , which denotes such knowing as comes through seeing; and of  $\theta\epsilon\omega\sigma\alpha\iota\tau\epsilon\upsilon$   $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  to behold him (vi.40; xii.45).

A distinction is to be observed between  $\gamma\iota\upsilon\omega\sigma\kappa\omega$  and  $\omicron\lambda\theta\epsilon\upsilon$  (2). The former means to know by experience, knowledge which is acquired, and by a natural extension, to understand. The latter means to know anything in an absolute sense, to know all about anything. The difference

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(1). Stevens, Theology of the N.T., p.230 (2) see Westcott, St. John, p.46 and Abbott, Johannine Vocabulary, 1621 ff.

between the two words is made plain when we examine the passages in which both words occur: viii.55, "Ye have not known him ( $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\ \kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon$ , i.e. have no understanding); but I know him ( $\omicron\iota\delta\alpha$  i.e. have absolute knowledge)† and if I say that I know him not ( $\omicron\upsilon\iota\kappa\ \omicron\iota\delta\alpha$ ), I shall be like unto you a liar; but I know him ( $\omicron\iota\delta\alpha$ )"; xiii.7, "What I do thou knowest not now ( $\omicron\iota\delta\alpha\varsigma$ ); but thou shalt understand hereafter ( $\gamma\upsilon\omega\sigma\eta$ )"; xiv.7, "If ye had known me ( $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\ \upsilon\pi\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$  understood), ye would have known my Father also ( $\gamma\iota\delta\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$  absolute knowledge)". It is therefore with irony that Jesus says of the Jews (vii.22), "Ye both know me and know whence I am ( $\omicron\iota\delta\alpha\tau\epsilon$ )", the fact is, as He says later, "ye know not ( $\omicron\upsilon\iota\kappa\ \omicron\iota\delta\alpha\tau\epsilon$ ), I know him ( $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\ \omicron\iota\delta\alpha\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\iota$ )". Again in viii.14, He says "I know ( $\omicron\iota\delta\alpha$ ) whence I came.....but ye know not ( $\omicron\upsilon\iota\kappa\ \omicron\iota\delta\alpha\tau\epsilon$ )". In viii.19, He says, "If ye knew me ( $\gamma\iota\delta\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$  i.e. knew all about me), ye would know my Father also ( $\gamma\iota\delta\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon\ \alpha\upsilon$  i.e. know Him absolutely).

In view of this meaning of  $\omicron\iota\delta\alpha$  one would have thought that John would have always used it of the relationship between Father and Son. The Evangelist however uses  $\gamma\upsilon\omega\sigma\kappa\omega$ , in x.15: "Even as the Father understands me and I understand the Father". The reason for this is that Jesus wishes to show that His relationship with the people of God as the Good Shepherd is the same as that of Himself with the Father. He wishes to show that there is common ground between them. The one relation is the measure of

the other. He therefore uses a word which suggests mutual knowledge and sympathy, instead of one which suggests absolute distinction (1).

Believing, so far from being contrasted with knowing, seeing, and beholding, is expressly associated with them. As we have already observed there is no antithesis between faith and knowledge. The multitude demand of Jesus a sign in order that they may "see and believe" (vi.30); we have in 1 John iv.16, "We know and have believed", in vi.69 "we have believed and know", in x.38 the disciples are required to believe in order that they "may know and understand" (2), and in vi. 40 we have "he that beholdeth the Son and believeth in him". The two ideas of believing and knowing are however by no means synonymous, and they are in fact distinctly discriminated. Believing is referred pre-eminently to Jesus, whereas the relation of men to God is expressed more commonly as knowing Him. The profound breach between the world and God, which expresses itself in their unbelieving treatment of Jesus, is not called a belief in God, but ignorance of Him (vii.28; viii.55; xv.28; xvi.3; xvii.25). The result which accrues from knowledge of God is not faith in God, but knowledge of Him (viii.19; xiv.7). It corresponds to this, that with reference to the Holy

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(1) cf Westcott, St. John, p.155 (2) γνωστω και πιστωσθητε suggests to know once and for all and to go on knowing.

Spirit it is not believing that is spoken of, but knowing and beholding (xiv.17; 1 John iv. 2.6). Even in relation to Christ, the idea of believing recedes, and that of knowing takes its place, in view of His ascension and consequent beginning of His more perfect and spiritual relationship with His disciples. Whereas in view of His earthly manifestation Jesus demanded, "believe that I am" (viii.24); in view of His glorified condition it is said, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am"(viii.28). "In that day shall ye know that I am in my Father"(xiv.20).. It is also highly significant of the relation of these two ideas that while there is emphasis upon Jesus' knowledge of God, (viii.29,55; x.15;xviii.25) there is no mention of His faith in God. This is the more remarkable because Jesus represents His own relation to the Father as the perfect pattern, according to which that of His disciples is to be fashioned. As He is in the Father and the Father in Him, so are the disciples in Him and He in them; as He knows the Father, so do they know Him; as He abides in the Father's love, so do they in Him; as He keeps the Father's commandments, so do the disciples keep His. But with all these parallels there is no analagous comparison between His faith in the Father, and His disciples faith in Him. Jesus' relation to God is never expressed in terms of faith. (1)

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(1) It may also be pointed out that truth and love are represented as objects of knowledge and not of faith. (viii.32; 1 John ii.21; iii.16).

Both of these conceptions therefore have their own special sphere of application, and the mark which distinguishes them is this - that believing connotes a characteristic exercise of the will. We have seen that the fundamental idea of faith, both in the Hebrew and N.T. Greek, is that of trust. The use of *πιστεύειν* in 11.24 is indeed unique, but the idea of trust appears very clearly in the single instance in which we have the expression "to believe in God" (*εἰς τὸν Θεόν* xiv.1). Faith is here contrasted with trouble of heart at Jesus' departure. The construction with *εἰς* is significant for, when in view of His forthcoming death which seems to render Him unavailable as an object of faith, He urges His disciples to turn their faith towards God. As the disciples had through faith in Him been led to a true faith in God; so now He hopes that their trustful faith in God will carry them through the supreme crisis, and preserve their faith in Him - "Believe also in me". Faith has in this instance, as in so many others, a special reference to difficulties to be overcome. It is for this reason that man's relation to God is expressed rather in terms of knowledge than of faith. Whatever difficulties a man has to overcome in making a personal surrender of himself to God, they are not such as are represented by the idea of faith.

If God is known, He is, by that very fact, manifest as man's supreme good; and the reasonableness of surrender to Him is immediately apparent. But in the case of Jesus

whose divine majesty is obscured by His earthly manifestation in the flesh, the act of surrender is impossible except through an act of trust, and more especially on the part of those who on account of their ignorance of God have many hindrances and objections to overcome. It is therefore not without significance that the first man whose faith in Jesus is mentioned should be a man whose prejudice showed itself in the objection, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (iii.43 ff ). And the original Gospel ended with the faith of Thomas whose trust in Jesus had been so profoundly shattered that even the testimony of His fellow disciples could not convince him ( xx.26 ff ). The victory which overcometh the world ( 1 John v.4 ); which triumphs over every inward and outward obstacle, and apprehends Jesus as the eternal Word, is an act of trust, and from this the idea of faith gains a significance which differentiates it from knowledge which implies rest and attainment. (1)

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(1) It will be remembered that the Sacraments which are also means by which eternal life is appropriated were considered at the end of chapter vi. Here we have only considered the subjective attitudes to Christ which are essential before men can receive this gift from God.

IX

THEOLOGY AND ETHICS.

We have already had occasion to note (1) that John's teaching is essentially a theology. The history he records is in every detail a revelation of God and his ethics are resolved into the imitation of God. The divine life in God's children is both manifested and tested by filial likeness to the Father. Christian ethics from this point of view is the spontaneous fruit of the true life; although it is also directly conditioned by a true knowledge of God. It is as we might expect in the Epistle rather than in the Gospel that the ethical bearing of John's teaching is most clearly expressed. The Epistle seeks to make plain for practical purposes the profound teaching already presented in the Gospel. It "presupposes in its readers acquaintance with a compact body of teaching like that which we find in the Fourth Gospel" (2). It is no less theocentric than the Gospel. In the words of Richard Law the Epistle "bids its readers try themselves not as to the fulness and fruitfulness of their spiritual life, but as to their exhibiting those qualities which belong essentially to the life of God. God

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(1) page 35 above  
 (2) Sanday, Recent Criticism of the Fourth Gospel, p.245

is Righteous, therefore whosoever has the Divine life in him doeth righteousness. God is Love, therefore His life in men exhibits itself in love. God is conscious of Himself in His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, therefore His life is manifested in men by their Belief - their perception of the Divine in Jesus." (1).

The very idea of fellowship is exhibited in the double form of fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with the brethren. These two aspects of the Christian fellowship are not separable even in thought: "that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us" (xvii.21). It is one indivisible fellowship; and while on the one hand a man can remain in this community only by abiding in Christ the Vine (xv.6); it is on the other hand no less truly a condition of fellowship with God, that the fellowship of believers with one another be realised by observing the commandment of brotherly love (1 John iii.24). This is justified by the consideration, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John iv. 20). The idea of children of God includes two moments of thought: the filial and the brotherly relationship. From John's emphasis upon the latter we may see how far he was from regarding eternal life as the mere contemplative knowledge of God. It is a life which

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(1) The Tests of Life, pp 208 ff



is to be exercised in the sphere of Christian brotherhood, and it finds its satisfaction in the fellowship with the brethren as well as in the fellowship with God. The Christian fellowship and eternal life are the two ideas into which John has analysed the Kingdom of God; as eternal life represents the blessings of the Kingdom, so does the brotherhood represent its sphere. Love, the principle of fellowship, directed towards the Father and towards the brethren, is the complete expression of the moral life, the fulfilment of the law of the Kingdom. It is at once the duty and privilege of fellowship. Love is indeed regarded as a commandment; but more characteristically as the spontaneous fruit of the true life. As the Father is love, and as the Son has manifested this love to the world; the life which he thereby imparts to men can be nothing else but a life of love. Likeness of the children to the Father, filial and brotherly affection, is the consequence of their begetting from God, and the natural expression of their condition as children. Love is therefore the test of the presence of the true life in man; and in the assurance of meeting this test, lies the filial confidence which casts out all fear. As Dr Moffatt remarks: "the love relation between the Father and the Son is organically connected with the divine love for men; there is a repeated concern to show that it is not a detached piece of celestial speculation, like some of the gnostic elaborations of the tie between heavenly aeons. The love of the Father and the

Son is bound up with the message and mission of God's love to the world of men; the significance of it is missed when it is detached and isolated." (1). In a word - the ethics of John spring from the fundamental ideas of his theology.

Because of this close relationship between the love of God and its manifestation in love towards the brethren, John's whole system is in the highest sense practical, and it is capable of being brought to bear upon every individual problem of the moral life. If there is a problem raised by the lack of harmony in the brotherhood, he looks up into the face of God and in that look he knows that "he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." If the brotherhood is tempted to sin, the denunciation comes with the absoluteness of one who knows the nature of God. He refuses to give assent to the fiction that love can be divorced from practical problems or confined to the experience of a certain "feeling" towards God. He does not however discuss in the Epistle the application of love to special problems: as in his Gospel he sums up his theology in a few general ideas, so in his Epistle he dwells upon the great central conceptions of morality. Christian morality is summed up in the idea of likeness to Jesus, which is the same thing as likeness to God, and is expressed particularly by love.. John does not extol love

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(1) Love in the New Testament, p. 259

more highly than S. Paul, but it because he includes under this one term the whole catalogue of Christian virtues that he justifies the title Apostle of Love. Notwithstanding his strong emphasis upon the moral walk, he mentions in the Epistle but one concrete case of conduct: "But whoso hath this world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (1 John iii. 17). This example serves to display the discrepancy between love which is only in word and tongue, and love in deed and truth which is ready to lay down life for the brethren, as Jesus laid down His life for us (1 John iii. 16, 18).

This instance recalls the Epistle of S. James (ii. 15, 16), though the single point of contact rather serves to direct attention to the contrast which is so marked between these two epistles. There is in fact no greater contrast within the N.T. than that between the Epistle of S. James, with its many moral precepts unrelated to any moral theory, and that of John, with its single precept of love as the outcome of his whole theology. The concrete examples of discipline, admonition, and exhortation with which the Pauline Epistles abound stand also in strong contrast to the generalities of the Johannine Epistles. This may perhaps be explained in part from the fact that the aim and destination of the Epistle was too general to allow of reference to the particular situation of any individual community.

John in common with S. Paul does not adduce the traits of Jesus' earthly life as the pattern for the disciples' imitation. The immediate concern of the early Christians was with the contemporary Christ whom they worshipped. In the words of S. Paul they knew Christ "no longer after the flesh". This is all the more remarkable in the case of John who insisted in his Gospel that the Word was made flesh. The words and deeds of the historic Jesus are not however ignored, but as it is the imitation of God that is the rule of the Christian life it is just those features of Jesus' life in which He most conspicuously transcended the normal human standards and manifested the divine which are set forth as the disciples' example. As S. Paul thought of even "the meekness of Christ" (2 Cor. x.1), as manifested transcendently not in His ~~earthly~~ earthly walk, but in His descent from heaven to earth, so John sees love exemplified not in Jesus' kindly intercourse with His disciples, but in the gift of His life for them (xv.13; 1 John iii.16), and in God's gift of His Son (iii.16; 1 John iv.9). It is therefore Christ's sacrifice which is the example of love for the world. When John expresses the ideal of Christian conduct under any other terms, it is by such general conceptions as walking in the light as He is in the light (1 John i.7), or "he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk as he walked" (1 John ii.6).

There is another general conception under which John

represents the conduct required of Christians: that is the O.T. ~~zaxm~~ conception of righteousness. As he emphasises the righteousness of the Father (xvii.25; 1 John i.9), and of Christ (1 John ii.1), so he says, "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him" (1 John ii.29). Righteousness is an ethical conception with John, the chief element in it is brotherly love. It is used in quite an untechnical sense and there is no trace of S. Paul's idea of imputed righteousness (1). Indeed he seems to warn his readers against the misinterpretation to which this idea was so liable, "Children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John iii.7). To this conception we must add the ideas of consecration and purity as characteristic elements in the Christian life. In xvii.17 Jesus ~~says~~ prays the Father to consecrate the disciples in the truth. This does not refer so much to internal and subjective purification as to the external hallowing by which God sets a man apart for His service. That this is so may be inferred from the fact that Christ uses the same word in verse 19 of Himself, "for their sakes I consecrate myself". There can be no reference to internal purification in this case but rather the constant dedication of His life to the work of redemption. And it is to such

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(1) cf Moffatt, Love in the N.T., p 287 and R. Law, Tests of life, pp 67 ff

dedication that God calls those who believe on Christ. The idea of freedom from moral defilement is found in 1 John iii. 3 where the command to "purify oneself" is equivalent to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John ii. 15). The Greek *ἀγνός* means the same as the Hebrew *קִיָּוָה*, Levitically clean, and *ἀγνία* is that element in the Christian character which is achieved by the discipline of temptation. The Christian is to purify himself, even as Jesus Who, though tempted at all points as any other man, was and is pure (1 John iii. 3).

We will now consider in more detail what is meant by the New Commandment (xiii. 34). As the divine life which was in the Logos was manifested as love, and so was the light of men (i. 4); so must also that eternal life, which is imparted to believers manifest itself as light and love. This must be displayed in the lives of Christ's followers not only in such a way as will satisfy themselves of the reality of their possession of life; but more especially that the world may know that they are Christ's disciples (xiii. 35). Thus love is regarded as the spontaneous fruit of life. It is therefore strange at first sight that he should express it also in terms of the law, as a commandment. There are few ethical precepts attributed to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, yet Jesus is represented as repeatedly calling upon His followers to keep <sup>HIS</sup> ~~the~~ commandments. And this exhortation appears still more frequently in the Epistle. John has indeed no aversion

to the expression of Christian morality in the terms of commandment. He had however as completely superseded the legalistic standpoint as had St. Paul himself. His idea of the "new commandment" had nothing in common with the "new law" which early in the second century was used to designate the Christian revelation as the successor and counterpart of the Old Testament. By including all commandments under the one commandment of love, John dissolved the whole conception of Jewish legalism.

Though there is no hint of Jewish legalism in John's conception of the "new commandment", he has contact with O.T. thought in his strong emphasis upon the moral walk. He had no sympathy with the notion of contemplative knowledge of God which found in itself its end and satisfaction. To know God was to keep His commandments (1 John ii.3). Nor did he regard love as mere feeling which found its end solely in religious adoration. To love God is to keep His word and His commandments (1 John ii.5; v.2; 2 John 6). True love is shown in work (ἐν ἔργῳ 1 John iii.18), as God's ~~xxx~~ love was also displayed in work (iii.16; 1 John iv.9). Love to Christ shows itself by keeping His commandments (xiv.21,23), as His love to the Father was shown by fulfilling His commandment (xiv.31). No one was better aware than John that the tree of knowledge was not the tree of life; that it is not knowing but doing that makes blessed (xiii.17). It is not sufficient to possess the commandments of Jesus, there must be the doing of them (xi.47). One of the purposes

of the light being in the world is to urge men to walk in the light (xii.35). Similarly as God has revealed to men His truth, so it is His commandment that they walk in the truth (2 John 4).

It is characteristic of John's mind that he should include all commandments in the one commandment of love to the brethren. "The Christian commandments are not a miscellany of arbitrary requirements or by-laws; they are practical applications of the one Divine Law to the outstanding facts and situations of human life" (1). In the commandment of love, John sums up the whole message (1 John iii.11), and it is characteristic of his ethical conception that he should represent righteousness as equivalent to brotherly love (1 John iii.10). We have noticed how John saw the revelation of God not only in Jesus' words but in His manifestation as a whole; so in his ethical teaching, rather than in individual precepts, it was in the total impression of His life, as love unto the end, that he finds the guiding principle of the Christian life.

In common with most commentators Archbishop Bernard regards the essential obligation of the  $\epsilon\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\eta\ \kappa\alpha\iota\nu\eta$  as brotherly love (2). From this point of view the commandment is new because it was enjoined according to a new measure, or rather was measureless: "as I have <sup>loved</sup> you" (xiii.34). Jesus

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(1) R. Law, The Tests of Life, p 212.

(2) S. John, p. 527



loved His own *εἰς τὸ ἄσ* - "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (xv.13). Hence we are introduced to a new definition of love, "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John iii.16). Love is therefore no mere sentiment but an enduring passion, not the correlative of dislike, but of hate and murder - "not as Cain was of the Evil One and slew his brother" (1 John iii.12), The commandment is therefore new because whereas "the Old Testament demanded that men should love their neighbours as themselves, the New Law is that they should love the brethren better than themselves and die for their friends." (1).

But while all this is true it does not seem to me sufficient to explain the solemnity with which Jesus spoke of the New Commandment. The whole trend of the narrative, in which the saying occurs (xiii.1-35) appears to require that *ἐν τῷ καινῷ* shall break new ground and not be simply a restatement of familiar teaching. With the departure of Judas, Jesus found Himself at last alone in the company of His true disciples, whom He had gathered out of the world, and whom He had finally purified. In the constitution of this little company He sees His earthly work finished, Himself and His Father glorified (xiii.31). This was the New Israel brought to birth by the creative power of God (2).

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{8} Hoskyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel, p.527  
 (2) see pages 183 ff above.

As one family they had just partaken of the New Covenant meal (1), when therefore He gives to His disciples a commandment which shall distinguish them from all the world (xiii.35) what can this mean but the New Law for the New Covenant? It is old because it was foretold by Jeremiah and was the intention of God from all eternity (Jer. xxxi.33; xxxi.40). It is new because now for the first time it could be written on the hearts of men who abide in Christ. The ancient covenant failed because as S. Paul says the external law had no power to make alive (ζωοποιήσασθαι). It was due to the insight of the prophets that they foresaw a new covenant which would be written not on tables of stone but upon the heart and vitally appropriated by the elect children. Thus the εὐτοῦ καὶνῆ is the καὶνῆ διαθήκη. In contrast to the ritual use of the blood by Moses in establishing the ancient covenant, the Mediator of the better covenant gives His life to be appropriated by the elect in order that they may abide in Him and <sup>be</sup> fruitful in good works. One of the means by which this life is appropriated by the faithful is the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ (2). The New Commandment is therefore parallel to the New Covenant ratified by "my blood" (1 Cor. xi.25), and the "new covenant blood" (Matt xxvi.28). But John in his characteristic manner emphasises the spiritual

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(1) see pages 205 ff above

(2) see pages 207 ff above.

side of the sacrament - the spirit of love without which the opus operatum is valueless (1). It is the spirit that quickeneth and this is the redemption of the failure of the first covenant: it enables men to love one another, as He gave commandment (2).

It is noteworthy that in the Johannine writings there is no commandment to love either God or Christ. In the Old Testament this was the commandment which held first place ( cf Matt. xxi. 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ ). This was no doubt due to the formal relations which existed between the people and God under the ~~old~~ covenant; and Jesus had actually to remark upon the lack of love to God on the part of the Jews (v. 42). But under the New Covenant the relation of the Christian community to God is no longer external, it is real and inward, founded not only through the election of God, but by His begetting the children. Because of this immediate experience of God, love towards God is a matter of course, and throughout the Johannine writings it is simply assumed. It is a matter of course that every child of God "loveth him that beget" ( $\tau\omicron\nu\nu\ \gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\acute{\eta}\sigma\omicron\nu\nu\tau\alpha$  ), and it is a consequence of this that he "loveth him also that is begotten of him" (3) (2 John v. 1). The two relationships are really one: "for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love love God whom he hath not seen" (1 John v. 1). As the love of

(1) cf G.H.C. Macgregor, The Gospel of John, p. 284.

(2) see Abbott, Johannine Grammar, 2093. & 2094; cf an article entitled  $\epsilon\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\eta\ \kappa\alpha\iota\nu\eta$  by R.P. Brown in Theology, April 1933

(3)  $\tau\omicron\nu\nu\ \gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\acute{\eta}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\grave{\iota}\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  may mean either Jesus or the sons born of God - see Moffatt, Love in the N.T., p 272

God is the postulate of the Christian community, its very *raison d'etre*, only the love of the brethren needs to be enjoined as a commandment. "And this commandment have we from him, that he that loveth God love his brother also" (1 John iv. 20,21).

This point is illustrated in a striking way by the unusual turn which he gives to some of his sentences. For example when in 1 John iv. 11, he says, "Beloved if God so loved ~~us~~ ~~and~~ us" we might expect him to go on and say that we ought to love Him, but instead we have, "we ought also to love one another." Similarly in 1 John iii.16 he says, "hereby we know love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to ~~love~~ lay down our lives" - not for Him = "but" for one another". This is in harmony with the teaching of the Synoptic Gospels: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" (Matt. xxv 40; cf John xiii.20). The only way in which after Christ's departure (xii.7.8.), the disciples' love can be showed towards him "in deed" is by works of lovingkindness towards His brethren (1 John iii.17=18).

As John found in the idea of love the whole conception of Christian morality it is natural that he should associate with it the ideal of meekness and lowliness of heart which is so prominent a trait in the Synoptic account (Matt. xi.29). Just before enjoining the New Commandment he narrates the incident of washing the disciples' feet

(xiii 12-17). In this symbolic act Jesus represents more clearly than any words could have done the character of meekness which He required. It was not thinking lowly of Himself; nor adopting a lowly attitude; but assuming a lowly position. It was a yoke, a burden, the willing assumption of the position of a servant - and this not with reference to God, for that would have been only too obvious - but towards one's fellow men. "If  $\bar{y}$  then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought" - note the same turn of expression in "to wash one another's feet." It was not enough that S. Paul should recognise himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1.1); we must also recognise "ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" ( 2 Cor. iv. 5).

Corresponding to John's representation of Christian morality in terms of a commandment, he also makes prominent the idea of reward . The single passage in which he regards hope as the motive of Christian conduct (1 John iii.3) implies this conception. There is the same implication in the exhortation to abide in Christ, "that we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John ii.28); and in 1 John iv. 17 "boldness in the day of judgement" is regarded as the reward of perfected love. The idea of reward is more clearly stated in the second Epistle verse 8 than in any other passage: "Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward" The reward is probably eternal life. In iv.36 wages as the

reward of faithful work is closely associated with the gathering of "fruit unto life eternal". Even Jesus who does His work in fulfilment of the Father's commandment (x.18;x11.49) looks for the Father's reward. He expects to be glorified because He Himself has glorified the Father, and had accomplished the work which He had given Him to do (xvii.4.5)

DOCTRINE OF ASSURANCE.

We have already discussed John's teaching concerning the knowledge of God. But John uses the words *οἶδαμεν* and *γινώσκουμεν* in another and quite different way. It belongs exclusively to the Epistle, and is one of its most characteristic features. It was natural for John, who regarded salvation as a present possession, to think of it also as a fact which could be tested and verified. Therefore he says: "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John v.13). The same confidence is expressed in the last verses of the Epistle, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Evil One. And we know that the Son of God has come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ."

This knowledge of salvation is not intuition, nor does it rest on any subjective grounds. As Richard Law remarks no ~~place~~ place is found in the Epistle for any immediate, self-certifying, consciousness of regenerate life (1). The test is essentially

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(1) The Tests of Life, p 279

practical. His fundamental maxim is this: "If we know that he is righteous~~s~~, we know that everyone also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him" (1 John ii.29). Strongly as the orthodox faith is emphasised as the test for discerning between the spirits of error and the spirit of truth (1 John iv.1) it is never expressly mentioned as the ground for a disciple's certainty of possessing eternal life. As love is the test whereby the world may know the disciples of Christ (xiv.35), and as the false brother is marked out by his lack of compassion towards a brother in need (1 John iii.17); so each disciple has to judge of the reality of his own salvation by the same objective proof of a love which is "in deed and truth" (1 John iii.18). "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John iii.14). IN 1 John ii.3 we have a characteristic expression, "hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (cf 1 John ii.5).

There is a test of a different character, and that is the witness of the Spirit. This is as objective as the witness of brotherly love. For the Spirit is not regarded as bearing immediate and self-evidencing testimony of the divine sonship of the believer. The Spirit witnesses to the historic Christ, and it is the acknowledgement of faith in Christ that provides the assurance that God abideth in men. Thus the words, "And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he gave us" (1 John iii.24), does not signify the intuition of a fact, but rather the inference from a fact; for the indwell-

ing of God is recognised by the confession that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" ( 1 John iv.2). Furthermore in one of the rare instances in which John looks forward to the perfection of the believer's life in the other world, he regards that too as the object of knowledge: "We know that when he shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii.2). But as the future life is only the perfection of that which we now have, and advances to perfection by increasing in the knowledge of God a man may be assured of the future life by the verification of eternal life in the present.

#### PRAYER.

In close connection with the doctrine of Christian confidence which we have just considered, John brings the idea of prayer. "If our heart condemn us not, we have boldness towards God, and whatsoever <sup>we ask</sup> we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do the things which are pleasing in his sight" (1 John iii.22) (1).<sup>21</sup> And this is the boldness we have towards him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him" (1 John v.14.15). These two verses taken together show that Christian prayer is not a cry of helplessness in the face of great odds, but rather

(1) *ἁπλοῦς* in the Gospel signifies plain as contrasted with mystic (v.24; xi.14; xvi.29), or open as contrasted with secret utterance (vii.26; xviii.20). In the Ep. to the Hebrews it means fearless trust as here (iii.6; x.36).



the expression of confidence that God will answer the petitions of the man whose will is in harmony with the will of God. It is the will of God that the eternal life of truth and righteousness shall grow and multiply; when we will this together with him we have absolute assurance that God will answer our prayers. It is the characteristic of him who is "begotten of God", that he seeks to do the will of God. Our prayers are answered because our will is in inward harmony with God's and the evidence of this is that "we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (2 John iii.22). As Jesus Himself said: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (xv.17).

In addition to the High Priestly Prayer in the seventeenth chapter there are more references to Jesus' prayers in the Fourth Gospel than elsewhere in the N.T. It has often been noted that the prayers of Jesus are expressed by the verb *ἑρωτάω* (xiv.16;xvi.26;xvii.9.15,20), and those of the disciples by *αἰτέω* (1). The attempt however to explain the principle of John's consistent discrimination of these two terms has not been successful; they both mean to ask, and John does not at all use the specific term for prayer *ὑποσχέσθαι* (2). In one particular way he comes nearer than any other writer in the N.T. in giving a definite doctrine of prayer. The possibility of prayer addressed to God was

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(1) see e.g. Field's Notes on the Translation of the N.T. p.101. and Abbott, Johannine Grammar, p 468 f  
 (2). Dr. Field deals trenchantly with those who attempt to make the distinction. Field's Notes, p/101. O' Mullin. Grammar of N.T. vol. 1 266 N

simply assumed by all Christian writers. Prayer was not a new thing with Christianity; but prayer in the name of Jesus was, and it is this that John emphasises in a way entirely consistent with his Christology.

Participation in the Messianic salvation was in the O.T. made dependent upon "calling upon the name of the Lord" (Joel ii.32). St. Peter and St Paul agree in interpreting this as a calling upon Jesus as one who has been exalted to be Lord (Acts ii.21; cf verse 36; Rom. x.12 ff ) "Calling upon the name of Jesus" appears together with Baptism as the condition of salvation (Acts xii.16). And in Acts ix.14; 1 Cor. i.2; 2 Tim.ii.22 Christians are actually designated as "those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ". It was thus a characteristic of the Christian community to address their prayers to Jesus as well as to the Father.

This conception also appears in the Fourth Gospel. According to the true text of xiv.14 prayer is thought of as being directly offered to Jesus: "If ye shall ask me anything in my name, that will I do" (1) The omission of "me" in some MSS was evidently due to the feeling that there is some incongruity in the thought of addressing Jesus Himself "in his name". No such incongruity existed in the mind of John. In xv.16 the phrase "in my name" is to be connected with "he may give", as appears clearly from the parallel expression in xvi.23, "If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name". The conception that

~~It makes the distinction...~~  
(1) N B & C. om. A. D. L.  $\mu$  is rejected by Bernard. S. John. 544

asking in Jesus' name means direct address to Him is made clear in xvi.26: "In that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you." Jesus here explains to His disciples that prayers addressed to Him do <sup>not</sup> have to be passed on as it were to the Father. The exalted Christ is so thoroughly the dispenser of all gifts to the Church, that whatever the Father Himself gives is given in Jesus' name (xiv.26; xv 16; xvi.23). This is not in anywise to derogate from the Father's supremacy; for in the verse just quoted it is assumed that the Father is pre-eminently the hearer of prayer, and Jesus' power to answer prayers directed to Him, is grounded upon the fact that "the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." And in xiv 13 the fulfilment of the disciples' prayers by Jesus is said to be a glorification of the Father in the Son.

There is a contradiction in Jesus representation of the possibility of addressing prayers to Him: whereas He says in xvi.23 "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing (ἐρωτησάτε). Verily verily I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name"; we have, on the other hand, in xvi.26, "In that day ye shall ask (αἰτήσασθε) in my name", and in xiv.14, "If ye shall ask me anything in my name, that will I do." It has been noted that the verb in the first instance is that which is elsewhere used only in reference to Jesus' prayers, and it may be that John intends in this case to make a discrimination between the two words. But the passage shows how

difficult it is to give them any interpretation which does not involve some confusion. We can see however in a general way that John would represent that prayers could be addressed either to the Son or the Father.

This is in accordance with the general trend of Johannine theology. As in the Epistle the reference to personal pronouns seems often to be to the Father or to the Son indifferently, so here we have a neutral expression in regard to prayer, "Ask whatever ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (xv.7). In these parting words of Jesus he does not emphasise the fact that the Father is hearer and answerer of prayer; but it was necessary for Him to assure His disciples that they might no longer address Him in His exalted state as when He was on earth, nevertheless prayer to the Father constituted intercourse with Him, and the Father's gifts were given in His name. Furthermore they may ask Him directly in His name. Hitherto they had talked familiarly with ~~know~~ Him, but they shall do so no longer (xvi.23). The old form of intercourse will be broken off with His departure, but a new form of intercourse will take its place as Jesus ceases to be the object of earthly friendship and becomes the satisfaction of their religious aspirations: "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled" (xvi.24). This last phrase suggests that Jesus aimed at comforting His disciples with the assurance that the communion which was their joy on earth would be continued

though in a new form. Upon His departure they would hold intercourse with Him "in His name", that is in the same manner in which they held intercourse with the Father. This would be proved by experience as they received the gifts which they asked: "Whatsoever ye ask, it shall be done" In the Epistle there is added the qualification "according to his will" (v.14). As the will of God is the final and perfect redemption of men (vi.39.40) this qualification does not limit the exercise of true prayer, but rather displays the breadth of its scope and the certainty of its fulfilment. In the verse following there is a thought which doubtless John often recalled to mind as he considered the apparent failure of his own prayers: "And we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him" The force of the "we have" instead of "we shall have" is that though the fulfilment may not yet be apparent, it exists in the sphere of the divine thought, which is the sphere of reality, and only awaits manifestation. It is thus characteristically Johannine in thought. (1)

John reveals his close dependence upon Hebrew thought in his expression to "ask in his name". The more usual phrase in the N.T. is to "call on the name of the Lord Jesus"

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(1) see R.Law, The Tests of Life, p.302

But John's expression stands much nearer the Hebrew formula **קרא בשם יהוה** (Gen iv. 26), which is strictly "to call in the name of Yahweh". The usual interpretation of the phrase "to call ( or ask) in the name of Jesus", is to take it as the concluding formula of a prayer addressed to the Father and indicates the ground of confidence for approaching the mercy seat of God. But the correct text of xiv.14 shows that this interpretation fails to afford an adequate explanation of the expression, "ask me in my name". We have here an explicit reference of prayer addressed to Jesus, and it is significant that it should be expressed by so striking an Hebraism. It is true that in the O.T. we have no precise parallel such as to "call upon me in my name Yahweh", but such an expression would not be foreign to the profound conception of the "name" in Hebrew. Whether or not we can interpret this phrase in the sense of direct prayer to Christ, we are obliged to recognise in it the pregnant force of the Hebrew idea. And just because in Hebrew the significance of the "name" is so large and inclusive there is nothing unusual in the transition from "asking in my name" to "receiving in my name", which appears to some to be sudden and harsh. (xvi.23.24).

It is difficult to account for the Johannine use of the word "ask" to the exclusion of the generic word for prayer, but it is unlikely that it was intended to exclude adoration and thanksgiving from the notion of prayer:

petition being the most specific conception of prayer it includes all else. The prayer of petition was the most apt to express to the disciples the assurance of continued intercourse with Jesus. For it is only by answer to prayer that the reality of the mutual relation can be proved. Prayer is not merely the expression of man's attitude to God, but is a means of communication with Him and involves a reciprocal response on God's part. It is in fact part of John's doctrine of fellowship. What prompts prayer is the fact that "the Father himself loveth you" (xvi.27). And the condition of prayer is that "ye abide in me, and my words abide in you" (xv.7). It is therefore as the assurance of continued fellowship with Jesus that the answer to prayer is said to fulfill the disciples' joy (xvi.24). This is an expression which is almost invariably associated with the perfection of fellowship in one or other of its forms - with one another or with God in Christ (xv.11; xvi.20.22; 1 John i.4). Prayer is not only the fulfilment of the joy of fellowship with the Father and the Son; it is also associated with the fellowship which exists among the brethren. It is with the same idea of fellowship in mind that John considers the subject of intercessory prayer: "If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and he will give him life". The brother who sins is cut off from the Christian fellowship. All sin separates from God; but "there is a sin not unto death" (1 John v.17); sin, that is, which

though it cuts one off from life, does not do so irretrievably. As the sinner is thus cut off from the fellowship, and can therefore no longer pray in the covenant name of Jesus; it is the duty of the brother to intercede for him, and God will give him life.

When we look back from this point on the course of study we have pursued, it is impossible not <sup>to</sup> recognise the profundity of the religious thought of John. In its unity and consistency; in its revelation of a heart aflame with the love of God, and its ready application of the moral walk; in its deep spiritual insight into the nature and purpose of God, we recognise a mind which has attained, as it seems to me, the loftiest and largest conception of religion in the New Testament.

