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zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe 78

Paul N. Anderson

The Christology of the Fourth Gospel



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Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6

by

Paul N. Anderson



J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) Tübingen

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Foreword

Paul N. Anderson's Glasgow doctoral dissertation is at once one of the most concentrated and intensive exegetical studies and one of the most wide-ranging and suggestive essays on Johannine christology that I have seen. As the author himself states it, his purpose is "to gain clearer insight into the christological tensions of the Fourth Gospel by means of seeking a deeper understanding of the dialectical process of thought by which the evangelist has come to embrace such a distinctively unitive *and* disunitive christology." In pursuing this goal Anderson concentrates on chapter 6, the Feeding of the Five Thousand and subsequent events and discourses, in which the tensions and dialectical character of John's thought become apparent.

The identification of tensions is credited to Rudolf Bultmann, although his efforts to resolve them by source and rearrangement theories are rejected, and C.K. Barrett's suggestions about the dialectical character of John's thought then become seminal in their resolution. Anderson's exegesis of John 6 is itself a major contribution. In my opinion both his appreciation of Bultmann's interpretation and his refusal to accept his literary-critical resolution of exegetical problems are well-founded. Also like Bultmann, he cannot regard the narrative and discourse of chapter 6 as simply derivative from the Synoptic Gospels or Mark. At the same time the relationship is clear. Rather than regard it as a problem amenable to source and redaction criticism, whether of the Synoptic Gospels or other documents, Anderson seeks to understand the Johannine version of this material as an independent development of, and reflection upon, the same events that are somewhat differently recounted in the Synoptics.

This mode of understanding leads Anderson to some of his most stimulating suggestions, which, however, might make him seem vulnerable to the charge of psychologizing the text. And yet, by using the research and categories of the American theologians Fowler and Loder, who have undertaken to analyze and describe the experience and development of faith on the basis of empirical investigation, Anderson applies their insights and results to the Gospel of John. The proposal that something like what they describe lies at the root of the tensions of Johannine thought is provocative and will doubtless raise questions. Just at this point, however, Anderson's positive theological relationship to Bultmann's hermeneutic becomes evident. Like Bultmann, Anderson believes that the basic structures of human existence and experience are universal through time and space, so that the analysis of the nature of faith among twentieth century Westerners has relevance to what is enshrined in a first-century text. Moreover, he also believes, again with Bultmann, that the nature of Christian faith, if it is genuinely faith, cannot

be different in a Christian of the first century and one of the twentieth. By contrast, however, in his appeal to empirical evidence and experience rather than the structures of human existence, Anderson is typically Anglo-Saxon.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Anderson's research and proposals is the way he is able to take into account the perspectives of recent major contributions to Johannine research. Aside from Bultmann and Barrett, there is C.H. Dodd, whose work on the historical tradition of the Fourth Gospel as oral tradition with a historical basis Anderson obviously finds congenial. J.L. Martyn's (and Raymond E. Brown's) position on the Jewish-Christian, originally inner-synagogal, dynamic behind the Fourth Gospel is basically accepted, although Anderson believes it antedates the *birkat ha-minim*. At the level of the present text, or the most recent environment of the Fourth Gospel, Anderson finds considerable room to agree with Käsemann: the Johannine version of Christian faith and the Johannine conception of the nature of the church and churchly authority stand consciously over against the Petrine. Anderson would, however, nuance this tension more in the fashion of Brown than of Käsemann himself. John represents a view of gospel and church in tension and dialogue with the Petrine, rather than a sectarian version of Christianity that is, so to speak, beyond the pale.

In holding open the possibility that the Gospel of John represents an original, independent, eyewitness source, Anderson's work will doubtless appeal to certain conservative and evangelical interests. It would, however, be misleading to characterize his work as conservative. It is, rather, bold and imaginative. Doubtless any scholar will find reason to take exception to some parts or aspects of it. Nevertheless, by putting old and important issues in a fresh perspective and attempting to apply new methods, Anderson stimulates us to reappraise our own solutions to the Johannine riddles. In doing so, he will have also set an agenda for his own career, if he undertakes to address all the counterquestions his proposals will doubtless engender.

D. Moody Smith

Preface

This work is a revision of and considerable expansion upon my doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Glasgow in December of 1988. Much appreciation is felt for D. Moody Smith's contributing such a complimentary Foreword, and for Martin Hengel's generous inclusion of this work in the WUNT 2 monograph series. Much appreciation is also felt for the helpfulness of Siebeck/Mohr publishers on the production end of the project.

A bit of explanation is due regarding the reader's use of the footnotes. Simple, bibliographical references are usually made in the text itself, but fuller discussions of points and multiple bibliographic references are reserved for the footnotes. Because this work is often critical of majority and minority views within the guild, judgments in the main text at times require substantiation, which one hopes does not digress too far afield. Where end notes in the original thesis were overly lengthy, these have either been shortened, reconfigured or included as separate appendices at the end of the book. Tables and charts have also been added and crafted to clarify points made within the text, and Greek has been adapted for accessibility.

While significant monographs by J. Ashton, J. Neyrey, J. Painter, W.R.G. Loader, U. von Wahlde, F. Segovia and others, produced recently, as well as significant works by Synoptic scholars, receive little explicit mention, this does not imply their being overlooked. They will, one hopes, be engaged in future discussions.

Paul N. Anderson

Acknowledgments

In many ways scholarship is a parasitic venture. The scholar draws his or her 'life' from the vitality of those whose work has preceded theirs, and from the support of many others. Continuing the analogy, where the parasite simply feeds off the host, offering nothing in return, both host and parasite are soon diminished. However, where the parasite offers back another contribution in exchange for sustenance received, not only is the relationship between parasite and host mutually beneficial, but the biosphere is strengthened and ecosystems sustained. Therefore, this work represents the contributing side of a symbiotic relationship; it is but a small beginning of that which is offered in return for that which I have received so generously from so many others.

First, I should like to thank the faculties of Malone College in Canton, Ohio and the Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana for my undergraduate and graduate introductions to the pursuit of truth: to Roger Barrett, Alvin Anderson and Miriam Burke, for their training in the fields of cognitive and developmental studies; and to Elton Trueblood and Alan Kolp for their encouragement to write and stimulation of my interest in the Gospel of John, respectively. I am also deeply grateful to Otto Betz and Martin Hengel for their tutorial guidance during my research in Tübingen over the summer of 1987, to the communities of Tyndale House in Cambridge, and Woodbrooke College in Selley Oak, England, for their assisting my research over the summer and autumn of 1988, and to the faculty of George Fox University for providing the 1991 summer research grant which facilitated preparing the thesis for publication.

Second, I should like to thank members of the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Glasgow for their guidance and support. Guidance has been enriching, ranging from the course on the history of biblical interpretation, taught by Robert Davidson and Ernest Best, and the provocative seminar on the Gospel of John, taught by Christopher Evans, to the Glasgow New Testament Seminar, hosted by John Barclay and John Riches. I am also grateful to the university for being 'liberated' to give myself to full-time study by receiving the Overseas Research Scholarship and the Divinity Postgraduate Fellowship from 1986-1988, as well as to the John Sarrin Trust in America for their support. To my fellow researchers, Leslie Milton and Hugh Pyper I say a hearty 'thanks', for endless cups of coffee and discussions about 'things Johannine' — not necessarily in that order — and to Wendy Sproston and the British New Testament Conference Johannine Seminar, to Robert Kysar and the National SBL Johannine Literature Section, to Jeff Staley and Michael Cosby and the Pacific Northwest Region SBL New

Testament and Hellenistic Religions Section, to Wayne Rollins and the National SBL Psychology and Biblical Studies Group, to John Painter and Alan Culpepper and the SNTS Johannine Literature Seminar, to Vernon Robbins and the Rhetoric and the New Testament Section of the National SBL meetings, to Irv Brendinger and the Center for Christian Studies in Portland, Oregon and to my students and colleagues at George Fox University for allowing me the opportunity to test some of these ideas within the 'oral tradition' before expressing them in the written. This allowed the work to mature considerably since my doctoral research. I also appreciate Raymond Brown's helpful comments on Table 21 and Appendix VIII. Most of all, however, I am truly grateful to my adviser, John Riches, for his knowledgeable guidance and incisive judgments over my years of research at the University of Glasgow. If an adviser may be considered anything like a 'duelling-partner', challenging an advisee to excellence by both example and exercise, I am indeed fortunate to have had such a rigorous — and yet profitable — experience.

There are many others who have proof-read, typed, responded to ideas, and been engaged in correspondence and discussion, who know my appreciation apart from having been mentioned here. But finally, I must reserve my deepest thanks for those family and friends who have made our two years in Scotland possible, and who supported the extensive revision process in the meantime. To our parents, brothers and sisters, and their families we say 'thanks', but especially to Carla, Sarah, Della and Olivia is my appreciation most profoundly felt, for their enduring the throes of 'research-related widowhood and orphanhood'. To them this book is dedicated. My only hope is that I should be able to return but a portion of the loving support and contributions I have received so liberally from others.

May, 1995

Paul N. Anderson

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Abbreviations

1. Journals and Periodicals

<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review.</i>
<i>ABR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review.</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica.</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library.</i>
<i>BK</i>	<i>Bibel und Kirche.</i>
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research.</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin.</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly.</i>
<i>CTM</i>	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission.</i>
<i>DownR</i>	<i>Downside Review.</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly.</i>
<i>EstBib</i>	<i>Estudios Biblicos.</i>
<i>ET</i>	<i>Expository Times.</i>
<i>ETR</i>	<i>Etudes théologiques et religieuses.</i>
<i>EvTh</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie.</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review.</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal.</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation.</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature.</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament.</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies.</i>
<i>LV</i>	<i>Lumière et Vie.</i>
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica.</i>
<i>NKZ</i>	<i>Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift.</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum.</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies.</i>
<i>QRT</i>	<i>Quaker Religious Thought.</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique.</i>
<i>RGG</i>	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.</i>
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses.</i>
<i>RivB</i>	<i>Rivista biblica.</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse.</i>
<i>RTP</i>	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie.</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology.</i>
<i>ThD</i>	<i>Theological Digest.</i>
<i>ThR</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau.</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies.</i>
<i>TTKi</i>	<i>Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirche.</i>
<i>TTZ</i>	<i>Trierer theologische Zeitschrift.</i>

<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin.</i>
<i>VigChr</i>	<i>Vigiliae christianae.</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche.</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche.</i>

2. Series and Collections

AnBib	Analecta Biblica.
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica, New Testament.
IDB	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> , 5 vols., ed., G. Buttrick et. al., Nashville, 1962–1976.
IRT	Issues in Religion and Theology.
JSNTS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass.
LTPM	Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs.
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements.
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series.
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge.
SBLASP	Society of Biblical Literature Abstracts and Seminar Papers.
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series.
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series.
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series.
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and its World.
SE	Studia Evangelica, ed., F.L. Cross, Berlin.
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , 10 vols., ed. G. Kittel and G. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, 1964–1976.
UNT	Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament.
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary.
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament.
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament.

3. Works Often Cited (by name or key-word)

Ashton	<i>The Interpretation of John</i> , ed. J. Ashton, IRT, Philadelphia/London, 1986.
Barrett	<i>The Gospel According to St. John</i> , Philadelphia, 1978. (Dialectical): 'The Dialectical Theology of St. John', in his <i>New Testament Essays</i> , London, 1972, pp. 49–69.
Borgen	(Bread): <i>Bread from Heaven</i> , Leiden, 1965.
Brown	<i>The Gospel According to John (I–XII)</i> , New York, 1966. (Community): <i>The Community of the Beloved Disciple</i> , New York, 1979. (NTE): <i>New Testament Essays</i> , Milwaukee, 1965.
Bultmann	<i>The Gospel of John</i> , Philadelphia, 1971.
Culpepper	<i>The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel</i> , Philadelphia, 1983.
Fortna	<i>The Gospel of Signs</i> , Cambridge, 1970.
Fowler	<i>Stages of Faith Development</i> , San Francisco, 1981.
Käsemann	<i>The Testament of Jesus</i> , Philadelphia, 1968.
Lindars	<i>The Gospel of John</i> , Grand Rapids/London, 1972.
Loder	<i>The Transforming Moment</i> , San Francisco, 1981.
Martyr	<i>History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel</i> , Nashville, 1979.

- Meeks *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, Leiden, 1967.
- Schnackenburg *The Gospel According to St. John* Vols. 1–3, London/New York, 1980, 1982, 1983.
- Smith *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel*, New Haven, 1965.

4. Besides the standard abbreviations for books of the Bible

Philo:

- Leg. all.* Allegorical Interpretation.
- Congr.* The Preliminary Studies.
- Mut.* On The Change of Names.
- Mos.* On Moses.

Ignatius of Antioch:

- Eph.* his letter to the Ephesians.
- Ro.* his letter to the Romans.
- Magn.* his letter to the Magnesians.
- Phil.* his letter to the Philadelphians.

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Introduction

John's Christological Unity and Disunity: Identifying The Options

To consult the Fourth Gospel is to be confronted with the classic issues of christology, and to do christology is to be drawn back time and again to the christological interpretation of the Fourth Gospel. This is due, in part, to the struggles faced in Western Christianity's attempt to assimilate John's christology into its thought. Indeed, many of the key debates of the seven ecumenical councils hinged upon the distinctive portrayal of Christ in the Fourth Gospel.¹ What is even more amazing, however, is that in several of the christological debates opposing parties *both* drew from the Fourth Gospel to substantiate their positions. As T.E. Pollard observed:²

At the turn of this century, F.C. Conybeare, in a review of Alfred Loisy's *Le quatrième évangile*, wrote: "If Athanasius had not had the Fourth Gospel to draw texts from, Arius would never have been confuted." [*HJ*, VII (1903), 620] That is however only part of the

1 Consider, for instance, John's influence upon such issues as pre-existence versus subordinationism, *homoousia*, hypostatic union, monotheletism, and *filioque* debates. Had it not been for the Gospel of John the events leading up to and during the seven ecumenical councils would certainly have had a different history (cf. M.F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, Cambridge, 1960, esp. pp. 112–128, for patristic interpretations of John; and T.E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, Cambridge, 1970; who identifies at least four strands of Johannine christological debates). Pollard is also so convinced of the formative influence of Johannine christology upon the christological development of the early church in general that he is able to say:

I am not unaware that other books and key passages of scripture (e.g. Philippians 2:6ff., Colossians 1:15ff., Proverbs 8:22ff.) also played an important role. Nevertheless, I believe that it was St John's Gospel, with its Logos-concept in the Prologue and its emphasis on the Father-Son relationship, that raised in a most acute way the problems which led the church to formulate her doctrines of the trinity and the person of Christ. (*Ibid*, p. xi)

2 *Ibid.*, p. 3. One can identify an impressive similarity of function between the theological debates of the early church Fathers and the literary-composition theories of modern scholars. While there is little connection between their approaches to biblical texts, they have addressed a common set of issues: namely, how the multifaceted presentation of Christ in the New Testament — and John in particular — might be understood clearly and coherently. While early christological discussions assimilated the assets and limitations of a Platonic world-view, the Fathers were primarily concerned with doing sound exegesis of the scriptures. M.F. Wiles suggests that:

truth, for it would also be true to say that if Arius had not the Fourth Gospel to draw texts from, he would not have needed confuting.

The obvious question following such an observation is: ‘What is the origin of John’s distinctive christology?’ Only as this question is addressed can one acquire an adequate understanding of what John is saying about Christ, and just as importantly, what John is not.

There are basically three possible approaches to the tensions within John’s christology. One may diminish their existence, one may locate one of the poles of the tensions as external to the thinking and writing of the evangelist, or one may identify them as internal to the thinking and writing of the evangelist. Any of these approaches must also include an explanation of how such a phenomenon may have occurred; thus, christological tensions cannot simply be discussed in isolation from historical, literary, and theological issues. The solving of one set of problems often creates a new set of problems to be addressed. The primary focus of this study, however, is John’s christological unity and disunity, which calls for an introductory discussion of the three basic options concerning one’s approach to the christological tensions in the Fourth Gospel.

1. The first option is to diminish or ignore the apparent contradictions, attempting to harmonize the christological tensions (or to stay with the metaphor, attempting to ‘harmonize the discord’) in John. This had been the primary approach to interpreting the Fourth Gospel until the beginning of the 19th century.³ Rather than coming to grips with the problems inherent to John’s unitive and disunitive

There is no title that the Fathers would have coveted more for themselves than that of Biblical theologians. Later scholars may point with justice to the influence of Greek metaphysical thought upon their writings and their understanding of the Gospel, but in conscious aim and intention their overriding purpose was to interpret the message of the Bible. (*op. cit.*, p. 158)

Where many of their efforts went into reconciling apparent contradictions dogmatically, modern scholars have attempted to address these issues using the tools and critical methodologies of the modern age. Such theological giants as Wellhausen, Loisy, and Bultmann are but a few examples of modern scholars who have sought to address these and other perplexities by devising literary/composition theories to resolve them. While their tools and methodologies have been different, biblical scholars — both modern and patristic — have been driven by a common interest: to account for the christological tensions in the Fourth Gospel.

- 3 The issue of authorship, for instance, had not been questioned seriously until the beginning of the 19th century. As an example of the turning of the tide among scholars, consider K.G. Bretschneider’s *Probabilia de Evangelii et Epistolarum Johannis Apostoli indole et origine eruditorum iudicis modeste subiecit* (Leipzig, 1820). Translated by E. Haenchen and R.W. Funk, the title is, ‘Probable conclusions about the type and origin of the Gospel and Epistles of the Apostle John, modestly submitted to the judgment of the scholarly world’. (E. Haenchen, *A Commentary on the Gospel John* vol. 1, E.t. by R.W. Funk, Philadelphia, 1984, p. 24). ‘This book, intended for the professional world’, says Haenchen, ‘nevertheless contained sentences like this:

thought, the traditional approach to John's unitive and disunitive christology has sought to make sense of its tensions by means of metaphysical speculation or dogmatic postulation. However, to ascribe John's christological tensions to representations of metaphysical mysteries misses the intriguing issue of *how* John's christology came to incorporate such tensions and diminishes one's appreciation of the Fourth Gospel's richness and distinctive presentation of Christ.

On one hand, the Word was with God and the Word was God (1:1).⁴ On the other hand, the Son can do nothing on his own authority (5:30), but *only* what he sees the Father doing (5:19).⁵ This seems to imply that there are both elevated and subordinationist christologies in John. Regarding the signs, on one hand, they are used apologetically, to evoke a believing response from the reader (20:31).⁶ On the other hand, the evangelist highlights not the miraculous value of the signs, but their existential significance. In fact, the second of the two macarisms⁷ in John even blesses that faith which is independent of the need to see miraculous signs (20:29). And, what of the contrast between present and futuristic eschatologies in John? On one hand, the one hearing the word of Jesus and believing in God has already passed from judgment into life (5:24).⁸ On the other hand, the one 'eating the flesh' and

It is not possible that both the Jesus of the first three Gospels and the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel are historically true at the same time, since the greatest differences obtain between them not only in the mode of speech, but also in the way evidence is adduced and in the kind of activity; it is also not possible that the first three Evangelists invented Jesus' teachings, morals, and way of teaching; the author of the Fourth Gospel could quite possibly have concocted his Jesus. (*Ibid.*, Bretschneider, p. vii; *Ibid.*, Haenchen, p. 24.) While this book was not immediately accepted, the questions it raised regarding the relationship between John and the Synoptics are still with us today. The simplistically dichotomous evaluation of the Synoptics' value as 'historical' and John's value as 'spiritual' is still evidenced today by the fact that there is little, if any, place for the Fourth Gospel in current investigations of the life of Jesus. (See R.E. Brown, 'After Bultmann, What?', *CBQ* 26, 1964, pp. 28–30; and also 'The Problem of Historicity in John', *CBQ* 24, 1962, pp. 1–14; and *NTE*, 187–217. Also, see n. 33, below.)

It was not until some time after Bretschneider's earlier contribution, however, that the problems *within* the Fourth Gospel began to be addressed with the tools of literary criticism. In 1907 J. Wellhausen published his *Erweiterungen und Änderungen im vierten Evangelium* (Berlin), and in 1908 he published his commentary (*Das Evangelium Johannis*, Berlin). Then, in four issues of *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, from 1907–1908, E. Schwartz produced articles regarding 'Aporien im vierten Evangelium'. From that time on, criticism of the Fourth Gospel has not only focused upon John/Synoptic comparison/contrasts. It has also sought to explain the perplexities (aporias) within the Fourth Gospel itself.

4 See Appendix I, "John's Exalted Christology".

5 See Appendix II, "John's Subordinated Christology".

6 See Appendix III, "Johannine Signs as Facilitators of Belief".

7 See Appendix IV, "Johannine Signs and the Existentializing Work of the Evangelist".

8 See Appendix V, "Realized Eschatology in John".

'drinking the blood' of Jesus will be raised up in the last day (6:54).⁹ It could be that the evangelist was not concerned with being consistent, and that it is only to a modern audience that these appear to be contradictory sets of propositions.¹⁰ However, if the christological thought of John is found to be genuinely self-contradictory, then at best the Gospel is a self-negating witness to be disbelieved; or at worst we have the confused musings of a schizophrenic to be patronizingly disregarded.¹¹ Therefore, to overlook the tensions in John without addressing the problems they present is not an option for contemporary and serious study of the Fourth Gospel.

2. A second option is to acknowledge John's christological tensions, but to ascribe them to literary sources *external* to the thinking of the evangelist.¹² This approach preserves a certain singularity of perspective and non-contradiction of thought, as differences are explained by the evangelist's use of earlier sources or by later interpolations added to his work. Therefore, the tensions are explained by the existence of multiple contributors, and even multiple christologies in

9 See Appendix VI, "Futuristic Eschatology in John". Consider also John's tensions between determinism/free will, true Israelites/the Jews, universalistic/particularistic soteriology, and its apparent ambivalence toward the sacraments.

10 Questions raised by scholars often say as much about the era of the scholar as the epoch being discussed. What appear to us to be 'contradictions' may not have seemed to be such to the evangelist. Thus, R. Kysar's criticism of modern scholars' analyses of Johannine christology is well taken. Says Kysar:

Contemporary interpreters are too often inclined, it seems to me, to analyze the christology of this early Christian document by means of categories which are in all probability not those of the FE. Did the evangelist operate within the conceptual framework of such polarities as faith and history, human and divine, or person and function? In all likelihood he did not consciously use such categories. The understanding of the FE's view of Christ will gain ground when we are able to grasp those modes of thought in which the evangelist, and not necessarily the interpreter, is at home.

(R. Kysar, 'The Fourth Gospel. A Report on Recent Research', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*: ii Principat, Bd. 25, 3, ed. by H. Temporini and W. Haase, Berlin, 1985, pp. 2448f.).

11 While 'schizophrenic' may not be the best way to talk about the apparent contradictions in John's christology, it nonetheless describes the sense of disjointedness some scholars have detected within John's thought. Alluding to J. Behm's article ('Der gegenwärtige Stand der Erforschung des Johannesevangeliums', *TLZ* 73, 1948, pp. 21–30), R.T. Fortna says about Johannine aporias: 'At times it has been suggested that these phenomena are to be attributed to some defect in the evangelist, such as carelessness, unconcern for consistency, or senility.' (pp. 2–3)

12 In saying the tensions were external to the thinking of the evangelist, one must devise a literary theory of how this could have happened. Simplistically put, the evangelist may have incorporated material into his Gospel with which he disagreed at least slightly. Or, he may have been critical of the way a particular story or tradition was slanted, so he 'corrected' its nuance. It is almost certain that his work was edited for publication by another hand (Jn. 21:24f.), and it is possible that during this stage of composition further material may have been added, or existing material altered. This is what is meant by 'influences external to the thinking of the Fourth Evangelist'.

John. This view is articulated by E. Haenchen in an essay introducing his commentary ('Various Christologies in the Gospel of John', pp. 91–97):

There is a great deal to be said for the view that we are hearing the voices of two theologically diverging evangelists in the Fourth Gospel. ... In the underlying tradition Jesus is pictured as a great miracle-worker, whose mighty deeds demonstrate and authenticate his divinity. John corrects this perspective embedded in the tradition in a fundamental way, without having to deny the miracles reported by the tradition. For him, their value lies elsewhere. (pp. 94–95)

In this paragraph Haenchen represents the views of many scholars¹³ who maintain in somewhat modified forms the most widely accepted aspect of Bultmann's composition theory pertaining to the literary origins of John.¹⁴ While D. Carson is correct, that Johannine source criticism has moved beyond the work of Bultmann,¹⁵ one nonetheless continually finds the source of many current discussions traced back to Bultmann's epoch-making contribution to the issue: his commentary on John.¹⁶

One of the key contributions — and scandals — of Bultmann's work for modern interpreters is that it ascribes what appear to be irreconcilable tensions to

13 For instance, see R.T. Fortna, 1970; and W. Nicol, *The Sēmeia in the Fourth Gospel*, Leiden, 1972; as well as J. Becker, 'Wunder und Christologie: Zum literarkritischen und christologischen Problem der Wunder im Johannesevangelium', *NTS* 16, 1969–70, pp. 130–48.

14 While Bultmann's former pupil, H. Becker, expanded upon the gnostic origin of the *Offenbarungsreden* in his doctoral dissertation, *Die Reden des Johannesevangeliums und der Stil der gnostischen Offenbarungsreden*, Göttingen, 1956; and while S. Temple's book, *The Core of the Fourth Gospel*, London/Oxford, 1975, attempts to demonstrate the process by which the Fourth Gospel had been expanded upon an earlier 'core' of discourse material, Bultmann's *Offenbarungsreden* hypothesis has left most scholars finally unconvinced. On the other hand, scholars have generally been more receptive to Bultmann's *sēmeia* source theory. The probable reason for this difference in reception is that Bultmann is able to produce more convincing stylistic, contextual, and theological (and especially, *christological*) evidence for his *sēmeia* source hypothesis. The *theios anēr christology* of the *sēmeia* source is quite distinguishable from the more reflective *Tendenz* of the evangelist, according to Bultmann. Thus, any appreciation of his literary/composition theories *must deal centrally with his treatment of the christological tensions of the Fourth Gospel*.

15 On one occasion, D.A. Carson says that some '... writers are still engaging in detailed polemics against Bultmann's source criticism — unfortunately ignoring the fact that the debate has moved on somewhat during the last forty years.' ('Recent Literature on the Fourth Gospel: Some Reflections', *Themelios* 9, 1983, p. 11). Perhaps this is because, as Carson states elsewhere, the '... seminal work behind all modern attempts to reconstruct a literary source, or literary sources, for the fourth gospel, is, of course, the *magnum opus* of Rudolph Bultmann' ('Current Source Criticism of the Fourth Gospel: Some Methodological Questions', *JBL* 97, 1978, p. 414).

16 D.M. Smith, for instance, considers three prevalent trends in Johannine studies to be directly or indirectly a reflection of scholars' attempts to address issues raised by Bultmann. These include a) the search for a Johannine tradition which is independent from the Synoptic gospels, b) studies of the relationship between the kerygmatic character of the Johannine discourses and their pre-gospel homiletic function and form, and c) inquiries into the socio-

various literary sources. According to Bultmann, underlying the Fourth Gospel are at least three main written sources, and the evangelist has woven these into an ‘historicized drama’.¹⁷ By means of intricate linguistic analysis and the consistent assignment of theological motifs to their credited sources, Bultmann believes he is able to distinguish these sources on stylistic, contextual, and theological grounds. Therefore, according to Bultmann, there are at least *four separate christologies* interwoven within the Fourth Gospel, and each of these may be attributed to a separate source. a) The christology of the *Offenbarungsreden* source is that of the Gnostic Redeemer-myth, which portrays a redeemer figure who comes down from heaven and enlightens the elect with secret, divine knowledge, thus sealing their salvation. b) The christology of the *sêmeia* source is that of the *theios anēr*, who, through mighty acts of power, convinces his Jewish audience to believe in him. c) The christology of the evangelist is more creative and developed. While incorporating the other christological emphases, he believes that the existential significance of Jesus’ words and works is the

religious context out of which John emerged. (See D.M. Smith, ‘The Sources of the Gospel of John: An Assessment of the Present State of the Problem’, *NTS* 10, 1964, pp. 336–351.)

Of course, Bultmann cannot be given total credit for these developments, as his work and the later work of others was influenced by such contributions as those of J. Wellhausen (*op. cit.*); B. Bauer (*Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte des Johannes*, Bremen, 1840); F.C. Baur (*Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien, ihr Verhältniß zu einander, ihren Charakter und Ursprung*, Tübingen, 1847); F. Spitta (*Das Johannes-Evangelium als Quelle der Geschichte Jesu*, Göttingen, 1910); H. Wendt (*Die Schichten im vierten Evangelium*, Göttingen, 1911); E. Hirsch (*Das vierte Evangelium in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt verdeutscht und erklärt*, Tübingen, 1936); and W. Bousset (esp. ‘Ist das vierte Evangelium eine literarische Einheit?’, *TR* 12, 1909, pp. 1–12, 39–64). Nevertheless, Bultmann’s mastery as a theologian, a researcher of ancient religions, and a linguistic analyst was demonstrated in his ability to synthesize earlier theories into a coherent whole. This had not been done at such a level of sustained and exhaustive argumentation before. Thus, the observation of E. Haenchen is correct that:

The impression of the unity of this work helped to give his commentary the influence it came to have: like a mighty tree, it appeared not to permit anything strong and important to prosper in its shadow. This effect did not set in immediately, but once it began, it became clear that Bultmann’s commentary on the Gospel of John decisively dominated an entire generation. (p. 34)

- 17 This is the converse of a ‘dramatized history’. In the former, places, dates and other history-type (*historisch*) information is included for the purpose of making the drama more believable — an approach employed widely by writers of historical fiction or novels. A dramatized history, however, is concerned with presenting an account of a significant event or series of events in ways that are instructive for later audiences. Here, the outer details of places, dates and sequence form the main structure. The ‘historian’ then adds to the narrative dialogues, interactions with other people, and other ‘human’ factors which make the plot come alive. There is some license for paraphrase, but it is only done as an effort to elucidate the author’s understanding of the events being described (cf. Bultmann, p. 210). He understands and portrays the events of Jesus’ ministry as scenarios of the saving and revealing ‘discourse’ between God and humanity.

priority for faith. For him, to believe in Jesus is to enter into a spiritual relationship whereby all human and religious endeavours must eventually give way to complete faith in God's revelation in Jesus. d) The christology of the redactor is bound up with his ecclesiastical concerns. He prepares the Gospel to be received by the church of his day and therefore adds sacramental and futuristic themes, restores the image of Peter, and attributes to the Gospel apostolic authorship.

The clearest context in which these four christologies can be seen is in John 6, where they all occur together.¹⁸ From the *sēmeia* source we have the feeding of the 5,000 (6:1–13) and Jesus' walking on the water (6:16–21, 25); from the *Offenbarungsreden* source we have the Bread of Life discourses and other material (6:27a, 33, 35, 37b, 44a, 45c, 47b, and 48); and from the redactor we have the so-called 'eucharistic interpolation' and a few other additions (6:1c, 18, 23c, 27b, 39c, 40c, 44b, and 51c–58). For this reason, ch. 6 has often been considered the 'showpiece' of Johannine source theories as well as for theories of multiple christologies in John.¹⁹ John 6 may thus be termed the '*Grand Central Station*' of Johannine historical, literary and theological issues.

Bultmann's source theory appears to have several other assets, as well as weaknesses. Historically, John's disagreement with the Synoptics is no longer an issue as the Fourth Gospel contains virtually no historical information, according to Bultmann. The historicizing details were included by the evangelist to make his drama come to life and thus enhance its impact. This would also account for the large quantity of symbolic content in John. One problem with such a view, however, is that there is still a great deal of historical-type detail in John which does not appear to be used symbolically. To say that such details are simply historicizing touches added to enhance the narrative effect does not do them justice. Also, the once widely-held view, that the Synoptics are intended to be understood more historically and John to be understood more spiritually,²⁰ is simplistic and inadequate. This is especially clear where the Johannine

18 This accounts for the vast number of critical and interpretive articles which have recently been written on John 6. Other than the Passion narratives, it is here that John may be most adequately compared with the Synoptics (consider the feeding of the multitude, 6:1–15; the sea crossing, 6:16–21; and Peter's confession, 6:68f.). It is also in ch. 6 that the literary characteristics of supposed sources may be analyzed, and it is here that the unity and/or disunity of the theological (and especially the christological) content of John may be evaluated.

19 Consider for instance, R. Kysar's article entitled, 'The Source Analysis of the Fourth Gospel — A Growing Consensus?' *NovT* 15, 1973, pp. 134–152. In this essay, Kysar attempts to demonstrate a 'growing consensus' among scholars regarding the existence of sources and redactions in John. In doing so, he charts the results of nine scholars' source-critical analyses of John 6. More will be said about this article below, in Chapter 3.

20 This was certainly the issue C.H. Dodd wanted to raise with Bultmann and others who had come to regard the Fourth Gospel as patently non-historical. In his *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge, 1965, Dodd sought not to 'prove' the historicity of the Fourth Gospel, but to explore 'what kind of history' it was intended to convey. In doing so, he recognized that the old Johannine/Synoptic comparison was obsolete. Says Dodd:

tradition appears to be earlier and more reliable than that of the Synoptics. It is also becoming increasingly recognized among scholars that much of Mark's editorial work is motivated by theological purposes as well as historical ones. Likewise, Matthew and Luke. Thus, all four gospels are motivated by *both* theological and historical interests. The basic issue, however, is whether Bultmann has incorrectly inferred the purpose of the Fourth Evangelist and the literary history of his work. While the question of John's historicity may be left open for now, to say that the evangelist was not seeking to provide an historical, or at least a 'meta-historical'²¹ witness to the earthly ministry of Jesus is forced.

The comparison between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics has been placed in a fresh light. That there is a real difference between them is a fact which has been manifest to clear-sighted readers of the gospels ever since the time when Clement wrote that "John, observing that the bodily facts had been made clear in the [earlier] gospels ... composed a spiritual gospel". [Eusebius, *EH*, 6, 14, 7.] But the difference was exaggerated by nineteenth-century criticism, as if the Synoptic Gospels were entirely 'somatic' and John was nothing but 'pneumatic'; as if, in other words, the Synoptics gave us nothing but plain, brute facts of history and John nothing but abstract theology in symbolic guise. (pp. 4–5)

This presupposition was challenged by Dodd in his examination of the content and character of the Fourth Gospel. Not only did he find a great deal of historically reliable detail unique to John, but he also attempted to show the form of the material underlying the Fourth Gospel was based upon *oral* rather than written traditions. His work has been followed and built upon by such scholars as M. Hengel, (*The Johannine Question*, London/Philadelphia, 1989); J.A.T. Robinson (*The Priority of John*, London, 1985); R.E. Brown (*New Testament Essays*, Milwaukee, 1965); B. Lindars (*Behind the Fourth Gospel*, London, 1971); and L.L. Morris (*Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, Exeter/Grand Rapids, 1969). Curiously, Dodd's work has yet to be satisfactorily challenged — or heeded — by the guild. (Cf. D.A. Carson, 'Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel: After Dodd, What?', *Gospel Perspectives* II, ed. R.T. France and D. Wenham, Sheffield, 1981, pp. 84–145).

Thus, while Bultmann's source-hypotheses may account for the presence of historical content in John (as some of the sources contained apparently historical information), it did not analyze critically basic assumptions regarding 'historicity' — as such — especially with relation to the evangelist's reasons for writing (see also F. Mussner, *The Historical Jesus in the Gospel of St John*, E.t. by W.J. O'Hara, New York, 1967; for an insightful explanation of the Fourth Gospel's interpretive portrayal of the history of Jesus as one who speaks to the needs of the early church, using *Johannine language*).

- 21 The descriptive term, 'metahistorical', is used by D.M. Smith in his essay (reprinted from *Int*, 31, 1977), 'The Presentation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel', *Interpreting the Gospels*, Philadelphia, 1981, pp. 278–290. The point that deserves to be taken seriously by Johannine scholars is that actual events are not historic, in and of themselves. Only when they are interpreted as 'significant' do they acquire 'historical' value for the present and the future. This may happen negatively as well as positively, and W. Pauck has described this phenomenon well ('The Significance of Adolf von Harnack's *Interpretation of Church History*', *Union Seminary Quarterly review*, 1954, p. 15):

We study history in order to intervene in the course of history and we have a right to do so. ... To intervene in history — this means that we must reject the past when it reaches into the present only in order to block us.

In other words, to say that the evangelist was writing an historicized drama misrepresents the apparent purpose of the evangelist. He was more likely writing a dramatized history.²² This is not to say that the redactor did not 'publish' it for rhetorical reasons. A related historical issue has to do with how well Bultmann's interpretation fits in with what was happening within the context of Johannine Christianity, but that discussion will be saved for later.

Bultmann's literary solutions are not without their problems either. While some literary problems are solved (i.e., the order of John 5 and 6, the abrupt ending of ch. 14, the origin of ch. 21, etc.), other problems emerge—not the least of which includes the disordering of numerous texts and fragments which just happened to break between complete phrases and sentences. This sort of thing could indeed have happened with an ancient codex or scroll, but it seems very improbable that it could have happened to such a degree within the middle of the text, leaving a redactor with so many disconnected-yet-complete phrases and sentences to be reordered incorrectly.²³ Another series of criticisms has come from scholars who have tested the linguistic unity and disunity of the Fourth Gospel and have questioned the possibility of detecting underlying sources on the basis of literary analysis alone.²⁴ These and other problems cause one to sympathize with R.E. Brown's criticism of Bultmann's elaborate literary scheme.

In summary, the theory of accidental displacement seems to create almost as many problems as it solves. The solution to our problem would appear to lie in the direction of a more deliberate procedure. (p. XXVIII)

The theological grounds for Bultmann's theory of composition are the strongest, and the most widely accepted aspects of his hypotheses (his identification of a *sēmeia* source and the additions of a redactor) have found agreement primarily

In other words, Harnack's work as a historian was *not* simply to find out 'what actually happened', but to challenge conventional interpretations of what happened in order to provide a new interpretive foundation for the future. His intention was (according to Pauck) '... to overcome history by history ... and transform it into something better' (p. 16). The function of the adjective, 'historical', is always a rhetorical one.

- 22 Therefore, history and theology must be considered on two levels: the level of the reported event and the level of its reporting. The epoch-making monograph of this topic has been J.L. Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (1968, revised and enlarged 1979), which J. Ashton refers to as '... probably the most important monograph on the Gospel since Bultmann's commentary' (p. 5).
- 23 See also R.E. Brown's criticisms along these lines (pp. XXVI–XXVIII) and B.S. Easton's 'Bultmann's RQ Source', *JBL* 65, 1946, pp. 143–156.
- 24 For thorough discussions of the literary unity of John, (especially in reaction to Bultmann's commentary) see D.M. Smith's analyses in *Composition*, pp. 64–79; and in 'The Sources of the Gospel of John: An Assessment of the Present State of the Problem', *NTS* 10, 1963/4, pp. 336–351. See also R.T. Fortna, pp. 203–218.

because of their theological, and more specifically, their *christological* foundation.²⁵ The weakness of assuming distinct literary sources on the basis of theological judgments, however, is obvious. It rests upon at least three layers of judgment: a) a correct and singular interpretation of what the text both says and means, b) an accurate assessment that meanings are genuinely incompatible with each other within the text as they stand, and c) a superior reassignment of material to other sources which creates fewer problems — or at least preferable ones. If any of these layers of judgment be flawed, *in any way*, the validity of one's interpretation is correspondingly weakened.²⁶ For this reason, the counsel of C.K. Barrett is well taken.

I take it that if the gospel makes sense as it stands it can generally be assumed that this is the sense it was intended to make. ... *Someone* published it substantially as it now stands; and I continue to make the assumption that he knew his business, and that it is the first duty of a commentator to bring out this person's meaning. (p. 22)

3. A third possibility in approaching John's christological tensions is to treat them as tensions *internal* to the thinking and writing of the evangelist. The problem, of course, is to find a way of taking seriously these theological, literary, and historical tensions as well as 'letting John be John'.²⁷ A crucial issue regarding an adequate understanding of John's christological unity and disunity is whether or not to see them as a reflection of a dialectical form of thought which underlies

25 Again, the christological approach to the Fourth Gospel of many scholars has been based upon the work of Bultmann, especially regarding the theory that multiple christologies underlay John's distinctive presentation of Jesus. One may detect a certain continuity between Bultmann's detection of various christologies underlying the Marcan tradition, and he appears to be making similar moves in analyzing John.

It is also significant that due to the criticism of Bultmann's literary hypotheses by such scholars as E. Schweizer (1939), E. Ruckstuhl (1951), and B. Noack (1954), those aspects of his theories which have depended chiefly on literary or theological analyses alone have fallen by the wayside. An example of this is his *Offenbarungsreden* source theory.

26 The primary target for critics of John's disunity has been the claim that John contains various sources, detectable on the basis of stylistic analysis. The contributions of three of these scholars may be summarized as follows: while Schweizer's work was being written around the same time as Bultmann's commentary, he nevertheless addressed some of the same issues. By applying thirty-three linguistic analyses of Johannine language and style, he concluded that while source-criticism may be a useful tool and that John probably used sources, it would be difficult to discover these on the basis of linguistic analysis alone. Ruckstuhl was more sweeping in his criticism. He argued that not only were sources impossible to identify, but all source criticism of the Fourth Gospel should be abandoned. Noack took a different stance. By analyzing John's use of the Old Testament, Noack demonstrated that the Fourth Evangelist probably did not quote this source but cited it loosely from memory. He concluded that if John treated his only known source so loosely, it would be impossible to infer with certainty John's use of hypothetical sources.

27 For an extended arguing of this point, see J.D.G. Dunn, 'Let John be John: A Gospel for its Time', in P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien: Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982*, Tübingen, 1983, pp. 309–339.

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