

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PURPOSE AND MUTUAL RELATIONS OF THE
JOHANNINE EPISTLES

BRYAN A. WILLIAMS
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

PRESENTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF CAPE TOWN UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF ASSISTANT PROFESSOR JOHN PAINTER
AND PROFESSOR J.L. DE VILLIERS.

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

C O N T E N T S

	PAGE NO.
INTRODUCTION	1
<u>PREPARATORY CHAPTER</u> : THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES - A SURVEY OF THEORIES OF PROVENANCE AND MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS	6
CATEGORY (1) The Epistles unrelated	6
(2) The Epistles unrelatable	14
(3) 1 and 2 John closely related	16
(4) 2 and 3 John closely related	19
(5) The Epistles related "concentrically"	23
(6) The Epistles related simply through a "school" theory of authorship	42
(7) 2 and 3 John and other NT books related by the identification of named persons	45
(8) The Epistles related by common authorship, time and single church destination	47
The superiority of the hypothesis	49
<u>CHAPTER ONE</u> : THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE JOHANNINE GOSPEL AND EPISTLES	75
Preamble:	75
Internal references to author/s in the Gospel and Epistles	
<u>Fourth Gospel / 1 John and other Inter-Johannine Relationships:</u>	
(A) The Gospel and 1 John	78
(B) 1 and 2 John	88
(C) 2 John and John's Gospel	93
(D) 2 John and 3 John	93
(E) Bergmeier's arguments against common authorship	95
<u>"School" theories of the authorship of the Johannine Books</u>	96
(A) Johannine Community	97
(B) Arguments against the "school" concept of authorship	104
(C) Conclusion to "school" discussion	111
(D) The "one author" concept	111

<u>CHAPTER TWO:</u> THE DATING OF THE JOHANNINE BOOKS	136
<u>CHAPTER THREE:</u> THE NATURE OF THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES	143
(A) Analysis of the Fourth Gospel	143
(B) The Fourth Gospel and 1 John Prologues	146
(C) Analysis of 1 John	148
(1) Recurring cycle theories	148
(2) Disparate source theories	150
(3) Dual purpose theories	153
(D) Literary type of 1 John	157
(E) The nature of 2 John	164
(F) The nature of 3 John	165
(G) A synthesis	166
(H) Additional points:	167
(a) Mandatory statements and prohibitions	
(b) Tone	
<u>CHAPTER FOUR:</u> THE ERRORS CONFRONTED IN THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES	190
Preamble	190
(A) The Doctrinal Error opposed in 1 John	191
(1) Emphatic statements	191
(2) Repetition	195
(3) "Sign-posted" statements	198
(4) True and False Doctrine	201
(B) A comparison of the Doctrinal Error opposed in 2 John with that in 1 John	206
(1) Emphatic statements	206
(2) Repetition	207
(3) "Sign-posted" statements	208
(4) True and False Doctrine	209
(C) A comparison of the practical problems opposed in 1 John and 3 John	214
(D) Conclusion	216
(E) Identification of the heresy	216
(1) Cerinthianism	
(2) Ignatius' Asian opponents	

<u>CHAPTER FIVE:</u> THE JOURNEYS AND VISITS OF THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES	251
Eleven events : their sequence and significance	252
(1) Witnessing Jesus' ministry	253
(2) The missionary journey	255
(3) "Episcopal" activities	257
(4) The separation of the heretics	258
(5) Encouragement for the Elder	259
(6) Itinerant missionary work	260
(7) Christian fellowship	260
(8) The writing of the Epistles	261
(9) Demetrius' journey	261
(10) The Elder's programme	261
(11) Heretical activities	263
<u>CONCLUSION</u>	263
<u>CHAPTER SIX:</u> THE PERSONALITIES OF THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES	272
(A) Gaius and Diotrephes and their church/es	272
(B) The "Lady"; individual or church?	278
(C) The "Lady" and Gaius	283
(D) Some personages of 1, 2 and 3 John	284
<u>FINAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION</u>	299
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	300

INTRODUCTION

The series of questions which is often grouped under the heading "the Johannine Problem" is perhaps the most intractable of all those which confront New Testament scholars. Many of these questions cannot be avoided, no matter which of the five traditional "Johannine" books is studied. On one side there is the complex of queries surrounding the Fourth Gospel: its authorship, historicity, milieu, nature and date. In another direction is to be found the formidable set of challenges associated with the Johannine Apocalypse.

No less difficult are the questions posed by the Epistles of John. First there is the question of authorship. Did one writer pen all three works? What is the relationship of the writer/s of the Epistles to the author/s of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse of John? There is also the problem of timing - even leaving aside the Gospel and Apocalypse, is it possible to come to any conclusion concerning the priority of one or other of the three Epistles? Were they written at the same time? What is the answer to the peculiar absence of contemporary names¹ in 1 and 2 John? What, in fact, is the nature and intention of each book? What is one to make of the current church situation, of the elusive personalities and their movements?

The hypothesis advanced here suggests that the three Johannine Epistles came from the same hand, the author of these also being the author of the Fourth Gospel.² At some period, probably in the last two decades of the first Christian century, the writer, a man with a supervisory role over a number of churches, was living in a certain strategic centre (quite possibly in Asia Minor³). He wrote 1 John, 2 John and 3 John on one occasion. The First Epistle is fundamental. It was written to meet a disturbing situation which had arisen in a local church.⁴ The writer expresses his concern about two basic characteristics exhibited by certain counterfeit Christians. These are (i) the holding of a docetic type of Christology, and (ii) an arrogance and lovelessness which is the result of a claim to superior religious experience. The writer portrays clearly and positively what he conceives to be the nature of genuine Christianity,⁵ which comprises certain norms of faith and practice.

1 John, then, was written to a local church and was intended to be read publicly before its members. 2 and 3 John had a supplementary purpose: 2 John was written to a notable lady within the church that received the larger Epistle, and 3 John to her husband, Gaius. ALL THREE DOCUMENTS WERE INCLUDED IN ONE PARCEL which was addressed to Gaius. Accordingly, two of them could be either anonymous (1 John)⁶ or without the main recipient's actual name (2 John). The "something to the church"⁷ is 1 John.

The wife was perhaps the theologian of the family.⁸ She received a brief restatement of the theological "heart" of 1 John (the true doctrine of Christ). This was to be a yardstick for the offering or refusal of hospitality to itinerant teachers or preachers. She was perhaps called *Ἐκλεκτῆ Κυρίᾳ*⁹ because she was so obviously a choice Christian,¹⁰ but fundamentally because she was elect of God!¹¹ Her husband Gaius had as his main responsibility certain administrative and presbyterial duties. Both he and Diotrephes (and probably others in some sort of "senior council"¹²) had influence in the local church, but "Diotrephes ... likes to put himself first".¹³ This had created tensions in the community which could only be resolved by the intervention of the "area supervisor" - the *πρεσβύτερος*.¹⁴ There was no need to hide from Gaius the exact position of individuals (eg Demetrius) nor to avoid the name of Diotrephes. On the other hand, both individual commendation and censure had to be avoided in 1 John,¹⁵ which was to be read openly before the congregation.¹⁶ In one sense the First Epistle is not a letter at all; it bears some resemblance to a spoken address which has been recorded.¹⁷ Thus it has no opening according to the regular letter pattern of the age, and the conclusion is far from orthodox. (For all that the personal tone of the writing is evident, by, inter alia, the repetition of vocatives such as *τεκνία*, *ἀγαπητοί* and *πατέρα*).

With respect to the community of the writer,¹⁸ some people had already "gone out"¹⁹ - these are the "antichrists".²⁰ Verse 10 of the Second Epistle contains advice for the future treatment of itinerant people with similar views. The Third Epistle unambiguously names one villain (whose stated error is that of rejecting discipline, though he may well have been guilty of doctrinal unorthodoxy²¹ as well). 3 John also tells Gaius what the church should do by way of monetary or other assistance to true missionaries.²²

In both 2 and 3 John the writer refers to an impending visit. The statement in 2 John and both statements in 3 John²³ all apply to the same visit.

²⁴A further reason for the anonymity of 1 John may perhaps be detected: the above hypothesis does not preclude the sending out of other copies of the First Epistle to well-known congregations with other accompanying "2" and "3" Johns appropriate to the local situations concerned.

Such a scheme as that enunciated here, is, like so many contemporary reconstructions of first century events, incapable of anything approaching final proof. Essentially, however, the hypothesis would seem to be plausible if a reasonable case can be made for the following points:

- (1) That one author wrote the three Johannine Epistles
- (2) That all of the Epistles were written on one occasion
- (3) That the nature of the books themselves is best explained by the hypothesis
- (4) That there are already two "fronts" (in the sense of elements in the heresy) against which the writer directs 1 John, one of these being the issue in 2 John (the doctrinal controversy) and the other, the issue in 3 John (the ethical controversy)
- (5) That all movements alluded to in all the Epistles fit naturally into one local Sitz im Leben
- (6) That all named or unnamed personages readily find a place in one local church situation.²⁵

In succeeding chapters these propositions will be examined seriatim. In the meantime, and even at this early stage, it may be appropriately asked what consequences would follow the successful demonstration of the proposed reconstruction.

The primary consequence is that the hypothesis presents a more complete, more "multi-dimensional" view of first century church life than other views of the Johannine Epistles do.²⁶

The other great consequence of the acceptance of the hypothesis lies in the area of church discipline and the refutation of error. A complete picture of the methods employed in the repudiation of heresy and immorality by an outstanding first century Christian leader becomes possible.

These preparatory statements will be elaborated at the end of the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Cain is named in 1 John 3:12; his is the only non-contemporary name.
- ² The Apocalypse of John is generally excluded in what follows on the ground that its study is a large subject in itself, and that it would often be irrelevant to a study of the mutual relationships of the Epistles. On the other hand, it would be quite impossible totally to exclude the Fourth Gospel. It stands in far too close a relation to at least 1 John and 2 John for this to be done without seriously damaging the whole picture.
- ³ The acceptance of a Johannine community provides a preliminary signpost to this locale, since Revelation 1:9 says "I John... was on the island called Patmos".
- ⁴ See page 139 re other "2" and "3" Johns.
- ⁵ Cf. the New English Bible title for 1 John: "Recall to Fundamentals".
- ⁶ In fact, since "anonymous" really means "of unknown authorship" and not "of unstated authorship", 1 John was anonymous not to the original readers, but only to distant or later readers.
- ⁷ 3 John 9
- ⁸ Cf. the hypothesis of the dual authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews by Aquila and Priscilla, the wife taking the greater part but being unnamed because of ancient custom not to announce a woman author. For details see Donald Guthrie: New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation, p.22.
- ⁹ 2 John 1
- ¹⁰ Shown both in the commendatory remarks at the start of 2 John and also in the way she had been bringing up her children. 2 John 1;4
- ¹¹ R. Schnackenburg, Die Johannesbriefe, Herder, Freiburg, Basel, Wien, 1970 (4th Edition), p.305
- ¹² See pp. 272 ff
- ¹³ 3 John 9
- ¹⁴ 3 John 1, 9, 10; cf. 2 John 1
- ¹⁵ See page 167
- ¹⁶ See e.g. the triple address ΤΕΚΝΙΧ/ΠΑΤΕΡΕΣ/ΒΕΚΝΙΣΤΟΚΟΙ in 1 John 2:12-14: these vocatives are used enigmatically, but clearly all refer to the membership as a whole. ("the threefold arrangement is probably not much more than a rhetorical figure" C.H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles in the Moffatt New Testament Commentary Series, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1946, p.38) or to the membership in its various parts (R. Bultmann says "ΤΕΚΝΙΧ designates the readers collectively" but in the case of ΠΑΤΕΡΕΣ + ΒΕΚΝΙΣΤΟΚΟΙ "the author addresses the various age groups" Comm. The Johannine Epistles (E.T.) Fortress Press, 1973, p.31)

¹⁷ Pp. 157

¹⁸ Pp. 258 ff

¹⁹ ἐξ ἡλθον, 1 John 2¹⁹; cf. 1 John 4¹

²⁰ 1 John 2¹⁸; cf 1 John 2²²; 4³; 2 John 7

²¹ Because of their mutually consistent doctrinal teaching, and also because of their fundamental agreement with New Testament doctrine generally, Schnackenburg does not hesitate to use the adjective "orthodox" even when discussing the doctrine of such early books as the Johannine Gospel and Epistles. Comm. pp. 159 and 322; cf. P.312.

²² 3 John 5, 6. One meaning of προπέμπω is "help on one's journey with food or money". W. Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature, translated by W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, Chicago, 1957, p.716.

²³ 2 John 12; 3 John 10 and 14.

²⁴ It is very likely that there were other epistles of John. Ps. Cyprian contains the statement that Christ "instructs and exhorts us in the letter of his disciple John: 'so see me in you as one of you sees himself in water or in a mirror'". New Testament Apocrypha, ed. by R. McL. Wilson, Butterworth, 1965, pp.91-2. 3 John 9 is commonly regarded as indicating a lost letter, though that is not the view adopted in this hypothesis.

²⁵ For a diagrammatic representation of the hypothesis see p.252

²⁶ Probably a more many-sided view of a church than any other part of the New Testament, too. See pp. 50 to 52.

PREPARATORY CHAPTER

THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES: A SURVEY OF THEORIES OF PROVENANCE AND MUTUAL RELATIONS

Before any particular theory of the interrelationship of the constituent parts of the Johannine epistolary corpus may be advanced it is necessary to review relevant theories propounded over the last century or so.

How may the many theories be classified from the point of view of the relations of the Epistles to each other? It would seem that all theories fall into one or other of eight categories¹:

1. THOSE WHICH DO NOT RELATE THE EPISTLES SITUATIONALLY, THOUGH THEY DO SO FROM THE ANGLE OF AUTHORSHIP, TIMING AND GENERAL AREA.

A number of scholars' ideas come in this grouping:

B.F. WESTCOTT

The traditional attitude to introductory questions is expressed in the commentary of Brooke Foss Westcott "The Epistles of John" published in 1883.^{2,3} Westcott believed that the Gospel and all three Epistles were written by one writer, viz. the Apostle John.⁴ The aged Apostle probably wrote the four books in "the last decade of the first century": the destination was Asia,⁵ 2 and 3 John at least being written probably from Ephesus.⁶ As with all writers in the present category, no 1 John/2 John/3 John link is proposed. The problem of the address of 2 John "is insoluble with our present knowledge."⁷

A.E. BROOKE

1912 was the year of the publication of Canon Brooke's very comprehensive and influential commentary on the Johannine Epistles.⁸ Brooke contended that common authorship of the Fourth Gospel and 1 John "remains the most probable explanation of the facts known to us".⁹ He hesitated to name the actual author,¹⁰ but believed him to be a pupil of John the Apostle.¹¹ The date of the three Epistles could hardly have been later than AD.110.¹² The Epistles were "almost certainly addressed to a definite church or group of churches" in Ephesus or elsewhere in Asia Minor whose circumstances were well known to the writer.¹³ Thus they are not "catholic" books - not to the church universal.¹⁴ The second letter of John was

probably to a church.¹⁵ Gaius and Diotrephes belonged to the same church as each other.¹⁶ The missive alluded to in 3 John 9 is not to be identified with 2 John because (i) there is no mention in 3 John of the 2 John teachers, (ii) Diotrephes does not get a mention in 2 John and (iii) the attitude to strangers in the two letters is quite different.¹⁷ Brooke concludes: "we should probably therefore add this instance to the many indications in the Epistles of the New Testament of a wider correspondence than has been preserved in the canon". Brooke's judgment that 3 John 9 does not signify 2 John may be accepted without hesitation, even though his reasons leave much to be desired.¹⁸

H.A. IRONSIDE

Nearly twenty years after Brooke's commentary, that of Ironside appeared in the United States.¹⁹ In commenting on 2 John, Ironside expressed the belief that the primary recipient was "a Christian matron who, with her children, adorned the doctrine of Christ".²⁰ The lady concerned had written to ask advice regarding the treatment of false teachers; she had then received 2 John as an answer. Gaius and Diotrephes belonged to the same church.²¹ Demetrius had earlier suffered at the hands of that "self-elected leader", Diotrephes, and had been "ruthlessly barred out" by him.²² There is a considerable element of speculation both in the matter of the postulated letter to the Elder and the earlier ejection of Demetrius; no substantial evidence on either side can be adduced in either instance.²³

A.H. McNEILE / C.S.C. WILLIAMS

The second edition of A.H. McNeile's work "An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament"²⁴ was published in 1953. In that volume the four Johannine books are again said to have been - in all probability - by the same man.²⁵ The error was of a theosophical nature - "the tendencies of which Cerinthus was a representative".²⁶ A rather unusual feature is the assertion not only that Gaius and Diotrephes belonged to one and the same church, but that Demetrius was their fellow-member as well.²⁷

JOHN R.W. STOTT

Stott²⁸ follows the traditional line of Westcott in matters of authorship²⁹ and environment of both writer and readers.³⁰ 2 John was written to a church.³¹ Diotrephes and Gaius belonged to the same church as each other,³² the latter being a member with some undefined but important position:

" - the Elder would hardly have written so outspokenly of Diotrephes to any but a church leader".³³ Stott thinks the argument of at least 1 and 2 John directed against Cerinthianism,³⁴ but is very well aware of the positive aspect of the Epistles: "A number of authors have argued that the Epistles of John are to be regarded rather as pastoral than polemical writings. There is some truth in this assertion. John exhibits a tender, pastoral care for his readers. His first concern is not to confound the false teachers, whose activities form the background of the Epistles, but to protect his readers, his beloved 'little children' and to establish them in their Christian faith and life".³⁵ The pastoral emphasis is of the greatest importance, especially in regard to the hypothesis advanced in these pages. It helps to explain in particular the very reason for the existence of both 2 John and 3 John, one of which might seem unnecessary if they were sent to one family. Why would any writer bother to write separate letters to a husband and wife³⁶ (or, more accurately, to a husband on the one hand and to a wife and children on the other) at the same time? The answer is to be found in the pastoral and evangelistic area. The $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\nu\alpha$ of verses 1 and 4 of 2 John fall into two categories, the believing and the unbelieving. The last thing that the Elder desires is that the believing be sidetracked during their tender years by a recital of the machinations of Diotrephes, who was supposed to be an example, a mature Christian leader; nor perhaps is it appropriate for them to be told details of the author's modus operandi as he deals with a disciplinary problem involving adults. As far as the unconverted children are concerned, the Elder refuses to become guilty of causing them to stumble³⁷ by openly displaying before them the shortcomings of those who ought to exhibit a responsible Christian character.³⁸ The author is far too spiritually sensitive, too pastorally concerned, for his young converts or potential converts to countenance that! Accordingly, he writes two short letters, one (setting out the steps which he himself will take re Diotrephes) to Gaius. 3 John is thus intended for the eyes of Gaius alone (or perhaps, it may be conjectured, for Gaius plus his wife but not the children). The other letter - since it would be unthinkable not to convey warm greetings to the whole family - is addressed to the mother and children.

John Stott has, then, unwittingly indicated the logical answer to the problem for the hypothesis of the existence of two short letters originating at the same time and sent to the same home.³⁹

DONALD GUTHRIE

A comprehensive and valuable study of questions involved in the Johannine Epistles appears in Guthrie's New Testament Introduction.⁴⁰ Guthrie argues that the author of 1 John was definitely an eyewitness of the ministry of Jesus,⁴¹ the Apostle John being the most likely writer. The Second and Third Epistles are likewise assigned to the Apostle.⁴² The Fourth Gospel is dated c90-95, and was probably slightly before 1 John, but "it is difficult to be certain - ";⁴³ 2 John was soon after 1 John,⁴⁴ and 3 John about the same time as 2 John. Guthrie says "In all probability this Epistle (3 John) and 2 John were the latest Johannine writings and the latest of all the New Testament literature - ".⁴⁵

Donald Guthrie hovers between seeing 1 John as a letter or as a sermon.⁴⁶ The readers were probably "a group of people, possibly in more than one Asiatic community, with whom the author was personally acquainted".⁴⁷

A lady and not a church was the probable recipient of 2 John: " - this would help to account for the reluctance of some of the early Christians to use the Epistle. A private letter written to a lady would not seem of sufficient importance to receive canonical status."⁴⁸

Some of the most interesting suggestions naturally arise with respect to the Third Epistle: Diotrephes is reckoned leader of the church concerned, whether legitimately or no.⁴⁹ Demetrius had no connection (so Guthrie argues) with earlier missionaries rejected by Diotrephes, since otherwise no commendation of him to Gaius would have been necessary.⁵⁰

If Gaius and Diotrephes belonged to the same church, the Apostle wrote two letters to it - one to the whole membership⁵¹ and the other to his most trusted friend within it. In Guthrie's view the three Epistles are very closely linked by virtue of common authorship, by dating, and by the provincial area concerned, but no co-ordinated single complex of events at the personal level is proposed - e.g. in discussing the possibility of 2 John - 3 John situational links, Guthrie says: "in the absence of any allusion in 3 John to the false teaching of 2 John, it is better to keep them apart".⁵² On page 221 it is said to be "unlikely" that 3 John 9 denotes 2 John, while "It is very improbable that 1 John is meant because 3 John is obviously intended for a much smaller reader circle,⁵³ and the letter in 3 John 9 would seem to have been concerned with a specific situation."⁵⁴

The objection to 1 John being indicated is quite unconvincing. The writer of 3 John 9 says categorically that what he wrote in his other communication was "to the church", even though 3 John itself was to one man, Gaius.

Moreover, the writer of a church letter would be unlikely to raise simply one harsh criticism in sharp relief, but would probably clothe what he had to say about inappropriate Christian conduct in a wider positive presentation with a sufficient grounding in theological truth.⁵⁵ It therefore follows that, far from 1 John being excluded by the 3 John 9 reference, it is more appropriate to its requirements than any other writing known. The vagueness of the τ ⁵⁶ and the essentially similar problems as far as Christian living is concerned of 1 John and 3 John 9 and 10⁵⁷ strongly endorse this judgment.

W.G. KÜMMEL

Werner Georg Kümmel also proposed that one man wrote the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles but that the actual author is unknown.⁵⁸ All the Epistles can be dated c90-110.⁵⁹ In one sense this writer is the most radical of those whose work is included in the first category⁶⁰ because he refused to limit the original recipients of 1 John to the area of the other two Epistles, or indeed, to any specific area:

"1 John ... appears to be a tractate intended for all of Christendom, an encyclical directed to all fellow believers, a 'manifesto'".⁶¹

On page 308 he says again, "1 John is in no way to be understood as a writing for specific readers".

The position advanced here is not convincing; Kümmel himself says that various authors have objected to the theory he holds, claiming

- (i) that 1 John presupposes a specific historical situation,
- (ii) that it contends against the danger of a heretical belief toward which the readers have already taken up a position,
- (iii) that the author implies a limited readership and
- (iv) that the vocatives used of the addressees ('children', 'beloved') imply an intimate pastoral and fatherly authority over a spiritual flock.

Kümmel's main point is the lack of what he calls "concrete" and "personal" relations in 1 John. An eloquent and effective counter to the main thrust of Kümmel's position is to be found in Robert Law's book "The Tests of Life", written over 60 years ago.⁶²

Werner Kümmel states that 2 John was addressed to a church,⁶³ and that (in common with the hypothesis) 2 and 3 John originated at the same time.⁶⁴

The congregations of the two short Epistles were different, "for the figure of Diotrephes will not fit into the harmonious picture of 2 John".⁶⁴

The last point is plainly arguable, especially the use of the strong words "will not fit". A simplistic 2 John situation is implied where all the foes were outside the church and all the saints within. The Third Epistle shows that in at least one place there was a "villainous" faction within, and 2 John itself, while not saying that heretics were inside the church, at least indicates in the plainest terms that they were knocking at the very door. It is likely that the Elder is in both letters trying to arrest the threatening unorthodox tide in one fellowship. His attack is two-pronged, dealing now with the danger within (3 John⁶⁵), and now with that without (2 John).

Kümmel objects to three influential positions:

- (i) Harnack's view of 3 John in the context of "the old provincial missionary organisation against the individual churches which had been consolidated under monarchical leadership"⁶⁶
- (ii) Bauer's claim that Diotrephes was a Gnostic⁶⁷
- (iii) Käsemann's idea that the Elder was himself heretical and had been excommunicated by Diotrephes.⁶⁸

Kümmel prefers to see "a conflict between a fixed ecclesiastical organisation and an earlier, freer charismatic situation",⁶⁹ but has doubts about whether the Elder does in fact represent the latter position. Kümmel suggests that the Elder is, like Diotrephes, only a congregational leader,⁷⁰ but that "he enjoys more than local authority".

J.A.T. ROBINSON

John A.T. Robinson's book "Twelve New Testament Studies" devotes some 40 pages⁷¹ to Johannine matters, and in particular, to challenging five commonly-adopted positions regarding the Fourth Gospel (primarily) and the Johannine Epistles.

The five presuppositions which in 1962 seemed "generally agreed" are:

- (1) That the Fourth Gospel writer used sources, including one or more of the Synoptics
- (2) That his own background is different from the events and teaching he purports to record
- (3) That he is a witness to the Christ of faith, but not the Jesus of history
- (4) That he represents the end-term of theological development in first century Christianity
- (5) That he is not the Apostle John nor an eyewitness.

The first presupposition attracts the judgment that " - the case for literary dependence (is) quite unproven and indeed quite unprovable",

a judgment which entirely accords with that of W.F. Howard and C.H. Dodd in their later writings. Robinson quotes P. Parker with approval: "It looks as though, if the author of the Fourth Gospel used documentary sources, he wrote them all himself"⁷²... "Indeed he is his own tradition".⁷³ As far as the present hypothesis is concerned, Robinson's remarks contain a repudiation of the "school" theories of Johannine origins, for not only is the idea of synoptic sources behind the Johannine Gospel denied, but also any sources outside the one writer's own observations and experience and deductions. The Fourth Gospel is said to be too much of a piece to admit of replanning or editing by different men, even men with the same general background and characteristics.⁷⁴ The stance taken in dealing with the authorship of the Gospel leads to Robinson's equally assured denial of the "school" concept when he turns to the Epistles in relation to the Fourth Gospel and each other: "I am persuaded that the Gospel and the three Epistles all came from the same pen and are addressed to the same community, though in a different situation".⁷⁵ Presuppositions (2), (3) and (5) all have to do with the historical directness of the witness of the Fourth Gospel author.⁷⁶ The Dead Sea Scrolls provide a convincing rebuttal of points (2) and (3) (says Robinson).⁷⁷ Presupposition (4) concerns dating, for which early limits are indicated by two statements:

- (i) Robinson agrees with E.R. Goodenough that the Fourth Gospel theology "reached its essential, if not its formal, maturity by about the same time as St. Paul's, at a date, that is, before any of the Synoptic Gospels were written"⁷⁸
- (ii) From the way the writer of the Epistles speaks, he "had evidently been their evangelist and pastor from the earliest days".⁷⁹

In fact the Gospel was probably written first and the Epistles later: there was " - at least a decade and more probably two, between the teaching (and perhaps also the writing) of the Gospel and of the Epistles."⁸⁰ 1, 2 and 3 John were probably, but not necessarily, close together as far as date of writing was concerned.⁸⁰

The raison d'être of Robinson's whole construction comes from his conviction that the readers in all cases (i.e. of the four Johannine books) were Diaspora Jews.⁸¹ It is this that moves him to separate the Gospel and the Epistles by so long a period. The readers were the same people in both bases, but their circumstances had changed.

Robinson favoured Cerinthianism - Cerinthus was a Jew⁸² - as the probable foe of the writer, though "It would be a mistake to assume that there was a 1:1 correspondence between the views of Cerinthus and John's opponents"...

"the heresy of the Johannine Epistles is better explained by what we know of Cerinthus than by any other known system".⁸³

Specifically, 2 John presupposes at least two churches (the "Lady" and her "sister"), 3 John "probably another one" plus "a number of Christian centres visited by travelling missionaries", and 1 John "perhaps" a group of Johannine churches.⁸⁴

Robinson's thesis raises a number of questions of great importance for Johannine studies, though here the destination of the Johannine writings in the either/or sense of Jews of the Dispersion versus various Gentile Christians is far less vital than the personal mutual relations of the original addressees of the three Epistles.⁸⁵ In any case, without accepting the whole Robinsonian position, it is perfectly possible to acknowledge the force of his contentions regarding authorship and mutual dating.⁸⁶ With respect to destination, the "probably" and "perhaps" of page 129⁸⁷ are not substantiated in any way. No case has been made for going along with Robinson in the Johannine Epistles' interrelationship suggestion. Indeed in the end Robinson must be assigned to category "1"⁸⁸ just because he provides no personal situational link, though he goes much further than some writers in that he makes the 1 John, 2 John and 3 John readers belong to one ethnic and religious environment.⁸⁹

WHAT, THEN, OF CATEGORY 1? FOR WHAT IS IT TO BE COMMENDED?
HOW IS IT INFERIOR TO THE HYPOTHESIS?

It is to be commended for the scholarly caution which is exhibited in the face of what is, in the last analysis, possibly unproveable. It is inferior to the hypothesis in that it represents too much caution. Given common authorship, common heresy, common behavioural problems, possible common area and possible common dating, besides a scheme which easily takes account of the individual people and events concerned,⁹⁰ there is only one element lacking from the point of view of closely co-ordinating the three Epistles: That is a categorical statement within the books that the local circumstances are common. That this is lacking cannot be denied, but for all that, two statements or combinations of statements may be noted here:

- (i) the statements concerning the proposed visit/s of the Elder in 2 and 3 John⁹¹ are so similar as to suggest the same occasion;
- (ii) there is a real likelihood of 3 John 9 referring to 1 John.

Neither of these is unambiguous; they must be interpreted. Thus it is not possible to assert positively that the situational milieu of 1 John equals that of 2 John equals that of 3 John. Yet, over all, it is highly probable that this is so. The absence of unequivocal cross-references weakens the conclusion to the extent that one must not say "certainly the same situation", but "very probably the same situation". Conversely, the scholar is not justified in not suggesting a close life connection in any comprehensive study of the Johannine Epistles.

2. THOSE WHICH SAY THAT THE EPISTLES CANNOT BE RELATED

The obvious candidate here is RUDOLF BULTMANN.⁹² In his commentary on the Johannine Epistles the Fourth Gospel⁹³ and 1 John are said to be by different authors: " - identity of the authors has often been asserted and is frequently asserted even today. I cannot agree with this supposition".⁹⁴

Apropos the Epistles, Bultmann says: " so far as the relationship of the three letters to each other is concerned, complete clarity, in my opinion, is not possible".⁹⁵ He goes on, "It can be said with certainty only that 2 John is dependent upon 1 John, indeed, that 2 John is definitely a secondary work".⁹⁵ It is "a 'catholic' letter, which the bearer would deliver to appropriate congregations from time to time."⁹⁶

The Third Epistle - "a genuine letter"⁹⁷ was also probably dependent on 1 John. Yet for all of his use of the word "dependent", Bultmann does not posit common authorship of the Epistles: he implicitly denies it.⁹⁸ The reasons for so doing are basically that

- (i) 2 John was late (later that is, than 3 John, since "the author knew - 3 John 9 ff - ")⁹⁹
- (ii) 2 John is a pseudo-epistle which in reality imitates 1 John
- (iii) 3 John was definitely post-1 John, since it reflects that book. It came from "the period of conflict between the old, specifically Johannine tradition and the initial development of ecclesiastical organisation".¹⁰⁰

The crux of Bultmann's position is the second point. It is of course very difficult to argue that one work is not an imitation of another similar one;¹⁰¹ The answer to Bultmann must rest on the twin bases that his argument is very subjective and the observation that the only support that he has gained is from convinced followers of his general position regarding the Johannine literature (e.g. J.L. Houlden).¹⁰²

What is the strength of category 2?

Bultmann's view appears to be a bold new initiative aimed at breaking the deadlock of having to determine the identity of unnamed and elusive characters (lady/sister/2 sets of children) and their position in the Johannine locale. If 2 John is a fiction it would appear on the surface that Bultmann is right in saying that no co-ordinated personal picture is possible.

What is the weakness of category 2?

The hypothesis of Bultmann that 2 John is not a real letter but a "fiction"¹⁰³ founders at the very point at which it seems strongest. Even if it were merely an imitative work (which opinion the vast majority of scholars deny), it is an imitation of something and for some reason. The "of" is easy - according to Bultmann it is an imitation of 1 John and 3 John, the former theologically, the latter structurally, and both to some extent verbally. But what Bultmann fails to answer is the "why". 2 John had to be written for something - what? The answer is that it instructs Christians to ostracize docetic heretics. But, then, on whose authority? The only possible answer is that the readers recognised the authority, or were tricked into believing that they had done so. Thus the readers must have been familiar with at least 3 John or 1 John or the writer of them; had this not been so they would have had a truncated message and an unaddressed¹⁰⁴ and finally unauthorised work. To any readers but those of 1 John and/or 3 John the writing would be so enigmatic as to have little persuading power. Thus there is a personal link at the readership level, and a real or pretended one at the authorship level. Therefore, even if 2 John were a fiction, situational personal links are demanded. Bultmann's agnosticism does not lead to a separation of the letters at a personal situational level, but an affirmation of their personal interdependence.

How is the hypothesis superior to category 2?

A satisfactory personal link is easily discernible in the hypothesis without recourse to a theory of imitation which satisfies very few scholars and whose emergence on the scene ultimately does nothing to dispel the mystery of the Johannine epistolary situation. On the contrary, it adds to its complexity unnecessarily.

3. THOSE WHICH PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZE A VERY CLOSE 1 JOHN/2 JOHN LINK. This includes the theories of C.H. Dodd and Neil Alexander.¹⁰⁵

C.H. DODD

One of the two or three most significant commentaries in the English language on the Johannine Epistles is that of C.H. Dodd in the Moffatt series of New Testament commentaries, first published in 1946.¹⁰⁶ Dodd suggested (tentatively) that the three Epistles were by one writer who was a disciple of the Evangelist. Many of this commentator's conclusions were based on prolonged studies in the Gospel of John: "The interpretation ...which I offer here has in large measure emerged from studies primarily directed towards the understanding of the Fourth Gospel in its contemporary setting."¹⁰⁷ Possibly the Elder John wrote the Epistles, but if so, he was not author of the Fourth Gospel as well.¹⁰⁸ As far as the writer of the Third Epistle is concerned, he had high authority in the church: "He commissioned missionaries and planned for their support, and he expected to have his directions carried out by the various congregations in his region. He was in fact...one of the 'elders' or 'presbyters' who in the sub-apostolic age carried on the tradition of apostolic authority".¹⁰⁹ He must, then, have been a major personage in the Johannine school.

Dodd conceived of 1 John as a circular epistle, 2 John to a particular congregation, and 3 John as a private letter to a friend.¹¹⁰ In some enigmatic manner, 2 John is dependent on 1 John. From the point of view of the Sitz in Leben of the readers, 1 and 2 John are also close to each other; the main difference is that the propagandists were not yet present in the 2 John situation, while they were in that of 1 John.¹¹¹ No connection can be established between 2 and 3 John, the latter was perhaps at a quite different time, and in "an entirely different situation", which may have been earlier than the other two Epistles.¹¹² Several points were made by Dodd apropos 3 John: (i) the church situation was one of transition between the "missionary" phase and that of local episcopacy¹¹³

(ii) Demetrius was perhaps one of the earlier missionaries, who together with his colleagues and armed with 3 John was to "resume (the) interrupted mission"¹¹⁴

(iii) there is no hint in 3 John that Diotrephes was unorthodox¹¹⁴

(iv) 3 John 9 does not indicate 2 John since the doctrinal controversy of the latter is absent from the former.¹¹⁵

Generally (Dodd affirms - correctly), the Epistles do not appear to come from a time of persecution. Although the church is unpopular (1 John 3:13 "Do not wonder, bretheren, if the world hates you"), visiting missionaries could perhaps have obtained gifts from pagans had they been so inclined (3 John 7). By taking these facts into consideration, Dodd suggested that a post-Domitianic date, a period when acute persecution had but recently ceased, is slightly to be preferred. Thus Dodd reckoned AD.96 to 110 as the approximate period of writing. The place was Asia."⁶

Dodd, then, separates 3 John from 1 and 2 John on the grounds of contents, especially the human situation indicated. It is not legitimate to do this - to say that 3 John represents "an entirely different situation" -

- because it is linked (i) with 1 John and 2 John by its authorship according to Dodd himself ¹⁷
- (ii) with 2 John by its structural similarity even in details ¹⁸
 - (iii) with 1 John by the close affinity between the ethical errors condemned in the First Epistle and exhibited by Diotrephes in the Third Epistle
 - (iv) with 1 and 2 John by its similar (albeit briefer) theological references to "truth" ¹⁹
- and (v) with 1 John by the similarity (but not identity) of statements in 3 John 11 and 1 John 2:29, 3:6, 3:9 and 3:10.

NEIL ALEXANDER

The Torch Bible commentary entitled "The Epistles of John" was printed in 1962. ¹²⁰ Alexander's opinion is that the Elder John (not the Apostle) wrote the Fourth Gospel cAD.85 to 95 and the Epistles c.96. ¹²¹ The readers of 2 John were not - at the time of writing - embroiled with the 1 John heretics. ¹²² First John was written to a wide area: the 1 John/2 John relationship is "not unlike that observed between an American Presidential candidate's nationwide TV 'set' speech and any of his 'whistle-stop' five minute addresses given on campaign tour. Nine-tenths of the substance of the latter is from the big speech, greatly cut down in volume. It uses the language and recalls and presupposes knowledge of the main speech. It has some additional emphasis on the local situation and some 'snap' practical advice for local party action." ¹²³

Against Alexander it may be said that a careful study of 2 John leads to the conclusion that it is not in fact more "local" than 1 John -

both are directed towards a limited number of very well known readers.¹²⁴ The prohibition - the most distinctively different aspect of 2 John - would surely have applied anywhere. The impression made on the reader is that 2 John is essentially more private and individual, but not to a more geographically circumscribed area. In fact (as is maintained in the present thesis) 2 John is most suitably considered as an accompanying note sent with 1 John.¹²⁵ Accordingly, 1 John is predictably "more studied, generalised" while 2 John is the kind of letter written to one trusted person/family in confidence.

Alexander does not say definitely either that Gaius and Diotrephes were in the same church or different (but nearby) ones. No ancient writer thought that 3 John 9 meant the Second Epistle,¹²⁶ he says.

The strengths of category 3

Due notice is taken of two very pertinent points. The first is the literary connection between 1 and 2 John, which at least implies a readership connection.¹²⁷ No less than seven verses in 2 John repeat or echo verses in the First Epistle: viz 2 John 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 12.¹²⁸ Moreover, verses 6 and 7 each correspond fairly closely with two verses in 1 John and 2 John 5 with three. In other words, 2 John, which has only 13 verses, has a total of eleven close affinities with 1 John. In fact, the only verses not repeated or echoed in the larger writing are either those with an "epistolary" significance or else those which prohibit the giving of hospitality to enemies of the Faith.

The second connecting link is in the doctrinal sphere, i.e. in the concept of the "truth",¹²⁹ the doctrine of God, the understanding regarding evil powers, the status of Christians, and most of all the common Christology of 1 and 2 John.¹³⁰

The weaknesses of category 3

A probable weakness is that both Dodd and Alexander see 2 John as to a local church.¹³¹ Other problems are (i) the failure adequately to note the structural links between 2 and 3 John, which are not of such a nature as to indicate imitation by a different writer, but are strong enough to suggest that the plan and contents of one letter were still very fresh indeed in the writer's mind when he wrote the other;

- (ii) the inadequate weight given to the common authorship ¹³²
- (iii) the relating of the planned visits of 2 and 3 John (couched in very similar terms) to each other
- (iv) the omission of a clear address if 1 and 2 John were sent without 3 John (unless an address appeared on the outside of the works)
- (v) the merely negative reference to strangers in 2 John; surely there were true missionaries about as well?

The superiority of the hypothesis may be expressed with the utmost brevity: the 'strengths' of category 3 are incorporated and its weaknesses avoided.

4. THOSE WHICH EXPRESS A COMPOSITE VIEW OF THE 2 AND 3 JOHN SITUATION BUT MORE OR LESS EXCLUDE 1 JOHN FROM IT.

The views expressed by James Moffatt, Charles Gore, Grenville Lewis and (possibly) J.P. Love¹³³, come in such a category. Ernst Käsemann has propounded a radically modified picture of the 2 and 3 John situation which comes closer to this group than to any other.

JAMES MOFFATT

In his book, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, published in 1912,¹³⁴ Moffatt surveyed the then current literature on the Johannine Epistles in some detail. One conclusion he reached was that 2 and 3 John were probably by the same author (possibly he was author of Revelation as well) but that the man concerned did not write 1 John or the Gospel. Since he held such a conviction, Moffatt naturally kept 1 John ("a 'catholic' homily")¹³⁵ relatively distinct from 2 and 3 John, though all five Johannine books were still regarded as having much in common. Moffatt also related 2 and 3 John closely to each other on account of their being (he said) directed to the same church.¹³⁶

CHARLES GORE

Nothing of consequence was added to the understanding of the situation surrounding the writing of the Epistles by the commentary of Gore, at one time Bishop of Oxford, in 1920.¹³⁷ The Apostle John was reckoned as author of the Gospel and the Epistles; he lived at Ephesus.¹³⁸ The Second Epistle was "written to a church personified".¹³⁹ The only unusual feature which did not (and does not) commend itself to most writers was the suggestion that

the τ of 3 John 9 denotes 2 John¹⁴⁰ - an apparently modest but significant situational connection.

GREVILLE P. LEWIS

Lewis' relatively short commentary¹⁴¹ has something to say about most of the concerns of the present chapter; of greatest interest is the attempted reconstruction of the background circumstances of 3 John. Briefly, the author of John and the three Epistles was "a disciple of the Apostle"; he wrote in Asia; the Gospel is to be dated c.85 and the lesser books c.87.¹⁴² The Second Epistle, since it presupposes 1 John, was written after it, the recipient being a local church.¹⁴³

Lewis states that the two short Epistles were to different churches.¹⁴⁴ John had sent missionaries to evangelize and also to encourage the local churches; a copy of 2 John was perhaps to be given to each Christian congregation.¹⁴⁵ At Gaius' church all went well, but then Diotrephes called a meeting in his own church, repudiated the Presbyter John's authority, refused hospitality to the visitors, and possibly rejected 2 John without even reading it. Some members who were loyal to John received the missionaries and were then excommunicated. The travellers reported to Gaius before going back to their base. The Third Epistle was then written and committed to the widely-respected Demetrius, together with a written message to Diotrephes (3 John 9). This message was to be read at the church meeting and the various earlier wrongs righted; failing such a response, the Elder would make a personal visit and deal with the recalcitrant members. En route to Diotrephes' church on the second journey 3 John was to be presented to Gaius. That loyal Christian was to be ready to assist the missionaries on their return journey to Ephesus should Diotrephes and his followers continue to be obdurate.

Generally the picture presented by Lewis deserves praise, particularly in its treatment of the 3 John situation. Yet various objections must be raised: (i) the theory has no real place for 2 John, which is an after-thought in the 3 John presentation, and which would appear to be unnecessary in addition to 1 John. If there had been a gap between 1 and 2 John with new developments intervening the relevance of 2 John 10 and 11 could be made out, but it must be borne in mind that Lewis assigns both to the same date - c.87.¹⁴⁶

(ii) the enigmatic address of 2 John is not explained

(iii) Gaius and Diotrephes are unnecessarily placed in different churches¹⁴⁷

ERNST KÄSEMANN

In 1951 the radical ideas of Ernst Käsemann about the Johannine literature were published in an article entitled *Ketzer und Zeuge*.¹⁴⁸ Käsemann (perhaps surprisingly) holds to the essential unity of authorship of the Fourth Gospel and three Epistles,¹⁴⁹ though he does perceive interpolations in the Fourth Gospel at least as far as ch.21 and 6:51b-58 are concerned. He did not entirely rule out the possibility of a Johannine "school" of authors,¹⁵¹ and nor did he reject Bultmann's idea of a "prototype borrowed from heathen gnosis" for 1 John as well as the Gospel.¹⁵² The Gospel is dated - and the Epistles too, apparently - at the end of the first century.¹⁵³ Both Syria and Ephesus are mentioned as possible places of writing of the Fourth Gospel and Epistles, though not so much as Käsemann's own views as those favoured by others: Käsemann himself says of the Fourth Gospel that both language and gnostic influence "let one think increasingly of Syria instead of Asia Minor as the home of the Evangelist".¹⁵⁴

The really revolutionary aspects of Käsemann's thinking in 1951 originated in a study of 3 John¹⁵⁶ and were prompted by writings of Harnack and W. Bauer. From Bauer's book "Orthodoxy and Heresy in the most Ancient Christianity" (published in 1934) Käsemann became convinced that heresy had a great role in the early church, and that heretical churches were "assimilated only by a long and changeful process."¹⁵⁷

Bauer believed heresy on the part of Diotrephes to be part of the 3 John problem, but Käsemann reversed this. Diotrephes is, for him, unquestionably the sole leader, the monarchical bishop¹⁵⁸ of his church, a fact that is demonstrated by his excommunication of missionaries and of the Elder himself.¹⁵⁸ Diotrephes was doctrinally orthodox.¹⁵⁹ By contrast, the Elder was (contrary to all other known instances in that period) a "lone-wolf" presbyter, who was unorthodox,¹⁶⁰ a character whose Christology lay between that of radical gnosis of docetic type and the emerging catholicism of the era.¹⁶¹ The Elder tried ineffectually to reprove Diotrephes, but was on the defensive because he knew that his own position was weak. However, the distinctive doctrines of the Elder,¹⁶² expressed with great originality in the Fourth Gospel and in 1 John, proved in the end to be more durable than some of those of early catholicism and eventually displaced them.¹⁶⁴

Rudolf Schnackenburg's four reasons for rejecting the thesis of Käsemann appear on pages 299 and 300 of his commentary: of these the most

persuasive are the first and the last. The former is the objection that the whole reconstruction founders on the attempt to prove the theology of the Elder heretical.¹⁶⁵ The latter is the objection that 2 John cannot justifiably be omitted to the extent that it is from the picture presented.

Additional objections which can be advanced include the following:

- (1) The excommunication of the Elder is fundamental to Käsemann's theories but it is nowhere stated in 3 John.¹⁶⁶ Only those who welcomed the missionaries were "cast out".¹⁶⁷
- (2) Käsemann says that all the Elder can summon against Diotrophes are "lame complaints over evil gossip and greed for power",¹⁶⁸ contending that such feeble action does not fit the usual church idea of the Elder. The obvious objection here is that Käsemann ignores the impending visit of the Elder.¹⁶⁹ It is true that 3 John 14 could indicate a purely private visit to Gaius, but 3 John 10, with its *ἐὰν ἔλθω, ὑπομνήσω αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ποιεῖ,* cannot be understood in so restricted a sense. It indicates public exposure by an authoritative personage.
- (3) Käsemann says that the 3 John writer cannot excommunicate, but that the 2 John writer can. Since he claims identity of authorship, a conflict emerges here, unless, of course, 2 John is held to emanate from an earlier stage before the Elder was excommunicated.¹⁷⁰
- (4) The ignorance and silence of the church concerning its greatest theological son¹⁷¹ is a major hazard for Käsemann, as it is for exponents of the various "school" theories.¹⁷²

FOR WHAT IS CATEGORY 4 TO BE COMMENDED?

The strengths of the group are the same as those of group 3, except that rather less attention is paid to the 1 John/2 John link from an environmental standpoint, and (as may be expected) correspondingly more to 2 and 3 John relationships.¹⁷³

FOR WHAT IS IT TO BE CENSURED?

- (i) 2 John is still seen as addressed to a church,¹⁷⁴ this being explicitly stated by both Gore¹⁷⁵ and Lewis.¹⁷⁶
- (ii) Oddly, 2 John is almost ignored when reconstructions of the setting are attempted, even by writers who apparently set out to co-ordinate the characters and movements of 2 and 3 John.¹⁷⁷ To some extent the tendency is understandable (the Third Epistle "is full of personal and circumstantial detail -")¹⁷⁸ but it is not justified.

HOW IS THE HYPOTHESIS SUPERIOR TO CATEGORY 4?

It combines the strengths of both it and the previous category, while avoiding their weaknesses, particularly that of the necessarily incomplete nature of each scheme.

5. THOSE WHICH ASSERT THAT THE THREE EPISTLES WERE WRITTEN MORE OR LESS AT THE SAME TIME, 1 JOHN BEING A CIRCULAR TO AN AREA,¹⁷⁹ 2 JOHN TO A SINGLE CHURCH AND 3 JOHN TO AN INDIVIDUAL WITHIN THE 1 JOHN ORBIT.

The obvious exponent of this idea is Schnackenburg, though A.M. HUNTER is also to be included. The view is also expressed (prior to Schnackenburg's adoption of it?) by C.H. Dodd in his commentary on the Epistles.¹⁸⁰

RUDOLF SCHNACKENBURG

The influential commentary of Schnackenburg - Die Johannesbriefe - is especially noteworthy because of its great attention to detail, its balance and its scholarly caution in arriving at conclusions. For these reasons, and also because the latest edition is relatively recent, the work undoubtedly merits a fuller treatment than other commentaries. In the pages that follow the main areas which have relevance to the current investigation are passed in review.¹⁸¹

THE AUTHOR AND HIS BACKGROUND

With regard to the authorship of 1 John, a useful statement of Schnackenburg's position may be located on page 7: "One can think of one born a Jew with Aramaic as mother tongue, who has adopted the Koine Greek faultlessly, yet in other respects kept the Semitic feel of the language".¹⁸² A little further on it is asserted that *ΤΕΚΝΙΑ* and *ΠΑΙΣΙΑ* are "particularly suitable in the mouth of an elderly man who has prominence and authority". These words would be readily endorsed by many commentators, but they represent a conclusion rather than a starting-point. The latter is discernible in the opening sentence on page 24: "Today there is widespread agreement that there is no investigation of John"¹⁸³ without religious historical inquiry". Schnackenburg then goes on to reject the either/or explanations of the Johannine literature based on Jewry or Hellenism because they are inadequate.¹⁸⁴ He says: "Particularly in the more recent investigation the question of a comprehensive gnostic intellectual (or spiritual) stream (Geistesströmung), which drew all culture areas of that time in its power (or spell - Bann), has been debated. When and wherever this stream has its origin - not many investigators today adopt a strong Jewish component¹⁸⁵ - need not be investigated here -" (though the heretics resisted in 1 John, Colossians and the Pastoral Epistles all belong in it).

Under the heading "The place of Historical Religion" Schnackenburg lists several religious traditions or movements and discusses their bearing on the Johannine books' authorship and milieu:

- (a) Judaism outside Qumran. Linguistically "some terms and phrases are only intelligible in the mouth of a Jew who was acquainted with the Old Testament and also had touch with Rabbinism".¹⁸⁶ The same can be said of content: the writer was of Jewish background, and did not come to Jewish concepts only via Christianity. "This particularly affects the whole circle of sin and atonement".¹⁸⁷
- (b) Qumran. The Qumran texts certainly have "significance" for the Johannine Epistles, but what this might be - general Jewish milieu or a more personal Johannine/Apocalypse/Baptist/Qumran link, or a post-AD.70 Christian/Essene connection - is in doubt.
- (c) Hellenism. The writer uses the current Greek language "faultlessly ... simply, yet not clumsily",¹⁸⁸ a fact that is seen particularly from the more informal, Hellenistic letter style of 2 and 3 John.
- (d) Oriental Syncretism. Some parts of 1 John require reference to the mystery religions, hermetic mysticism, and the magic papyri (Magi) for their elucidation. Especially is this so of "born of God".¹⁸⁹
- (e) Gnostic Movement. 1 and 2 John both demonstrate that "there is no doubt as to the contact of the author with Gnostic trains of thought. He does not fully reject the movement..." but "radically rejects the Gnostic way of salvation, which would dispense with the Saviour character of the incarnate Son of God".¹⁸⁹ The Johannine "dualism" "is separated from the Gnostic dualism by a chasm". Schnackenburg says: "The author of 1 John knows no metaphysical opposition between Godly and material world, no two hostile principles of origin.... the polarity of God's world and 'this' world.... becomes a religio-ethical division."¹⁹⁰
(What is asserted of 1 John is true of 3 John as well, e.g. verse 11).

Negatively, there is no "myth" of a "Redeemed Saviour" in the heresy attacked in 1 John (nor is there, of course, in 2 John or 3 John). The heretical way of salvation without a saviour was central in the opponents' system).

The above material is unspeculative and mostly uncontroversial. It presents a fair summary of what may be gleaned from the Johannine writings themselves. It has an important bearing on any Johannine studies in the area of essential background, and in a preliminary manner shows the underlying unity of the three Epistles, since all the statements (a) to (e) above apply to all the Johannine Epistles.¹⁹¹ The way is therefore prepared (but no more) for the possibility of common authorship, common date, common

location, etc. for the three Epistles, and so for the present hypothesis itself.

The linguistic/stylistic comparison of 1 John and the Fourth Gospel (which is in Schnackenburg's commentary basically a summary of the arguments of C.H. Dodd versus those of W.F. Howard)¹⁹² leads to the conclusion that "from this angle the acceptance of a common author has no obstacle in its way".¹⁹³

Theological comparisons of the same two books lead either to an assertion of identity of authorship, or to the claim that two closely associated persons wrote John and 1 John¹⁹⁴ respectively.¹⁹⁵ The 'yield' from this for the hypothesis is small: if the two books be by one writer, then the Fourth Gospel may perhaps be employed in the attempt to date the Epistles. If both Gospel and Epistles have a common author and there are good grounds for dating them close together, then the Gospel (which is alluded to more than the Epistles in the non-biblical early writers) can definitely be used in attempts at dating the whole corpus. In fact - according to Schnackenburg - the Fourth Gospel and 1 John are to be put in the same very short period.¹⁹⁶

When he discusses the **πρεσβύτερος** question, Schnackenburg contends that no original additional name was later excised, and that **πρεσβύτερος** is no fictitious title (as Hirsch had claimed) to indicate "that here the one great witness of Asia Minor was writing, who was in a special sense 'the Presbyter'".¹⁹⁷

Schnackenburg seems to grant the existence of the Presbyter of Papias (separate from the Apostle John), but says that there is nothing to demonstrate that he and the Presbyter of 2 and 3 John were the same. He observes that the 2 John writer was known to the readers,¹⁹⁷ and says of the Third Epistle, "According to 3 John the 'old man' exercises a more patriarchal than a jurisdictional supervision over the congregations".¹⁹⁸

In the end, it must be recognised that the **ὁ πρεσβύτερος** designation cannot now give the answer to the authorship question.¹⁹⁹

All that can be said is that 2 and 3 John almost certainly have the same author (both have **ὁ πρεσβύτερος**, they are about the same length, and they have similar stylistic peculiarities).

The contents of 1 and 2 John connect these books together, just as the

description of the writer as "Elder" (and other points) links 2 and 3 John. It is especially in 2 John 4 to 9, and then particularly with regard to love (and its practical realisation in brotherly love) and faith (and the right christological faith at that) that the close parallel with 1 John is seen.

All in all, one author for all three letters "may at least be permitted".²⁰⁰ On pages 300 and 301 the commentator asserts that the Johannine authorship of the three Epistles cannot be answered "with final certainty, but one must at least postulate for the letters a prominent personage from the 'Johannine circle'..... who represents and truly holds the 'Johannine tradition'".

Thus Schnackenburg appears to hold a type of 'school' theory - viz. one that allows the possibility of different Fourth Gospel/Epistles authorship, but which views the Epistles as from one person.

The last point is naturally entirely consonant with the current hypothesis.

THE DATE AND ORDER OF WRITING

On pages 15 ff Schnackenburg lists evidence which he claims indicates a late first century date for 1 John:

- (i) the repeated "from the beginning" of 1 John 2:7,24 and 3:11 (cf 2 John 5)
- (ii) the crystallising out of the "antichrists" (2:19)
- (iii) the intensive activity of the "false prophets" (4:1)
- (iv) the self-asserting struggle of the churches faithful to Christ
- (v) the fact that the readers are no longer in direct touch with the salvation event, but only "hearers" (3:11)
- (vi) the more powerful and clearly defined nature of the Gnostic movement as compared with Paul's day
- (vii) the nature of the Parousia expectation: there is "a certain resignation" about it, and "problems do not seem to arise from it".

All of these concerns (we are told) "already fill a page of church history" and so lead to a date near AD.100 for 1 John.

There is a considerable element of subjectivity in criteria of this sort.

When one thinks of the developments in the church situation which took place during Paul's years of literary activity - say from AD.49 to 64,²⁰¹ a period of only about 15 years - it may be asserted confidently that the 'Johannine picture' could easily represent any point on the fast-changing ecclesiastical scene from perhaps AD.80 onwards.²⁰²

So much for the date of 1 John per se. At a later point in his Introduction, Schnackenburg declares that the priority of the Gospel or the First Epistle relative to the other cannot be determined,²⁰³ but that their contents necessitate that they be considered more or less contemporaneous.^{204, 205}

Later again, in the Introduction to 2 and 3 John, 2 John is assigned a date near that of 1 John because of the attack upon the false teaching.²⁰⁶ In fact, all three letters may have originated at the same time.

No exception need be taken to Schnackenburg's conclusion of contemporaneity or near-contemporaneity for the four books. That is wholly reasonable.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE EPISTLES

With respect to the structure of 1 John, Schnackenburg notes the suggestion of Roller that the "pre-Asiatic" form of letter differed from the Hellenistic, and that it was still in existence, as could be demonstrated from Hebrews and 1 John. Schnackenburg says that this can hardly be proved.²⁰⁷ He is, of course, correct. If this were the explanation of the 1 John form, why are 2 and 3 John so obviously Hellenistic letters? Schnackenburg finally contents himself with saying "In the last analysis this type of letter (1 John) remains a riddle to us". That conclusion is not one of total agnosticism regarding structure, though. He says of the writer that "He states his purpose at the beginning (1:1-4) to make known the basic message of Jesus to the world concerning communion with God on the ground of union with Jesus Christ; but at the same time he allows himself to be stimulated through the countering of heretics and the concern for the inner strengthening of the Christian church. So time and again he adds instructions and admonitions. Thereby certain larger sections arise, in which one thought calls forth another". Thus neither unplanned progress nor the very systematic type of analysis is to be endorsed. The exegete must (says Schnackenburg) get his analysis from the work, not fasten it on to it. Such wise advice is apposite considering the almost

desperate attempts which have sometimes been made to impose a rigid analytical scheme on to 1 John.²⁰⁸ Schnackenburg's concept of structure and plan is to be welcomed, but not the circular letter theory which flows from it.²⁰⁹

The related matter of the unity or otherwise of 1 John is of no direct relevance to the hypothesis since the final product - 1 John as we have it - and not a hypothetical intermediate stage, is alone important.²¹⁰

Both 2 and 3 John are divided into an Introduction, three sections and a conclusion.²¹¹ The structure (or "lay-out" or "design" - Anlage) is an element demonstrating that 2 John and 3 John are "actual, not fictitious, letters".²¹² (Other elements which lead to the same conclusion are style, concise treatment of concrete questions, and the naming of individual persons - in 3 John).

THE OPPOSED HERESY

Fair agreement as to the general outlines of the combatted heresy may be said to exist today. Schnackenburg makes the following points:²¹³

- (a) The author fights on a single theological front. Even if the terms "antichrists" and "false prophets" include a plurality of groups, they agree in their denial of the Christ of the church.
- (b) The heretics represent both a christological "lie" and false moral views.²¹⁴ "The faith heresy and the moral indifference stem from the same source, and become a united unchristian attitude" (or "conduct" - Haltung).²¹⁵
- (c) The opposed religio-moral declension from Christianity is Gnostic in origin.
- (d) The opponents are to be looked for mainly in heathen-Christian circles.

The first two of the four statements (i.e. (a) and (b)) express exactly the viewpoint of Chapter 4 (following) where it is contended in addition that there are indications of both the doctrinal and ethical errors of the heretics in all three Johannine Epistles, as one would expect if the three books basically reflect one situation (albeit with differing emphases). The position adopted in this thesis is that one Epistle leaves out what is present in another, e.g. the prohibition in 2 John, the commendation in 3 John) not because they are addressed to different situations, but merely because they are complementary.²¹⁶ One Epistle carries on where the other leaves off, the writer selecting what he wants to say (and omitting what he does not want to say) to the immediate recipient/s in

each case. The particular kind of heresy concerned is to be discussed in Chapter 4 (following).^{217, 218}

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA CONCERNED²¹⁹

The First Epistle (in Schnackenburg's opinion) "presupposes a Pagan (5:21) Gnostic-infected region - ".²²⁰ The area, which would appear to encompass "a localized circle of Christian congregations", is more likely to have been Asia Minor than anywhere else.²²⁰ The evidence favouring that area and others may be summarised thus:²²¹

ASIA MINOR: (i) such was the tradition in ancient times from Irenaeus onwards

(ii) what little can be deduced internally harmonises with this, e.g. it was the main area of the early spread of Gnosticism.²²²

GREECE Gnostic views were traceable in Corinth at an early period (1 Cor. 6:12, 8:1 ff, 10:23).

SYRIA (i) The 'Syrian' character of the combatted Gnosis perhaps (but not certainly) points to the Levant.²²³

(ii) The "speech idiom" does the same

PARTHIA The address "ad Parthos" occurs at the top of 2 John in two late MSS, and is sometimes said to have been "moved across" from 2 John to 1 John.

The only serious contenders for the 1 John locale are Syria and Asia Minor. Against Syria, Schnackenburg affirms that the idiomatic type of Greek (if this is really Semitic) need suggest "nothing else than (that) the author was a born Palestinian".²²⁴ He considers "the grounds are not sufficient to cross over from Asia Minor to Syria."²²⁴

Again, the conclusion offered is perfectly compatible with the hypothesis, as a Syrian or even Greek milieu would be.

PERSONALITIES

Something should be said about the persons named in 3 John:²²⁵

(i) Gaius is described by Schnackenburg as "a befriended layman.. obviously the centre of a circle of friends, a prominent Christian and intimate friend of the 'Elder', but no official church person."²²⁶

- (ii) Diotrephes was perhaps a monarchical bishop or a member of a senior council (or teaching body).²²⁷ Schnackenburg writes: "all possibilities remain open as to whether it is a matter of usurpation or misuse of office" (in Diotrephes' case).²²⁸
- (iii) Demetrius is reckoned as possibly leader of the travelling missionaries; perhaps he was also entrusted with the delivery of 3 John.²²⁹ He was not previously known to Gaius.²³⁰

Quite possibly Schnackenburg's assessment of the position of Gaius is too modest²³¹ and that of Diotrephes too elevated,²³² but no dogmatism is justified here.

THE DESTINATION OF THE THREE EPISTLES

Schnackenburg affirms quite categorically that " - 1 John is directed to a larger circle of communities, 2 John to one single community and 3 John to a private person".²³³ Besides C.H. Dodd²³⁴ two other notable writers - A.M. Hunter²³⁵ and Floyd V. Filson - advocate a similar set of destinations. Filson makes the original 1 John readership wider than Schnackenburg does: "1 John was written as a general letter to be read in many churches; 2 John was sent to a certain church, not now identifiable...".²³⁶

No reasons are given for Schnackenburg's determination of destinations

- except (i) that a "circular" (i.e. presumably a circular for unrestricted distribution)²³⁷ must have an address,²³⁸ which 1 John has not. Schnackenburg does not even discuss the opposite possibility that his conception is not too narrow, but too wide.
- (ii) (implicitly only) that, since 2 John is regarded as a church letter,²³⁹ 1 John must, with its greater detail, have been intended for a wider readership.

The two related questions concerning the kind of destination intended for 1 John and 2 John respectively are at the very heart of the present hypothesis, and of course constitute the decisive point of departure between that and Schnackenburg's conceptions.

It could conceivably be claimed that Schnackenburg's view is in keeping with the idea that the shorter Epistles were separate covering letters for the First Epistle, and that this comes close to the hypothesis. If this were the case, the specific and local nature of both 2 and 3 John would require the existence of other comparable letters which could be

sent with 1 John to centres beyond those of the recipients of our 2 and 3 John. Such a course of events is possible,²⁴⁰ but in point of fact Schnackenburg nowhere explicitly formulates any such theory.²⁴¹²⁴²

Various terms are used by Schnackenburg in indicating the extent of the readership. 1 John is for "a region", "a localized circle of Christian congregations which found themselves in a similar situation", and "some groups) beyond the single congregation."²⁴³

Schnackenburg's basis for delimiting 1 John's original readership as he does is totally inadequate. There is no evidence that the book was a circular, and not a communication to a single church. In fact various considerations favour the latter, some of them strongly.

Nine reasons for regarding 1 John as to a SINGLE community, to ONE church, and 2 and 3 John as covering letters for it in that context:

- (i) In the one other instance in the New Testament where an Epistle has no address, lack of an address does not occur where there is a wide circle of recipients, but a narrow one. That instance of course is Hebrews,²⁴⁴ a book which is most commonly reckoned as being a message to a single group of Christians in one place. The internal evidence that a specific local community was in the mind of the author of Hebrews has three aspects:²⁴⁵²⁴⁶
- (a) The readership "has a definite history". The author refers to "former days" (10:32), to previous persecutions involving public exposure to abuse (10:32, 33), to plundering of property (10:34), and to generosity to others in need (6:10). He knew the circumstances in which their conversion took place (2:3) and their past and current position regarding persecution (12:4) as well as their present attitudes and frame of mind (5:11 ff, 6:9 ff, 10:25).
 - (b) The readership "has definite links with the writer". Besides the evidence adduced under (a) there are various points of contact visible in 13:18-23.
 - (c) The readership "was a section of a larger community". 5:12 limits the readers to only a part of one congregation because "they are capable of a teaching ministry, and this could hardly apply in general to the rank and file members of a church". Nor however, are they themselves the leaders, as 13:7 and 13:24 indicate.

It is plainly legitimate to conclude that the unaddressed Epistle to the Hebrews was intended for one community or for part of one community.

How does 1 John compare with Hebrews?

- (a) Again the readership has (to use Guthrie's words) "a definite history". In two places the writer refers to the message which "you (the readers) had from the beginning" (2:7), or "heard from the beginning" (3:11).²⁴⁷ He himself knew their spiritual surroundings in terms of the various "spirits" abroad (4:1). He was well aware of their most immediate dangers from separatist heretics (2:26, 3:7) or from "idols" (5:21).²⁴⁸ He knew their present spiritual state, their strengths and victories (2:12-14, 4:4). He was well aware of their great need of assurance and reassurance (3:19, 5:13).
- (b) It is almost superfluous to say that the 1 John readership "has definite links with the writer". Robert Law expressed this with characteristic fluency: "the personal chord is frequently struck, and with much tenderness and depth of feeling, the writer alternating between the 'you' of direct address (1:3-5, 2:1,7,8,12-14,18, etc. 3:5,13 etc.) and the 'we' in which spontaneous feeling unites him with his readers (1:6,10, 3:1,2,14,16,18 etc. 4:7,10,11 etc. 5:14, 15, 18-20). Under special stress of emotion his paternal love, sympathy and solicitude break out in the affectionate address 'little children' (ΤΕΚΝΙΑ, ΠΑΙΔΙΑ),²⁴⁹ or yet more endearingly 'my little children' (ΤΕΚΝΙΑ ΕΜΟΥ).
- (c) As with Hebrews, no leaders are named, and none are indicated in 1 John unless the term ΠΑΤΕΡΕΣ²⁵⁰ be so interpreted. Anyway, there is no hint that the readership is more than one community at this point.

Other New Testament letters, whatever the 'breadth' of their intended readership, had addresses,²⁵¹ whether they were

²⁵²
"Universal" letters - James, 2 Peter, Jude

Letters to several provinces - the Acts 15:23 ff letter, 1 Peter

Letters to several towns - Galatians (whether it was to 'North' or 'South' Galatia), 2 Corinthians²⁵³

Letters to one or two churches - Colossians,²⁵⁴ Romans,²⁵⁵ 1 Corinthians²⁵⁶(?)
the letters of Revelation 2 and 3

Letters to one church - 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians

or

Letters to individual people - Philemon, the Pastorals

What may be deduced from this pattern?

First: the inclusion or exclusion of an address appears to have no direct connection with either the number or location of the recipients, at least as far as New Testament letters are concerned.

Secondly: The lack of an address with a New Testament letter indicates the lack of a suitable addressee in a particular congregation.

Thus, the Hebrews group appears to have been immature²⁵⁷ and leaderless²⁵⁸ for some reason. In a similar way, the lack of a 1 John address indicates that there was no undisputed leader (or even council) to which the "letter" could have been addressed. The writer could not address a hostile demagogue who did not represent the faithful in that church, and nor could he insert the name of a minority leader in a church letter because that would offend others. Thus he wrote without referring to anyone by name so that his letter may (hopefully)²⁵⁹ enjoy acceptance. Now this situation of a church divided in this peculiar way and to this degree²⁶⁰ could hardly have obtained in every one of a circle of churches. In any case, in the only known instance of the (or 'a') Johannine writer writing to a circle of churches, he stated exactly to whom he was writing.²⁶¹ It would appear inescapable that 1 John was to one church only.

- (ii) The precisely stated destination of 3 John, the vaguely-stated destination of 2 John and the lack of any stated destination in the case of 1 John strongly indicates a single receiving milieu.

Out of the three Epistles of John that we have, two are not 'properly' addressed. Now, if the writer were in the habit of not addressing letters, considerable confusion could have resulted from carelessness or forgetfulness on the part of an envoy. The danger would be especially great if, as is often conjectured (on the strength of the 3 John picture), the writer sent out many letters to a number of churches. (In fact this is hardly in the realm of conjecture at all - the book of Revelation indicates that either he or an associate did send pastoral letters to various churches in a sort of diocesan area). If 1 John had been a 'circular', perhaps sent at the same time as 2 John²⁶² was despatched to one particular congregation, the problem might well be heightened and not relieved, for why should 2 John be vaguely addressed? Why should it not have had a specific direct address to compensate for the shortcoming of 1 John?

On the other hand, if 3 John were sent with 1 John, it would not only explain the presence of the larger Epistle and clarify its objective, but it would also cover its lack of stated destination. It seems then, that 3 John is necessary to 1 John.

Moreover, 3 John would do the same for 2 John. The Second Epistle was either to a church or to an individual person.²⁶³ If to a church, and if it were sent with 3 John, the problem of the vague destination would be relieved considerably. If however, 2 John were for a person and that person the wife of Gaius, all ambiguities would be removed.

A strong case may therefore, be made for 3 John (or an unknown letter like it) being an introductory letter to 1 John and to 2 John.

Since we have 1, 2 and 3 John which interlock so admirably, and since we do not have any other epistle which performs the part of any one of the three, the conclusion that all of them were sent in one parcel to a particular Christian named Gaius, who was to read and/or pass on each as the writer required and revealed in the works themselves, is weighty indeed.

(iii) The state of affairs reflected in 1 John makes it unlikely that 1 John is a circular.

Nauck suggests that the antithetic prototype of 1 John was sent at an earlier date to deal with a church problem. Then, at a later date, 1 John was sent in its final form.²⁶⁴ By that time the problem was much more acute. The despatch of the Epistle indicates the depth of the concern of the writer for the people, which is made more obvious by the repeated terms of endearment and almost desperate warning.

It is hard to imagine so anxious a spiritual parent allowing the error to reach a stage where church after church was affected both within and without before he took steps to correct the situation. The writer might have been fatherly and old,²⁶⁵ but he was no coward. He was not likely - according to the self-portrait he gives in 1 John - to delay action. As soon as he heard of

the threat of grave error in one church, he acted. If for the moment the possibility that 2 and 3 John were contemporaneous with 1 John be allowed, the proposed action is shown more fully. As soon as he heard of an explosive situation at the 'other end'²⁶⁶ he did two things: he wrote and he planned a visit²⁶⁷ to deal with it. It is psychologically impossible to think of a pastor who was decisive, autocratic, and confidently orthodox, doing anything else. Besides, in the shorter Epistles he once says that he has (just?) received information (2 John 4) and twice implies that he has (3 John 4,9). Far from a situation dragging on for a long time in a series of churches, or even in one church, the reader of the Johannine Epistles gains the impression that the doughty Presbyter will use a 'short sharp shock'! In 3 John 10 he says as much: " - if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, prating against me with evil words", and 3 John 13 and 14 betrays the same spirit.

Thus on the grounds of the state of affairs among the readers and the psychology of the author, one receiving church is much more likely than a plurality of them.

- (iv) The polemical tone of many 1 John passages suggests that the writer's preoccupation is with only ONE awkward church situation and ONE main foe

From one point of view 1 John 1:6-10 seems as wide as Christendom in its application, but it is equally easy to see a reference to the sins of an individual within it. There is no better candidate in the Johannine Epistles than Diotrephes for the role of villain, since he was still within a church where he could do harm, and not outside like those who had left the fellowship (2:18,19, 4:1 ff). Chapter 2, verses 1ff, quite possibly comprises not only a general warning against sin, but as the aorist tense in *ἵνα μὴ ἁμαρτήτε* and *ἐάν τις ἁμαρτή* indicates, may anticipate a particular act of sin, the future involvement of others in Diotrephes' machinations. The passage also pinpoints the steps to be taken should an ordinary believer be sucked into the 'Diotrephesian vortex'. Naturally, correct behaviour in the face of temptation is the keeping of *τὰς ἐντολάς* (2:3), pre-eminently love. That is precisely

what Diotrephes had failed to do. The strong language of 2:4 - **ψεύστης ἐστίν** - expresses more-or-less the same idea as 3 John 10, with its **λόγοις πονηροῖς φλυαρῶν**. Similarly, 2:6 quite possibly - even probably - implies some hurt by an individual against the writer. The singular **ὁ λέγων** of 1 John 2:9 and the **ὁ - μισῶν** of VII again appears to indicate one specific opponent as well as enunciating a general principle. What was there in Diotrephes if not a **σκάνδαλον** (V.10)? **Ἄλα ζονεῖα** also seems a fitting description of the man. Moffatt translates the term "proud display (of life)", J.B. Rotherham²⁶⁸ "vain grandeur (of life)", and the Twentieth Century New Testament as "pretentious (life)". The general idea of ostentation is very appropriate to the 3 John presentation of Diotrephes, while undoubtedly it has a more general application as well. 1 John 2:26 probably includes both the external and the internal threat: 3:4 speaks of "lawlessness" (**ἀνομία**), which may be understood in terms either of acts of or contempt of law.²⁶⁹ Insubordination may well have been a subject in the writer's mind as he wrote **πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία:** it is the central idea of 3 John 9 and 10. 1 John 3:8 ascribes **ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν** to the devil; 1 John 3:10 condemns the unrighteous and the unloving; 3:12 likens the unloving to Cain, while 3:14 says that he abides in death, and v.15 that he is a murderer. 1 John 3:17 says **ὅς δ' ἂν ἔχη τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου**-and is perhaps again a reference to Diotrephes, whose name "Zeus-reared" was to be found only "in noble and ancient families"²⁷⁰ who were presumably well-off so far as this world's goods were concerned. The loveless actions, quite out of keeping with a profession of love (3:18),²⁷¹ seem equally indicative of Diotrephes.

A somewhat bitter note, based on personal experience, is detectable in 4:6 - those who **ἀκούει ἡμῶν** know God. The verse hints that there are those near at hand who habitually do not "hear"²⁷² the writer. In 4:7,8,11,12 the cry to love one another is iterated and reiterated, and here it is the situation within the fellowship which worries the Elder. That situation is retrievable; the situation without perhaps not. The fourteenth verse of the fourth chapter once more contains a sort of cri de coeur of apostolic wrath against a (?) theological upstart. The same themes as occur in earlier parts of the book are repeated in

chapter 5.²⁷³

The tone of numerous verses thus seems to signify a personal opponent of the writer within his readership. Since the tone is so pervasive, it is logical to suggest that one reader in a single addressed church is meant.

Identical conclusions may be drawn from 2 John. There is the same preoccupation with Christians' loving one another and the concomitant fear that some don't.²⁷⁴ Verse 8 begins with the warning ΒΛΕΠΕΤΕ ΕΑΥΤΟΥΣ, which comes before verse 10, and therefore signifies that the danger is not only from those who have "gone out" and who might seek ingress again, but from one or more within the fellowship of the local church. Possibly there is importance in the emphatic position of the πρῶτος ὁ προάγων in verse 9, viz. that the local 'advanced' theologian is to be feared as much as any other.

It may be asked in this context why the self-exiled heretics were likely to seek some kind of readmission to the church (2 John 11). A likely answer is that in Diotrephes they saw a bridgehead they could use. If that was the case, both 1 and 2 John represent a specially 'ripe' situation for increased heretical penetration, something which the external docetic faction might not have sought in the same way in other places or circumstances.²⁷⁵

As far as 3 John is concerned, it can be observed

- (i) that Diotrephes does not walk ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ (verse 4) and
- (ii) that the 'letter' of 3 John 9 will not be received by Diotrephes, not just because it comes from the Elder,²⁷⁶ but because Diotrephes can see veiled references to himself within it. This understanding makes it possible to see how 1 John could fit 3 John 9, giving (as it would) offence to some in the 3 John environment.

The polemical tone, then, of 1 John, suggests a single church situation.²⁷⁷

- (v) The use of ΤΙΣ implies, in some 1 John contexts, a particular individual in a particular church.²⁷⁸

The indefinite pronoun ΤΙΣ occurs eight times in the Johannine Epistles. Four of these are quite possibly references to a specific person.

- (a) Both 2:15b and 4:20 begin ἐάν τις and then go on to name some sin: ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.
and ἐάν τις εἴπῃ ὅτι ἠγαπῶ τὸν θεόν, καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶ, ψεύστης ἐστίν.

- (b) 5:16 exhibits the same kind of construction expressed the other way round: i.e. from the eye of the beholder - Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσῃ, καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωὴν -

- (c) 2:27, though expressed differently, also includes a ΤΙΣ which may denote an individual person: καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μένει ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκῃ ὑμᾶς.

Now it is interesting that Paul faced a position similar to the insubordination of Diotrephes, a crisis when he was opposed by a local church member. In those circumstances, when he too was writing an epistle to a whole mixed Christian community, he refrained from naming the offender. In fact he employed the word ΤΙΣ in a statement very like the four above that are found in 1 John. The verse concerned is 2 Corinthians 2:5: Εἰ δέ τις λελύπηκεν, οὐκ ἐμὲ λελύπηκεν, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ μέρους, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ, πάντας ὑμᾶς.

The context demands that the $\tau\iota\varsigma$ is not a hypothetical person, but an actual character at Corinth. A number of other verses in the New Testament employ the word $\tau\iota\varsigma$ in places where a particular person or particular persons are indicated,²⁷⁹ but in no other instance (besides 2 Corinthians 2:5) is there a very close parallel so far as the circumstances are concerned with the Johannine Epistles' situation.

It is, therefore, likely that the Elder has one person in mind when framing certain 1 John verses. What the writer says is conditioned by what his opponent has actually stated.²⁸⁰ That 1 John is to one local church is thereby implied.

- (vi) Parallel expressions in 1 John and 3 John may signify that the one church is in the mind of the writer in each case.

This point will bear comparatively little weight, but it can be observed in 3 John 11 that the antitheses expressed in both the imperatives and the indicatives are rooted in personalities.²⁸¹ That is to say, the evil example to be avoided is that of Diotrephes, the subject of the preceding verses, and the good example to be followed is that of Demetrius in the succeeding verse. The teaching derives, then, in 3 John 11 (at least) from the *Sitz im Leben*.²⁸² It is likely that the same practice obtains in 1 John, where no examples (good or bad) are named: the parallelism is drawn basically from the faithful and Diotrephesian factions in the church addressed. Such a conclusion accords with the close resemblance of content, and, to some extent, verbal expression between 3 John 11 and 1 John 2:29, 3:6, 3:10, and 4:12.

- (vii) The prohibition enunciated in 2 John 10 and 11 seems to lead to the conclusion that 1 John and 2 John are to one and the same church.

The argument here proceeds as follows:

- (a) 2 John is plainly to one church (the opinion of very nearly all commentators, many of course further narrowing the readers to a family within a church).
- (b) But the prohibition on hospitality to heretics was surely necessary everywhere where the evil was present.
- (c) The prohibition is not present in 1 John.
- (d) Therefore 1 John by itself is in one important respect not wider, but actually narrower than 2 John.

- (e) Something else, presumably some other writing, must supply the 1 John deficiency.
 - (f) 2 John is the only document known that can do so.
 - (g) Therefore it is logical that 2 John should have been intended in the first place to go everywhere 1 John did.
 - (h) Therefore either both 1 John and 2 John were for one church or both were for a number of churches.
 - (i) But the opening verse of 2 John indicates the former: therefore both 1 John and 2 John were written for one church.
- (viii) The complementariness of 2 John and 3 John in respect of the denial or granting of hospitality as the case may be, links those two books in a single church environment. The interlocking of the two short letters over the subject of the treatment of missionaries is a powerful point in favour of the hypothesis, and against Schnackenburg's interpretation of the church destination of the Second Epistle. John Stott says that "the two letters must be read together if we are to gain a balanced understanding of the duties and limits of Christian hospitality".²⁸³

At the present time it is wholly reasonable to write thus, but what of the original circumstances? It is far more likely that one community should have received both commendation and encouragement regarding hospitality and advice regarding the withholding of hospitality from the unworthy than that only half the message should have gone to each of two places. Both the, 'Lady' and Gaius would need both messages, and the most obvious way for this to have been achieved would have been for them to have been in the same church as each other.²⁸⁴

- (ix) On a priori grounds, if all the Epistles are linked by possessing common authorship,²⁸⁵ if all came into existence at about the same time,²⁸⁶ if all were written at and sent to a single area, if the theology taught, ethical standards advocated, missionary situation portrayed and envisaged, and errors refuted are of a piece, then there is at least a fair likelihood that all the letters were written to one church. (There is nothing conclusive about this, of course).

What is the strength of the nine arguments set out above,²⁸⁷ and how do they compare with Schnackenburg's position? The strongest arguments among the nine are (i), (ii), (iii) and (viii), (vii) is not so strong, (iv), (v) and (vi) can bear comparatively little weight, and (ix) is interesting but little more.

Against these are ranged only two arguments of Schnackenburg's, one plain²⁸⁸ (i.e. the 'restricted' circular idea for 1 John based on the absence of an address), and the other indirect (1 John a circular because 2 John is believed to have been a church letter and 1 John is thought to be wider in readership).

The first of Schnackenburg's points is entirely without foundation (as has been shown). The second is based on a conclusion that is rather less likely than its opposite. In brief, Schnackenburg's entire position regarding the destination of the Johannine Epistles arises from his conviction that 2 John was written to a whole church. That conviction is not justified,²⁸⁹ and even if it were the deductions about 1 John would not necessarily follow at all.²⁹⁰

A.M. HUNTER

On most major issues Hunter, in his book 'Introducing the New Testament',²⁹¹ is in agreement with Schnackenburg. Thus the place of writing for both the Gospel and the Epistles is "Ephesus or its neighbourhood",²⁹¹ the 1 John readers were "the local churches in the 'diocese' of Ephesus"²⁹², 2 John was to a church²⁹³ and all the Epistles came into being at about the same time.²⁹⁴ 1 John is a "pastoral letter",²⁹⁵ 2 John is the "gist" of 1 John written to "a particular congregation being badly affected" by false doctrine. "This is the relation between 1 and 2 John. 2 John is a miniature of 1 John - "²⁹³ Hunter says of 3 John: "as in Philemon, there is a local church in the background - perhaps the very one to which II John was sent".²⁹⁶ Diotrephes "held the chief office in the church", though Hunter questions Streeter's idea that he could have been a bishop.²⁹⁷ Gaius is described as "perhaps the minority leader",²⁹⁶ and Demetrius was to carry the Elder's letter.

Hunter expresses much greater certainty than Schnackenburg does that the same man wrote the Gospel and the Epistles, tentatively identifying him

with Papias' Elder.²⁹⁸ The most obvious points of departure from Schnackenburg, though, concern the structure of 1 John, where Hunter uncritically adopts the 'three test' pattern of Robert Law,²⁹⁹ and the heresy, which is identified with Cerinthianism, and that without equivocation: "It is this 'Cerinthian' heresy which John attacks in 1 John 5:6".³⁰⁰

No detailed analysis need be given of the merits and demerits of Hunter's views. On authorship and date he is nearer the present hypothesis than Schnackenburg is, but on identification of the heresy and the structure of 1 John he accepts unsatisfactory ideas.³⁰¹

6. THOSE WHICH PROPOSE A LOOSE RELATIONSHIP SIMPLY ON THE STRENGTH OF A 'SCHOOL' THEORY, THE 'SCHOOL' BEING FOUND IN A PARTICULAR AREA AND DEALING WITH A GIVEN GROUP OF MORE-OR-LESS RELATED PROBLEMS.³⁰²

Barrett and Brown are important exponents of the 'school' concept, though Schnackenburg also represents it.³⁰³

C.K. BARRETT

Professor Barrett's great work on the Fourth Gospel appeared in 1955.³⁰⁴ In the present context the main interest of that book lies in the hypothesis advanced regarding the authorship of the five canonical Johannine writings.³⁰⁵ The suggestion is that John the Apostle migrated to Ephesus from Palestine and there composed various works of an apocalyptic nature. One of his pupils wrote up the Apostle's productions after his death to form the canonical Apocalypse (circa AD.96). A second pupil wrote 1, 2 and 3 John (or else one person wrote the First Epistle and another 2 and 3 John). Yet another, "a bolder thinker, and one more widely read both in Judaism and Hellenism" produced John 1-20. Later the book was edited and the final chapter of the Gospel was added by the incorporation of traditional material. According to Barrett, therefore, either 5 or 6 writers were responsible for the Johannine corpus besides those who originally framed the traditional material.

What may be said on the other side, i.e. against Barrett's admittedly hypothetical reconstruction?

First, leaving aside the questions surrounding the Johannine Apocalypse, many other highly competent scholars have argued on the basis of the most exacting grammatical, syntactical and theological studies that the Gospel

and Epistles of John are by one man; still more that at least 1, 2, and 3 John are.³⁰⁶

Secondly, Barrett's conjectures rest on no ancient tradition except that the Apostle John was exiled on Patmos (where he wrote the Apocalypse) and lived for years in Ephesus.³⁰⁷

Thirdly, some ancient testimony, particularly that of Irenaeus, is contradicted.³⁰⁸ (On the other hand it may be claimed that Barrett's complex theory is supported - albeit to a very modest extent - by the famous ambiguous statement of Papias).³⁰⁹

Fourthly, it may be seriously doubted whether the complete anonymity of so many key figures in the early days of the church has been satisfactorily explained. This is most relevant with respect to the Evangelist, the hypothetical writer of John 1-20, described by Barrett as "perhaps the greatest theologian in all the history of the church". It is difficult to see how a man of such calibre was "forgotten" so soon; it is scarcely satisfying merely to be told that "probably he was not popular".

RAYMOND E. BROWN

Brown, writing the Anchor Bible Commentary on John's Gospel,³¹⁰ carefully distinguishes between Biblical authors and writers: "The writers run the gamut from recording secretaries who slavishly copied down the author's dictation to highly independent collaborators who, working from a sketch of the authors ideas, gave their own literary style to the final work".³¹¹ Even on the basis of 'authorship' being "confined to responsibility for the basic ideas", a number of different people may have been responsible for a Biblical book or corpus - Brown cites Isaiah, Solomon and the Wisdom Literature, David and the Psalms, and Moses and the Pentateuch. Brown suggests that the Apostle John could have been author of what he calls Stage I of the Gospel (out of five stages proposed), and an eyewitness provided he used his materials fairly freely according to his listeners' needs.

The commentator sees difficulty about ascribing Stages II, III and IV of the Gospel "where the historical tradition was formed into dramatic and polished narratives and into long discourses and finally into a carefully edited Gospel", to the Apostle. For all that, John's influence was not

confined to the historical tradition, for the intermediate stages represent a development - along lines already laid down by him - by colleagues and disciples.

The 'Johannine School' idea is of course extended by Brown to cover the Epistles and Revelation though in his volumes on the Fourth Gospel he barely mentions it in that connection.^{3/2}

The great difficulties in Brown's scheme are

- (i) (in relation to the Fourth Gospel) that after several decades of oral transmission there are no discernible linguistic differences between the additional material inserted by a new writer^{3/3} and the 2 or 3 times reworked material of the primary author.^{3/4} This is all the more amazing in the light of the highly idiosyncratic nature of Johannine Greek.

- (ii) (in relation to the Epistles) that many passages very closely resemble verses in the Gospel.^{3/5} Out of the fifty or so places where 1 John comes very close to Fourth Gospel expressions, thirteen are in portions which Brown assigns to the final redactor of the Gospel.^{3/6} This would appear to require either one truly dominant author/writer in both cases, with other contributors' work being virtually non-existent,^{3/7} or else a similar process involving the same team of author plus writers for both books. Either of these options is really tantamount to an assertion of the common authorship of the Gospel and 1 John (similarly the Gospel and 2 John and 3 John).^{3/8}

The essential unity of authorship of the Fourth Gospel and that of the Epistles possibly provides assistance in the question of dating the Epistles, and the common unified authorship of the Epistles is a sine qua non of the present hypothesis.

Brown does not date the Epistles, but favours the period 90 - 100 for the Gospel.^{3/9}

No mention is made of the Epistles' area of origin, but Brown (like Schnackenburg) reviews the arguments for an Egyptian, Syrian, or Asian origin

of the Gospel. He too concludes that "Ephesus still remains the primary contender",³²⁰ one reason being the obvious links between that book and another 'Johannine' composition, viz. Revelation, "for the latter work clearly belongs to the area of Ephesus".³²⁰ The still closer Gospel/Epistles links make it almost impossible to conceive of Brown placing them anywhere but in Asia.

For what is category 6 to be commended?

- (i) There is a very definite recognition of the common factors in the Johannine corpus - the theological concerns and priorities and the distinctives of the language - relative to other parts of the New Testament.
- (ii) Contact is not lost with the very earliest days of the Christian era, the ministry of Jesus, but (on the contrary) a strong and continuous link is emphatically maintained.

For what is category 6 to be censured?

- (i) Insufficient attention is given to the extraordinary nature of the literary correspondences and the temperamental and other coincidences which intrude into the various 'Johannine' books.³²¹
- (ii) A whole series of 'great unknowns' is postulated - a speculative and therefore intrinsically suspect procedure.³²¹

7. THOSE WHICH IN VARIOUS WAYS CONNECT THE CHARACTERS OF 2 JOHN AND/OR 3 JOHN WITH NEW TESTAMENT FIGURES NAMED ELSEWHERE.

Views of this sort - held in the past by William Alexander and Dom Chapman and in the present by Mastin³²² and Filson - are highly speculative and sometimes downright fanciful.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER

In his commentary of 1901, Alexander agreed with Westcott insofar as authorship and general milieu of the Epistles were concerned.³²³ Alexander suggested that the Ephesian Christians had 1 John first, but because it was hard to memorise, and perhaps because few copies of it existed, 2 John was "written as a leaflet in a form more calculated for circulation and remembrance."³²⁴ Like its longer sister, 2 John sets out the three perils

- of (i) losing the true Christ
- (ii) losing love, and
- (iii) losing the true commandment.

Alexander regarded the recipient of 2 John as an individual person "an Ephesian Lady", a widow named Kyria. The Second Epistle was sent to Ephesus during the Apostle's absence from there (perhaps at the end of his exile).³²⁵ On the grounds of a common hospitable spirit Alexander linked Paul's host at Corinth (Romans 16:23) with the Gaius of 3 John. The state of schism reflected in 1 Clement (Alexander's commentary does not actually name the book) may be connected with Diotrephes' "aspiring to put forward his claim at Corinth".³²⁶ (Alexander admits a difficulty in 3 John 10 - the suggestion of the aged Apostle that he is capable of making the Ephesus-Corinth sea voyage. He weakens the difficulty by making ἐλν ἔλω a mere possibility. (see Ch.5, p.261). The Corinthian destination of 3 John is further suggested by Athanasias' "Synopsis of Holy Scripture", which puts the writing of the Fourth Gospel at Ephesus, and connects that book with Gaius of Corinth.³²⁷ Alexander further suggests that it is "by no means improbable" that the silversmith called Demetrius in Acts was the same as the Christian of that name in 3 John 12.³²⁸ However, the craftsman of Acts 19:24 and 38 was a pagan: his conversion is never recorded.

Alexander's explanations presume far too much. His identifications are superficially based.

DOM CHAPMAN

In the Journal of Theological Studies Chapman made two quite unconvincing proposals. He claimed that 2 John, because of the apparent references to the antiquity of the Christian community of readers (2 John 5) and the world-wide approval that they enjoyed (2 John 1), was written to Antioch or Rome. Secondly, Chapman argued for an identification of the Demetrius of 3 John with the Demas of 2 Timothy 4:10 who forsook Paul at Ephesus and subsequently went to Thessalonica.³²⁹

J.N. SANDERS / B.A. MASTIN

The commentary begun by Sanders and completed after his death by Mastin was published in 1968.³³⁰ In the Introduction it is suggested that the 'Beloved Disciple' was Lazarus, whose reminiscences appear in the later chapters of John's Gospel. The Beloved Disciple is distinguished from the "other disciple", who is identified with John Mark, "a Jewish aristocrat 'known

to the High Priest'".³³¹ Later a summary is given:³³² "The Fourth Gospel is the work of John, known in the New Testament as John Mark or Mark, and to Papias as the Elder". John Mark was exiled to Patmos, where he wrote Revelation, or at least the seven letters within it.³³³ He first actually visited Ephesus in AD.96 or 97, and from there he write the Johannine Epistles: "2 and 3 John belong to the latest period of John's life, when he was free to travel.....1 John is not an epistle in the same sense as 2 and 3 John, but rather an introduction to the Fourth Gospel".³³⁴ Although sources were used for the Fourth Gospel (especially for the earlier part), the work is truly that of John Mark. "Everything in the Fourth Gospel has been thoroughly assimilated by its author", even though the Gospel and Epistles contain "the paraphrases of the secretaries to whom he dictated them".³³⁵ The form and structure are his.

Sanders' theory has no direct ancient testimony to support it.³³⁶ It apparently involves an over-hasty identification with well-known New Testament characters. Moreover, the evidence advances does not rule out other views, especially the traditional one.³³⁷

FLOYD V. FILSON

Filson (as noted above - see page 30) maintains a view of the Epistles' destination like that of Schnackenburg. He assigns the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles to one writer, writing "probably several years earlier than AD.95 - ".³³⁸ A comparison of statements by Filson on pp. 312 and 371 ff indicates that the 2 and 3 John 'Elder' is to be identified with the Beloved Disciple (= Lazarus), who probably wrote at Ephesus.

8. THE VIEW THAT THE THREE EPISTLES ARE ALL CLOSELY RELATED, BEING WRITTEN AT ONE TIME BY ONE MAN AND SENT TOGETHER TO A LOCAL CHURCH, A PROMINENT CHRISTIAN MATRON WITHIN IT, AND HER HUSBAND RESPECTIVELY.

Such a concept is the basis of the present hypothesis. The commentators who come closest to the latter are Findlay and Houlden.³³⁹

GEORGE G. FINDLAY

In 1909 Findlay's book 'Fellowship in the Life Eternal' was published.³⁴⁰ In his opinion one author (the Apostle John) wrote the three Epistles.³⁴¹

2 and 3 John were sent to the same church³⁴² at the same time: "Now he would be a very stiff, stereotyped writer, who should echo himself thus precisely³⁴³ in two informal letters composed at any distance of time from each other... nearly simultaneous in their composition.... companion stereoscopic pictures"³⁴⁴ 1 John was sent with the shorter Epistles, but had other destinations as well;³⁴⁵ it was to a "widely scattered"³⁴⁶ flock, "not - to any one particular church".³⁴⁷

Findlay offers a number of points of contact with the hypothesis, but differs from it in two main ways:

- (i) He visualises 2 John as being addressed to a church,³⁴⁸ and therefore does not see the full significance of the complementary character of the two short Epistles.
- (ii) 1 John is not limited to the 2 John/3 John church, but happens to have come down to us with the short Epistles rather than with any other of the "scores of such letters"³⁴⁹ penned during the Apostle's "long presidency over the Christian societies of Asia Minor".³⁴⁹

J.L. HOULDEN

The recent commentary by Houlden³⁵⁰ is noteworthy primarily for its introduction. There is no expressed conviction that one author only was responsible for the Epistles (though remarks on pp. 4 and 11 suggest it),³⁵¹ but there is that 1 John and the Fourth Gospel were by different writers,³⁵² a conviction which predictably serves as a base line for much of what Houlden says about the Johannine corpus.

The Epistles all belonged to a single type of situation, i.e. they all faced comparable threats, but not necessarily the same actual situation: "the Johannine Epistles all part of a campaign to put a brake upon those who would 'gnosticize' the Johannine tradition of Christian teaching".³⁵³ Various evidences perhaps suggest or at least permit a single church destination for all three Epistles:

- (1) the "clear links"³⁵⁴ between them
- (2) the 1 and 2 John use of the word "antichrists" and the fact that Diotrephes "qualifies well for the title"³⁵⁴
- (3) the fact that a single situation may be "so fluid that it could be described in two ways" (i.e. the 1 John and 3 John ways).³⁵⁵

Other points indicate more than one destination ("There is much to be said for the view that 1 John and 3 John refer to different churches"): ³⁵⁶

- (1) the greater "serenity and generality" of 2 John compared with "the much more fevered" 3 John
- (2) the fact that in 1 and 2 John those who refused to hold "the truth" had gone out, whereas in 3 John they had themselves expelled others ³⁵⁷
- (3) the fact that in 3 John the issue is "not only doctrinal, it is also political". ³⁵⁸ (Significantly, for Houlden the issue is doctrinal - on the strength of 3 John 4 ³⁵⁹ - as well as being practical).

On page 150 the commentator again suggests that the letters were quite probably addressed to the "same situation, even if at different stages in its development" ³⁶⁰ - "at least "it cannot be denied that in reflecting the presence of schism in the church they are at one. The Third Epistle has the value of presenting that picture in concrete terms". In one place ³⁶¹ 1 John is reckoned as perhaps the fruit of the frustration of the travel-plan described in 2 John 12. Instead of going to the 'Lady', the writer penned 1 John. ³⁶²

In terms of authorship Houlden fairly clearly places the Johannine Epistles together; in terms of dating he does not really commit himself at all except to the extent that the Gospel is put first; ³⁶³ in terms of the error faced he is willing to admit the possibility of a two-pronged heresy in one local church. All of this more-or-less accords with the hypothesis, but in fairness it must be said that the commentator makes numerous other suggestions as well as those listed. Tentativeness rather than hard conclusions characterises him.

Wherein, then, is it claimed that the hypothesis is superior to the hypotheses of categories 1 to 7 above?

First, all the theories fall down over the problem of the mode of address ³⁶⁴ (i.e. 1 John possessing no address, 2 John having an apparently non-specific one, and 3 John alone having the name of an individual addressee).

Secondly, most of the theories give either no account or else an inadequate account of the puzzling difference in structure of the three Epistles (2 and 3 John letters; 1 John unclassifiable).

Thirdly, some theories fall down because they are overspeculative.

What justifies the present theory is that it deals most satisfactorily with the address and structure problems without falling into the snare of being over-hypothetical. It co-ordinates people, movements and environments in a meaningful way.

Furthermore, it ³⁶⁵perhaps better explains the fact of the preservation of two such short and relatively unimportant letters as 2 and 3 John: ³⁶⁶they were part of a corpus. The theory dispenses with any need to postulate lost letters in the Johannine Epistolary situation. ³⁶⁷Finally, it provides a possible explanation for the position of the letters in the New Testament apropos each other, rather than, for instance, 2 John (said by many to be a communication to a church) being embedded in Revelation together with the letters to the Asian Churches.

One very important question remains for this chapter. What consequences flow from the acceptance of the hypothesis?

The hypothesis adds a personal dimension to the Epistles relative to other theories.

When the writer uses vocatives in 1 John these are not simply Christian-to-Christian terms aimed at the whole world. ³⁶⁸The appellations ΠΑΤΕΡΕΣ, ΒΡΑΔΕΡΟΙ, ΤΕΚΝΙΑ ³⁶⁹, ΠΑΙΔΙΑ, ΑΓΑΠΗΤΟΙ and ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ take on a new vividness as they are seen to denote members of a congregation (perhaps a smallish congregation) with which the Elder had often prayed, wrestled, and perhaps wept. Whatever other congregations he had, this one was particularly close to his heart. A reason for this is evident in 1 John 2:7, 2:24, and 3:11 : the writer had known the church for many years, possibly from its very inception. The comparative age of the church, coupled with the close relationship that he had enjoyed with his charges for so long, caused all the more anguish to the writer as he looked on the deep schism which had (it seems) actually caused the majority to defect. ³⁷⁰

Just as the realisation that 1 John was written to a church and not a cluster of churches heightens the warmth of the personal references in that book, so does the awareness that 2 John is to a Christian lady and not to a whole church. ³⁷¹In 2 John verses 5 and 6 the very long and close association of the writer and 'lady' is obvious. Not only is it plain that the pastoral link had been strong for a very long time (there is a certain poignancy in ³⁷²

the repeated $\alpha\pi' \alpha\rho\chi\eta\varsigma$) but there was a great fear that even so close a Christian fellowship was in danger. Implicit in verses 5 and 6 is the dread that even the 'lady' may succumb to heresy. The closeness of the Elder and the $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\nu\alpha$ is apparent too in 2 John from the plural pronouns³⁷³ and verbs used:³⁷⁴ that his concern is of a largely pastoral and missionary character is seen in verse 4. The personal character of the writer/reader relationship in 3 John needs no stressing. It is either explicit or very near the surface in the majority of verses.³⁷⁵

The hypothesis shows the importance of women and children in the church,³⁷⁶ an emphasis which is also much to the fore in the Gospel of Luke.³⁷⁷ Even where the writer is not necessarily indicating children he still uses terms like $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ and $\tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ in 1 John.

The hypothesis permits, as those which propose different destinations for 2 and 3 John do not, an appreciation of the balanced instruction given in³⁷⁸ late New Testament times on the duty and limitations of Christian hospitality. Hospitality, meaning literally "love of strangers", was often just that, as 3 John 5 shows. Yet it was theologically conditioned. It was to be offered freely to the faithful (those who showed their orthodoxy by being able to testify "before the church" of the Elder).³⁷⁹ It was refused from the heathen, apparently as a matter of policy (3 John 7). It was prohibited to the heretics (2 John 10,11), who had forfeited all right even to Christian salutations.

The hypothesis permits an understanding of the total disciplinary procedure adopted by an important Christian leader of the era. In the Johannine Epistles the approach is threefold according to the hypothesis. The twin problem of doctrinal heresy and ethical sin warrants

- (i) a direct confrontation with the chief sinner (3 John 9 and 10),
- (ii) the enlisting of the help of loyal and mature believers (Gaius, and perhaps the Elect Lady),
- (iii) a 'letter' of challenge to the church concerning its purity and edification (basically the thrust of 1 John).

The Johannine writer, then, regarded church discipline as a necessary and serious matter which had to be pursued at all possible levels, whether public or private.³⁸⁰ Moreover, it had to be tackled in a constructive, compassionate spirit. Discipline was intended to lead to the preservation and indeed to the increased vigilance of the church. The exercise of

discipline also provided an occasion for a rehearsal of the fundamental beliefs and standards of the church.

The hypothesis encourages new insights into the author's character. The writer does not send a letter here and a letter there to meet some emergent threat. Rather he assesses the total situation in a church hovering over the abyss of heresy. He considers the forces available to him, particularly the orthodox and loyal Gaius and his wife and some of his family. Next, he writes to the whole church in such a way as to reveal his knowledge of the position, and showing his great love as well as his concern and anxiety. He determines to have the 'letter'³⁸¹ delivered safely to the church, and so sends it to Gaius to read to the congregation. To Gaius himself he gives more details, including encouragement to continue to do all he can for missionary agents who will help retrieve the situation, and a frank statement of his intended actions regarding the ringleader. Having done all this he writes a letter to the 'Lady' to ensure as far as he is able that no further disturbances occur on account of other heretics trying to take advantage of the situation.

The whole plan reveals the author as a man of fine theological perception, high ethical standards, deep feelings and a masterly tactician.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Writers whose work falls within each category will be considered in chronological order, then the strengths and weaknesses of the category as such assessed.
- ² MacMillan, London
- ³ The recent commentary by F.F. Bruce is in near total agreement with the points noted above, i.e. re authorship, date and location of writer and readers. Bruce does, however, suggest that the 'church' of 2 John 13 was the centre from which 3 John was sent. In one place he proposes - tentatively - that 2 and 3 John may have been directed to the same church, but then concludes "It is improbable, however, that the same church is in question". The Epistles of John, Revell, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1970, pages 13 ff. 15, 17, 134, 136, 149 ff and 154 ff.
- ⁴ The view has been restated as recently as 1972 in a 'post-Johannine school' manner by A. Wind in *Novum Testamentum*, Volume 14, pp 26 ff. Wind accepts different stages in the writing of the Fourth Gospel, but regards one writer (and him the Apostle John) as almost entirely responsible for the books. Leon Morris (who is also talking in the first place about the Gospel of John), claims in a recent commentary that modern rejection of the Johannine apostolic authorship is "due more to the prevailing climate of opinion of our day than to any new evidence ... Westcott has not been so much confuted as bypassed". A rather earlier commentary, "The Epistles of James and John" by A. Ross (in the New London Comm. series, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London & Edinburgh, 1954) agrees with Westcott on almost every major issue.
- ⁵ P. xxxii
- ⁶ P. lvi
- ⁷ P. 214
- ⁸ I.C.C., A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles, T & T Clark, Edinburgh
- ⁹ Ibid. p. xviii
- ¹⁰ Ibid pp xviii, lxii and lxvii
- ¹¹ As Harnack had before him. See Brooke p. lxxvii
- ¹² p. lviii
- ¹³ p. xxx. These statements (which obviously fall short of a coordinated theory for the Johannine events) are the closest Brooke comes to linking the persons and church/es of the Epistles. See also Robert Law, *The Tests of Life*, p. 41.
- ¹⁴ Brooke p. lxxviii
- ¹⁵ p. lxxxii
- ¹⁶ p. lxxxii

¹⁷ pp. lxxxiii/iv

¹⁸ Both (i) and (ii) are arguments from silence and do not in any case rule out a connection between the heretics of 2 John and the villain of 3 John. The third point is easily rebutted when the respective characters of the 2 and 3 John strangers are compared. See also Brooke, p.188

¹⁹ Addresses on the Epistles of John, New York and Oakland, 1930/1.

²⁰ p. 227

²¹ p.233

²² p.235

²³ Two authors fit chronologically here and belong in this group, but very little is added by them to the Johannine Epistles' picture. Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, in "the Fourth Gospel" (edited by Francis Noel Davey, Faber & Faber, London, 1947) claimed that the Gospel of John and the Epistles were all by one man who was not the Apostle John (pp.89, 92, 94, 95); both the Fourth Gospel and 1 John were addressed to "one particular group of Christians... in a particular place" (p.55). F.B. Clogg (An Introduction to the New Testament, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 3rd Edition, 1948, pp.277 ff) likewise proposed one writer - the Elder - for all four books.

²⁴ Revised by C.S.C. Williams. Clarendon, Oxford

²⁵ Ibid, p.306

²⁶ p.301

²⁷ pp.307/8

²⁸ Epistles of John in the Tyndale New Testament Commentaries series, London, 1964

²⁹ He particularly takes issue with the arguments of C.H. Dodd on the authorship question. Ibid pp.13-40

³⁰ pp.39,46

³¹ pp.200/201

³² p. 224

³³ p.218

³⁴ pp.46/7

³⁵ p.41. The commentator then draws attention to 1 John 1:4 "that your joy may be full"; 1 John 2:1: "that ye sin not" and 1 John 5:13: "that ye may know that ye have eternal life".

³⁶ Stott of course, does not say that 2 John is to a woman but to a church. The whole question of the possible interpretation of ἘΚΛΕΚΤῆ ΚΥΡΙΑ is considered in Chapter 6.

37 Cf. Mark 9:42 and Luke 17:2

38 A distinction exists between 2 John and 3 John: Diotrephes would be known to the children, but those alluded to in 2 John 10 ff. not.

39 Stott, too, proposes no direct link between 2 and 3 John, but he does say "the two letters must be read together if we are to gain a balanced understanding of the duties and limits of Christian hospitality". p.216.

40 The 'Hebrews to Revelation' volume, Tyndale, London, 1964 (Second Edition)

41 pp.187/188; C.H. Dodd, R. Bultmann and H. Conzelmann had disputed the assertion in various ways. see also pp. 253 ff.

42 pp.212,217

43 p.205

44 p.216

45 see pp.220/221

46 p. 195

47 p.196 cf. Schnackenburg, pp. 301 ff.

48 p. 215

49 p.218

50 p.219

51 A letter now lost - i.e. that of 3 John 9

52 p.216

53 The comment does not necessarily imply that the 3 John "reader circle" is part of the 1 John one.

54 p.221, footnote 1: the views of W. Michaelis are being repeated by Guthrie.

55 As Paul did so often and so effectively - e.g. in Romans Chapters 12 ff ("I appeal to you therefore, brethren - " where his appeal rests on the first eleven 'theological' chapters.

56 See below p. 273 note 17

57 see below pp. 214 ff

58 Introduction to the New Testament E.T. from the 14th Revised Edition, 1965, S.C.M., London, pp.315,6. Much useful material is also incorporated in the various parts of Kümmel's other book, The New Testament : The History of the Investigation of its Problems. The first British edition was published by S.C.M. in 1973.

59 Introduction to the New Testament pp. 312, 316

⁶⁰See above p. 6

⁶¹Ibid p.317. Edwyn Hoskyns supposes that the Fourth Gospel and 1 John were both "written for all Christians". A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, S.P.C.K., London, 1951, p.659

⁶²pp.41-43

⁶³Introduction: p.313

⁶⁴Ibid p.314

⁶⁵And, of course, in 1 John, where the church as a whole is alerted to the kind of dangers faced, though in the letter for public consumption the writer avoids personalities as far as possible.

⁶⁶Introduction to the New Testament p.314. A useful summary of Harnack's view is found in Brooke's commentary, pp.lxxxvii to lxxxix. By "the old provincial missionary organisations" Harnack meant that the church in Asia up to the time of the appearance of the Johannine Epistles was what might be called a "metropolitan-based" i.e. centrally organised, church under the unique leadership of the Elder. The Elder had absolute power over churches and individuals over a wide area as Paul had had perhaps 30 years previously. Harnack saw 2 and 3 John as reflecting the birth-pangs of a new order - the attitude to travelling evangelists and teachers reflects a relatively new situation. Diotrephes belonged to the "new" men, setting himself against the supervisory role of the Elder and persuading the majority of his church members to take the same line. The reconstruction Harnack proposed (his views were published in 1897) met with wide acceptance so far as the central concept is concerned. Nonetheless, two important objections have been raised. In 1912 Brooke wrote: "its weakest part is the attitude which it represents the author as having assumed with regard to the new movement" (p.lxxxix). Brooke readily agreed with Harnack that the old system was breaking down, but he asked "Is he (the Elder) struggling against it? Or does he see in some such change of organisation a way of meeting the danger which the old system could no longer control? Will Caius or Diotrephes be the first monarchical bishop...?" Kummel himself objected (p.314) that "there is not even a clue to a provincial missionary organisation or something similar". Strictly, that is true, but some sort of loose suzerainty by the Elder is implied for all that in the Epistles. cf. Ernst Haenchen "Neuere Literatur zu den Johannesbriefe" in Theologische Rundschau, 26, 1960, pp.1-43, 267-291.

⁶⁷See pages 274/5 and the pages referred to there.

⁶⁸For Käsemann's views see pp. 21 ff.

⁶⁹The essential difference between this view and Adolf von Harnack's is that the former represents a tightening of what might be called diocesan control, and the latter a loosening of it.

⁷⁰Kummel, moreover, implies usurpation of power on Diotrephes' part. p.314

- ⁷¹Studies in Biblical Theology No. 34, S.C.M., 1962 pp.95 ff.
Some of Robinson's views are modified in his recent book
"Redating the New Testament" S.C.M.; London, 1976. Footnotes
in what follows draws attention to important differences.
- ⁷²p. 97
- ⁷³p.98
- ⁷⁴"the dominance of a single mind is so powerful that we have the
impression.....that 'la tradition - c'est moi'" (a quotation
from Menoud) p.105 cf. Redating the New Testament, page 284
- ⁷⁵p.126
- ⁷⁶cf. references to 1 John 1:1-3/3:14 on p. 253.
- ⁷⁷Far from the Fourth Gospel being further removed from the
events surrounding Jesus' life than the synoptics, it is the
latter which represents "a progressive apocalypticization"
of Jesus' eschatology, but the Fourth Gospel is shown from
Qumran "never seriously (to have) undergone this process at
all" p.103. See also pp.98/9
- ⁷⁸p.102
- ⁷⁹p.127
- ⁸⁰pp.129/130. These opinions are repeated in Redating the New
Testament, pp.291 ff.
- ⁸¹p.124: "John was commending Christianity to Greek-speaking
Judaism" (in the Fourth Gospel); p.137. "There is no reason
to suppose that the congregations addressed in the Johannine
Epistles belong to anything but the Hellenistic Jewish community
for which we argued that the Gospel was written- ". cf.pp.132/3.
The congregations were in Asia Minor. See Redating the New
Testament, pp.285 ff and p.291.
- ⁸²p.135 cf.pp. 216 ff
- ⁸³p.134 note 2. This conviction has been all but repudiated
in Redating the New Testament. See p.286 note 154.
- ⁸⁴p.129
- ⁸⁵Robinson's contention seems more readily applicable to the Fourth
Gospel than to the Epistles because of, inter alia, the centrality
of the Old Testament in the fabric of the Gospel.
- ⁸⁶He now "provisionally" dates the Epistles "in the early 60's"
with 2 John shortly before 3 John, and 3 John before 1 John
"but in quick succession". Redating the New Testament, pp.287,
288 and 307.
- ⁸⁷See quotations at top of page 13.
- ⁸⁸See above p.6

- ⁸⁹ He does not, e.g. combine 1 and 2 John or 2 and 3 John in a scheme and omit the other Epistle (even in Redating the New Testament, though he comes closer to doing so there - see p.288)
- ⁹⁰ All of these matters to be taken up in the sequel, of course!
- ⁹¹ 2 John 12; 3 John 10 and 14. See below pp.261 ff
- ⁹² In a much more tentative fashion Donald Guthrie asserts of 2 and 3 John that "it is better to keep them apart" p. 216, see p. 9.
- ⁹³ The Gospel is placed in Syria by Bultmann: "The Semitic style of the author and the relationship of the Gospel to the Gnostic revelation discourses, the letters of Ignatius of Antioch and the Odes of Solomon, strongly supports the supposition that the author of the Fourth Gospel originated from the area of Syria. Above all it must be said that nothing in the Gospel points to its origin in Egypt or Asia Minor". The Gospel of John, E.T. by Beasley-Murray, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1971, p.12. As for the Fourth Gospel date, Bultmann asserted "composition and redactional edition - about 80 - 120 A.D. - the processes could have been relatively distant from each other". See page 96.
- ⁹⁴ The Johannine Epistles (E.T.), Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1973, (German Edition 1967) p.1: "The decisive argument against this identification ... is the Gospel of John and 1 John are directed against different fronts". (Haenchen has rightly pointed out that Bultmann's "decisive argument" need not be in any way determinative. Theologische Rundschau, 26, 1960, pp.1-43, 267-291). Since Bultmann's commentary appeared there have been those who have viewed different stages of the Fourth Gospel itself as reflecting diverse controversies. This is true of Wilkens, Nicol & J. Louis Martyn. see Robert Kysar, The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1975, p.77.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid. P.1
- ⁹⁶ p. 108
- ⁹⁷ p. 2
- ⁹⁸ In his 1927 article Analyse des ersten Johannesbriefe (in Festgabe für Adolf Julicher, JCB. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) Tübingen pp. 138-158) Bultmann gives the impression that the 1 John author (i.e. the man who used sources for 1 John and then added his own material) was entirely responsible for 2 and 3 John (p.138). E. Hirsch thought both 2 and 3 John 'fictions'. See. H. von Campenhausen, Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power, London, 1969, p.121, note 310.
- ⁹⁹ p. 108 - see also the 2 John 1/3 John 1 comparison and comment on P.107
- ¹⁰⁰ p. 2 cf. p.11
- ¹⁰¹ Dodd sees some merit in the suggestion but rejects it on two grounds, viz. its generally 'Johannine' nature and colouring, and the early acceptance of 2 John before 3 John. Comm. p.lxv.

Schnackenburg rejects the idea that 2 John and 3 John are "fictitious letters". Elements favouring his position (he says) are lay-out, style, concise treatment of concrete questions and the naming of individual persons (in 3 John) Comm. p.295; cf.p.305. Neil Alexander claims that 2 John cannot be reckoned a consciously imitative fabrication based on 1 John because of both the incomprehensibility of such an act and the extreme ingenuity demanded. The Epistles of John, SCM, London, 1962, p.139.

¹⁰² See, e.g. Houlden's Commentary, p.140

¹⁰³ Commentary p.1

¹⁰⁴ i.e. a virtually unaddressed work: *ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ.*

¹⁰⁵ And possibly that of A.M. Hunter, whose views, however, are better included in Category 5 pp. 23 ff

¹⁰⁶ Hodder & Stoughton, London

¹⁰⁷ Quotation from the writer's preface, p.viii

¹⁰⁸ The arguments concerned are found on pages x lvii ff in Dodd's book and worked out in more detail in the article "The First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel" in the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, April, 1937. See ch.1 pp. 78 ff
The basic criteria for dividing the authorship of Gospel and First Epistle are those of style and theology.

¹⁰⁹ p. lxiv

¹¹⁰ See p.lxvi and lvii; cf. Schnackenburg p.3 and pp 30 ff (above)

¹¹¹ p.lvii

¹¹² pp.lx, lxvi and lxvii

¹¹³ p.lx, see pp. 10 and 11 (above)

¹¹⁴ p.lix

¹¹⁵ p.161; cf the view and arguments of Brooke, pp. 6 and 7 (above).

¹¹⁶ See pp.lxviii, lxix, and Dodd's book, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, Cambridge, 1953, page 5, footnote 1.

¹¹⁷ Some would call it merely a product of the same school, but most scholars hold to a single author for the three books, if not for the Gospel and the Epistles.

¹¹⁸ See pp. 164 ff and especially p. 186 ff

¹¹⁹ Certainly in 3 John 4, and possibly in 3 John 1 as well (but see the views of Bergmeier, who makes allegedly different conceptions of "truth" the touchstone for a denial that 2 and 3 John (considered together) can be by the same writer as 1 John; pp. 195 ff. Schnackenburg (p.299) says "it is unjustified to shift the contrast between the Presbyter and Diotrephes from the practical-disciplinary to the dogmatic-doctrinal area". The "shift" (which Käsemann attempted) is unjustified but that is not the same as saying that some theologically orientated statements are made in 3 John,

and that these reflect those of 1 John. Schnackenburg himself says as much on p.319: "this letter (i.e. 3 John) - which according to language & theological ideas belongs closely together with 1 and 2 John".

¹²⁰ S.C.M., London

¹²¹ See pp.26, 27, 139, 140 and 143

¹²² cf. Dodd (Comm.) p.1vii

¹²³ p.141

¹²⁴ See, for instance, Robert Law, *The Tests of Life*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1909, pp.41, 42 and R. Schnackenburg, p.1.

¹²⁵ See pp. 2 ff and Chapter 3

¹²⁶ p.166

¹²⁷ A judgment which is not vitiated even by the acceptance of Bultmann's estimate of 2 John.

¹²⁸ The table on p.1xxiv of Brooke's commentary may be usefully consulted.

¹²⁹ But see R. Bergmeier, *Zum Verfasserproblem des II and III Johannesbriefes*, *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*, Vol. 57, 1966, pp.93 - 100. Also pp. 95 ff

¹³⁰ See pp. 88 ff

¹³¹ The point is debated in Chapter 6.

¹³² The same 'Elder' could have written on widely separated occasions but most writers (including Alexander) think otherwise.

¹³³ See note 140 (below)

¹³⁴ T & T Clark, Edinburgh

¹³⁵ Ibid, p.584

¹³⁶ "3. John ... addressed to Gaius ... a member of the same community or house-church as that to which 2 John had been written". Ibid p.477

¹³⁷ *The Epistles of John*, John Murray, London

¹³⁸ See pp. 15, 16, 27, 40, 43, 221, 222, 231

¹³⁹ pp.222, 224

¹⁴⁰ p.233. The little commentary of J.P. Love (I, II, II John, Jude, Revelation - *Layman's Bible Commentaries*, S.C.M., London, 1960) suggests that 2 John is possibly the object of the allusion in 3 John 9. See p.29 and also pp.12 and 27 for further references to the situation of the Epistles.

¹⁴¹ *The Johannine Epistles*, Epworth, London, 1961

¹⁴² Ibid pp.1 - 3

¹⁴³ p.127

¹⁴⁴ For this and what follows, see Lewis pp.133,4

¹⁴⁵ On p.127, when discussing 2 John, the writer four times states simply that one local church is involved.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid p.3

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter 6 pp. 272 ff

¹⁴⁸ Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Vol.48, 1951, pp.292-311

¹⁴⁹ The actual author is unknown to Käsemann, but it could not have been the Apostle John. Ibid p.298, and cf. E. Käsemann's book, The Testament of Jesus, S.C.M., London (ET.1968), p.1: "Historical criticism has demolished the traditional opinion that the Fourth Gospel was written by John, the son of Zebedee".

¹⁵⁰ To a much lesser extent than his predecessor, Rudolf Bultmann: see The Testament of Jesus, p.32 and p.14: "since ch.21 does testify to a redactional revision of this Gospel, the possible presence of interpolations within the rest of John cannot simply be excluded".

¹⁵¹ In 1951; in 1966 he inclined more in the direction of accepting a "school" theory. Testament of Jesus, p.60

¹⁵² Ketzler and Zeuge p. 306, note 2

¹⁵³ This is implied in the ecclesiastical situation envisaged, as well as by the statement on p.310 that the Presbyter was "a simple elder of the third Christian generation". Twice in The Testament of Jesus (pp.29/30 and p.36) the expression "at the end of the first century" is used of 'John' or the Fourth Gospel, though further on in the book the reader is informed that a little later the Fourth Gospel "could no longer be located in time and space".

¹⁵⁴ p.293, see also The Testament of Jesus, p.36

¹⁵⁵ Reiterated rather than retracted in 1966 even after almost universal condemnation. Testament of Jesus, p.xi.

¹⁵⁶ cf. J.L. Houlden, A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles, Black's New Testament Commentaries, 1973, p.7

¹⁵⁷ p.392

¹⁵⁸ p.298

¹⁵⁹ p.297

¹⁶⁰ "undoubtedly a Christian Gnostic" - even, by standards of "normal theology, a heretic". p.310. According to G.W.H. Lampe, the Presbyter's emissaries were quite possibly false teachers. Art. "Church discipline and the Epistles to the Corinthians" in Christian History and Interpretation: Studies presented to John Knox, C.U.P., 1967, p.361.

¹⁶¹ p.310

¹⁶² For details see p.302

¹⁶³ Perhaps edited by the church - p.302

¹⁶⁴ In fact, by the Elder's time, both he and his "orthodox" opponents were involved in "digression from the oldest church". p.310

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Houlden, p.10: "like 2 John, 1 John as it stands hardly presents its author as an opponent of traditional doctrines".

¹⁶⁶ "there is no suggestion that the Presbyter was excommunicated. How could he otherwise hope to reproach Diotrephes in the gathered assembly?" Ernst Haenchen, *Theologische Rundschau*, 26, 1960, pp.1-43, 267-291.

¹⁶⁷ 3 John 10: it is not certain that formal excommunication is meant by $\epsilon\kappa\beta\lambda\alpha\mu\epsilon\iota$ anyway. Bultmann is adamant that it does have that meaning (Commentary p.101), but Dodd allows that a 'conative' sense - "he is for excommunicating them" - or a literal physical sense is also possible.

¹⁶⁸ p.301

¹⁶⁹ Barrett says - quite rightly - that "the Elder, it seems, intends to reply in the same vein". Article, 'Conversion & Conformity' in 'Christ and Spirit in the New Testament', C.U.P., 1973, p.376. See also F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John*, Revell, 1970, pp.17,153.

¹⁷⁰ A position which is not explicitly stated by Käsemann, but which is implicit in his theory (e.g. on p.301). Houlden explains the discrepancy not on the basis of a different time of writing for 2 and 3 John, but different destinations. *A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1973, p.9.

¹⁷¹ The author of the Fourth Gospel is described by Jülicher as "perhaps the greatest thinker of the Christianity of the time" (i.e. c.100). See W. Kümmel, *The New Testament - The History of the Investigation of its Problems*, S.C.M. (First British Edition 1973), p.177.

¹⁷² See pp. 96 ff

¹⁷³ The observation is less true of Käsemann, whose whole point of reference is 3 John.

¹⁷⁴ See ch.6

¹⁷⁵ p.222,224

¹⁷⁶ p.127

¹⁷⁷ Once again, the remark is not so apt for Käsemann (see note 173 above)

¹⁷⁸ Houlden, *Commentary*, p.2

¹⁷⁹ conceived of as, say, provincial dimensions

¹⁸⁰ p.lxvi. Why then, is Dodd's scheme not dealt with at this point? There are two primary reasons: (i) C.H. Dodd separates 3 John from 1 and 2 John chronologically and (ii) he emphasizes the 1 John/2 John link more than any other.

¹⁸¹ Herder, Freiburg, Basel, Wien, 1970 (4th Edition)

¹⁸² Cf Kysar's judgment re Fourth Gospel studies: "one clue is crystal clear, namely, that contemporary research favours a Palestinian, Old Testament, Jewish setting for the thought of the Gospel". The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel, p.144. Less orthodox forms of Jewish thought are also elements in the author's background, of course.

¹⁸³ The next sentence shows that the Johannine corpus and not merely the Fourth Gospel is under discussion.

¹⁸⁴ So also Cullmann, Barrett & Kysar. see pp. 101 ff

¹⁸⁵ There may not have been "a strong Jewish component" in the origin of the postulated Geistessrömung, and nor may the Jewish element have been widespread at first, but there obviously was a considerable Jewish influence in particular Gnostic movements on the fringes of Christianity in the first century and 2nd century. R.M. Grant (Gnosticism and Early Christianity, Columbia, University Press, New York & London, 2nd Edition, 1966) seeks to demonstrate that "Gnosticism originated in a crisis in Jewish apocalyptic thought in the first two centuries of our era" (p.2.). As long as Grant uses the term "Gnosticism" basically of the 2nd century systems (plus "Simon Magus" and others somewhat before that time), the case is easily sustained. Thus, for instance, Hegesippus regarded Gnosticism as having its roots in an amalgam of Jewish Christianity and Jewish sectarian teaching. (Grant, pp.13, 14). Irenaeus claimed that the oldest Gnostic systems were those of Simon Magus, Menander, and Saturninus (Adv. Haer, 1-23,24). According to Grant the Gnostic system of the Book Baruch is "an example of gnosis almost purely Jewish" (p.19). In short, as one reviewer of Grant's book has written, "he has succeeded in establishing a real link between Jewish apocalyptic and Gnosticism" (J.T.S. review quoted on the dust-jacket of Gnosticism and Early Christianity).

Naturally, other sources must not be overlooked nor depreciated (cf. Grant, p.2). In a seminar on Gnosticism in Cambridge in 1973, R. McL. Wilson contended that there was a Jewish element in all Gnosticism. At the same seminar James Robinson claimed that it is impossible to distinguish Jewish and non-Jewish origins. That was surely going much too far, but it is significant that present studies of Gnosticism generally deal with lower criticism more than higher criticism, leaving ultimate questions aside because of their complexity and present unanswerability.

¹⁸⁶ p.26

¹⁸⁷ See the whole paragraph in Schnackenburg, pp.26,27

¹⁸⁸ pp.29,30

¹⁸⁹ p.30. Neither *σπέρμα* nor *γεννάω* occurs in either 2 John or 3 John; the former is found in 1 John 3:9, and the latter ten times in that book.

¹⁹⁰ p.31

- ¹⁹¹ Some qualification is required re (a) and (d) for neither 2 John nor 3 John mentions atonement or the idea of being born of God (see the remainder of Schnackenburg's sections in which these subjects appear, however: in general the judgment in the text (above) is accurate). The omission is scarcely on the grounds that the writer of the shorter Epistles was a different person from the author of 1 John and one who disapproved of these themes, since (in particular) the defended Christology is indistinguishable. The "omissions" are doubtless motivated by a desire for brevity, not disagreement.
- ¹⁹² See chapter 1 pp.78 ff
- ¹⁹³ Schnackenburg pp. 34 and 35
- ¹⁹⁴ In his Fourth Gospel Commentary, Schnackenburg distinguishes between a Fourth Gospel signs source and the Evangelist's own theological statement. The Gospel according to St. John, Herder & Herder, New York, 1968, Vol. 1, pp.64-67. cf. Kysar, The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel, especially pp.33 ff.
- ¹⁹⁵ One author of both the Fourth Gospel and 1 John is apparently taken for granted by Schnackenburg on p.231 of his commentary: verses are quoted from both books, and then a reference is made to "this early Christian theologian".
- ¹⁹⁶ See Schnackenburg p.42 and pp. 93 ff re 2 and 3 John's having the same author as the Gospel and 1 John. See Chapter 2 regarding dating.
- ¹⁹⁷ Schnackenburg p.296
- ¹⁹⁸ p.298
- ¹⁹⁹ p. 297
- ²⁰⁰ p.298. on pages 320 and 331, 2 and 3 John are definitely assigned to the same writer. Remarks on p.330 strongly support an identity of authorship in respect of 1 John and 3 John.
- ²⁰¹ Perhaps a little longer. See Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, Pauline Epistles, pp. 278,9. The maximum period possible was roughly 18 years.
- ²⁰² A.D.80 would still allow about 15 years from the probable time of Paul's death. Further discussion on dating and the Johannine writings occurs in ch.2 .
- ²⁰³ p.39
- ²⁰⁴ p.42; the Gospel is, of course, being considered in its final form.
- ²⁰⁵ Yet pp.51, 256, 263 and 274 all contain statements which suggest that the commentator has come close to accepting that all or part (e.g. the Prologue) of the Fourth Gospel predates 1 John.
- ²⁰⁶ p. 301: the point is first made on p.3 of Die Johannesbriefe.
- ²⁰⁷ p.2

- ²⁰⁸ See chapter 3
- ²⁰⁹ See pp. 30 ff
- ²¹⁰ Schnackenburg has little enthusiasm for the editorial additions proposed by Rudolf Bultmann (see Schnackenburg pp.11-15), whose efforts (especially in their final form) "awaken little confidence". Nor does he endorse the two-source theory of Windisch or the two-strands - but-one-author idea of Nauck (p.13; see below p.154) Schnackenburg concludes: "after all one will hold on to the unity of the writing".
- ²¹¹ 2 John: Prescript VV1-3, section 1 VV4-6, section 2 VV7-9, section 3VV10 and 11 and conclusion VV12 and 13.
- 3 John: Prescript VI, section 1 VV2-8, section 2 VV9 and 10, Section 3 verses 11 & 12 and conclusion VV13-15. See pp.305-331, the article of Robert W. Funk, "The Form and Structure of I and III John" (J.B.L. 86, 1967, pp.424-430) and pp. 164 ff.
- ²¹² pp.295/6. Papyrus discoveries make the "artificial letter" idea of Bultmann untenable today, says Schnackenburg.
- ²¹³ pp.16 ff; cf. ch.4
- ²¹⁴ References - 1:5 to 2:11; 3:4-24; 4:20 to 5:3
- ²¹⁵ Schnackenburg says that the heretics are not libertines but advocates of "moral indifferentism". For Schnackenburg this falls some way short of the "All things are permitted to me" of 1 Cor. 6:12.
- ²¹⁶ Thus, as shall appear in the sequel, the hypothesis represents not so much a denial of Schnackenburg's general position regarding inter-Epistle relationships, but a refinement and development of it. The current hypothesis was developed before Schnackenburg's work became available to the present writer.
- ²¹⁷ See pp. 191 ff
- ²¹⁸ Schnackenburg writes: "After everything we must assert that the repulsed heresy in 1 and 2 John does not allow itself to be equated with any of the heretical forms.... of that time known to us, but indeed show forth... more than one related characteristic. Common to all those heretics is the depreciation of the historical person of Jesus.." (p.22).
- ²¹⁹ The subject is taken up again (more generally - not just from Schnackenburg's standpoint) on p. 255 ff
- ²²⁰ p.3
- ²²¹ p.39 ff
- ²²² Extra-Johannine New Testament evidence is forthcoming from Colossians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy 4:1 ff, 6:20, and 2 Timothy 2:16,34, 4:4 (see p.39)
- ²²³ Floyd V. Filson observes that the main reason for placing the Fourth Gospel in Palestine or Syria by C.F. Burney and C.C. Torrey is the belief that Aramaic was the original language of the Gospel. A New Testament History, S.C.M., London, 1965 (first British Edition) p.311

- 224 p.40
- 225 No contemporary person is named in 1 or 2 John, of course.
- 226 pp.319, 320. see pp. 273 ff for a discussion of the position of Gaius in his church.
- 227 p.329
- 228 p.327 see pp. 274 ff
- 229 p.330
- 230 p.331
- 231 In the light of his functions; see pp. 272 ff
- 232 pp. 273 ff
- 233 p.301; the point is first made on p.3 of Die Johannesbriefe.
- 234 Commentary, P.lxvi and p. 16 (above)
- 235 See p. 23
- 236 A New Testament History, S.C.M., London, (first British Edition 1965) p.312
- 237 "Universality" is denied 1 John from another angle; 1 John is not a "covering letter" for the Fourth Gospel - if it were "it must disclose this more clearly. It presents itself as an independent document". Schnackenburg, p.3 (of course J.A.T. Robinson and others would deny that the Fourth Gospel is itself universally intended).
- 238 Schnackenburg, p.3
- 239 Ibid pp.3, 301, 304
- 240 or "that"
- 241 Cf. p.3
- 242 On p.39 he says: "1 John was directed to a number of congregations in a defined area", and he seems to regard 2 and 3 John as belonging to the same area of receiving churches.
- 243 Wolfgang Nauck also calls 1 John "an official open letter to a circle of readers". Die Tradition und der Charakter des ersten Johannesbriefes J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) Tübingen, 1957, p.126
- 244 i.e. several to a number of churches: Schnackenburg (as has been noted above on p. 30) regards a circular with an unrestricted target area as requiring an address.
- 245 Though it has a conclusion.
- 246 The material which follows is a synopsis of pages 25-29 in Donald Guthrie's New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation, Tyndale, 2nd Edition, 1964.

²⁴⁷ Cf. 2 John 5,6

²⁴⁸ See pp. 215 ff

²⁴⁹ The Tests of Life, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1909, p.41

²⁵⁰ 2:13,14 see p. 4 note 16

²⁵¹ Ephesians may appear to be an exception since $\epsilon\nu \epsilon\phi\epsilon\sigma\omega$ was missing in $p^{46}, \mathcal{N}, \mathcal{B}, 424c, 1739$, Marcion, Tertullian Origen, Ephraem and Basil (see U.B.S. margin). It has been conjectured that Tychicus was instructed to fill in the names of churches as he visited them (see D. Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, Pauline Epistles, Tyndale, 1964, pp.128/130). This is unproveable. What is demonstrable is that (i) the majority of ancient texts have an address (ii) that address is Ephesus in every text where there is a name at all, (iii) there is no parallel with 1 John anyway, for 1 John certainly has no provision for the insertion of any address within the body of the book.

²⁵² i.e. universal so far as the church was concerned; not geographically restricted

²⁵³ See 2 Cor. 1:2 "the whole of Achaia".

²⁵⁴ See Col. 4:15 ff

²⁵⁵ If ch.16 be original - see 16:5; cf 16:10,15

²⁵⁶ See 1 Cor. 1:11 ff

²⁵⁷ Hebrews 5:12-14

²⁵⁸ Hebrews 13:7

²⁵⁹ Cf. 3 John 9!

²⁶⁰ Co-ordinating the 1 John and 3 John situation as proposed in the hypothesis.

²⁶¹ i.e. the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3

²⁶² A possibility readily admitted by Lewis, N. Alexander, Schnackenburg and Hunter.

²⁶³ See ch.6

²⁶⁴ Wolfgang Nauck, Die Tradition und der Charakter des ersten Johannesbriefes, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1957, pp.125 and 133

²⁶⁵ see chapter 1 pp. 109 ff

²⁶⁶ 2 John 4 ff; 7ff; 9ff; 3 John 3 - 14

²⁶⁷ See chapter 5 pp. 261 ff

²⁶⁸ The Emphasized New Testament

²⁶⁹ E.W. Bullinger, A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek Testament, Bagster, 9th Edition, 1969, P.443

²⁷⁰ see John Stott's commentary (Tyndale Series) P.225

²⁷¹ cf. 3:23

²⁷² If the present may be allowed the element of continuity here.

²⁷³ e.g. love and obedience in 5:2; believing and disbelieving christological truth in 5:10.

²⁷⁴ 2 John 1, 5, 6.

²⁷⁵ Cf. 1 John 2:18,19, 4:1 ff

²⁷⁶ Here regarded as 1 John, of course.

²⁷⁷ The point scarcely needs arguing with respect to either 2 John or 3 John, though Clement of Alexandria said "significat autem electionem ecclesiae sanctae" (see Brooke, P.169), and Bultmann suggested something similar of 2 John (Commentary p.108).

²⁷⁸ The point is closely related to the previous one.

²⁷⁹ The point is certain in John 5:2, and at least arguable in all of the following - Rom.3:3, 1 Cor. 5:11, 2 Cor. 11:20(ter), Gal. 1:9, Gal. 6:3, Phil. 3:4, Col 3:13, 2 Thess. 3:10, 2 Thess. 3:14, 1 Tim. 3:5, 1 Tim.5:8, and 1 Tim. 6:3. Other passages again (eg. Mt. 21:3 and other Gospel passages) may be quite specific so far as the speaker is concerned, though the opinion of scholars will here depend on the view taken of the Person of Christ and the extent of His knowledge while in the flesh.

²⁸⁰ Cf. the rhetorical questions of Romans 3:1 ff and 11:1 ff, where the Apostle Paul answers questions which had certainly often been put to him by critics. Paul introduces these as part of a closely reasoned theological discourse, but the Johannine writer gives the impression of dealing with individual questions by an individual piecemeal.

²⁸¹ Ἀγαπητέ, μὴ μιμοῦ τὸ κακὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀγαθόν. ὁ ἀγαθοποιῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν· ὁ κακοποιῶν οὐχ ἑώρακεν τὸν θεόν.

²⁸² Cf. the implied distinctions in 3 John 2,3, and 4.

²⁸³ Commentary, p.216.

²⁸⁴ In a somewhat similar way 2 John and 3 John appear to represent the 'inside' of a situation and 1 John the 'outside' of a local situation. The larger letter illustrates the necessary steps to be taken at the church level before the public gaze, and 3 John and 2 John the private advice and consultations of the careful Pastor to and with the loyal Christian family.

²⁸⁵ See Ch.1, pp. 88 ff (below)

²⁸⁶ See Ch.2. (below)

²⁸⁷ pp. 31 to 41

²⁸⁸ See p. 30 for both

²⁸⁹ See Chapter 6, pp. 278 ff (below)

²⁹⁰ Wolfgang Nauck is undecided about the destination of 1 John: "- this community - or communities - to which 1 John is directed". Die Tradition und der Charakter des ersten Johannesbriefes, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) Tübingen, 1957, p.125. John Painter simply says "the congregation (singular) to which this letter was addressed". John: Witness and Theologian, S.P.C.K., London, 1975, p.115. Earlier - in 1950 - Elwyn E. Tilden Jnr. wrote of 1 John: "If... it was originally a circular letter, the writer has remarkably concealed the fact." Article, 'The First Epistle of John', Interpretation, 4, 1950, p.195.

²⁹¹ Third Revised Edition, S.C.M., 1972

²⁹² p.179

²⁹³ p.182

²⁹⁴ which was in "the last decades of the first century" (p.179): they were later than the Fourth Gospel. The date of the Gospel "may have been ...80 or even earlier" but the tradition there preserved "goes back to Palestine before the outbreak of the war with Rome in AD.66" (p.63).

²⁹⁵ p.178

²⁹⁶ p.183

²⁹⁷ "Did this kind of bishop exist as early as the last decades of the first century? Is it not as likely that Diotrephes was a presbyter...?" (p.183).

²⁹⁸ pp.64, 178, 179

²⁹⁹ p.180

³⁰⁰ p.179

³⁰¹ See below, chapter 4, pp. 216 ff, and Chapter 3, pp. 148 ff

³⁰² The Johannine 'school' concept is not necessarily the same as the Johannine 'community' concept. See below, pp. 96 ff

³⁰³ The difference between Schnäckenburg and Barrett in the matter is that the former holds to one author at least for all the Epistles, while Barrett suggests a multiplicity of authors for the corpus. The 'school' idea is expressed succinctly by Norman Perrin, The New Testament, An Introduction, pp.249, 250.

³⁰⁴ The Gospel According to St. John, S.P.C.K., London

³⁰⁵ pp.113,114

³⁰⁶ See especially W.F. Howard, *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*, Epworth, London, 1945, pp.109 ff and pp.252 ff; the article 'The Common Authorship of the Johannine Gospel and Epistles' by the same writer in *J.T.S.* 48, 1947, pp.12-25 and the article by W.G. Wilson in *J.T.S.* xlix, 1948, pp.147-156. See also Chapter 1 (below).

³⁰⁷ So Eusebius' H.E., Book 3, chapter 23 and elsewhere.

³⁰⁸ Passages in which Irenaeus ascribes 'Johannine' New Testament books to the Apostle include Adv. Haer I:8,5, I:16,3, III:1,1, and III:16,8. (The Ante-Nicene Fathers, The Christian Literature Publishing Company, Buffalo, 1885, Vol. 1. On pages 83 ff in his commentary Barrett gives corresponding passages in Eusebius' H.E.). It is very difficult to accept the claim that Irenaeus was confused over the identity of John, i.e. that he wrongly regarded the 'Elder John' as the Apostle. Since Polycarp died about the year 167 at the age of 86+, he was born perhaps c.81. According to Irenaeus "John" remained at Ephesus "until the times of Trajan" (Adv. Haer, III:3,4). This means that the lives of 'John' and Polycarp overlapped by nearly 20 years. Irenaeus himself was apparently born about 120, and so his life overlapped that of Polycarp by over 45 years. Considering these facts together with

- (1) the obvious frequency of inter-church visits in the second century
- (2) the proximity of Smyrna and Ephesus
- (3) Irenaeus' obviously superior intellect compared with that of Papias (a man "very weak of intellect"; this is evident from his discourses" - Eusebius HE.3,39.

The earlier passage where Papias is described as "a man well skilled in all manner of learning, and well acquainted with the scriptures" - HE.3,36 - is present in some M.S.S. only), and

- (4) the intense desire to learn everything possible about one's notable predecessors in the Faith (so very evident in the fragments preserved from the writings of Papias),

the suspicion of confusion must surely be directed towards Papias and not Irenaeus.

Over the last 15 years or so a new degree of confidence has been placed in Irenaeus' general accuracy in reporting his opponents' views. R. McL. Wilson says of the Nag Hammadi texts: "some of them indeed fit neatly into the accounts of the Gnostic systems provided by Irenaeus." (*Gnosis and the New Testament*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1968, p.29). In another passage, Wilson says "the texts so far published serve to confirm the conclusions reached through the researches of Foerster and Sagnard as to the essential reliability of Irenaeus - " (*Ibid*, p.86). A still stronger statement occurs on page 16: "The general reliability of Irenaeus, our earliest major witness, has been abundantly vindicated by the researches of Foerster and Sagnard - " R.M. Grant also supports the general accuracy of Irenaeus in at least one crucial issue - see *Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, Columbia University Press, 1966, p.89. In an earlier book the same writer introduces a section on Marcosian worship with the statement that Irenaeus "is describing, apparently from eye-witness accounts, what went on in the meetings of the Marcosians - ". (*Gnosticism: An Anthology*, Collins, 1961, p.191). W.F. Albright had an article

published in 1964 in which he said (when discussing the Nag Hammadi discoveries): "It is already certain that the accounts of ... Hippolytus and Irenaeus, are much more accurate than they have been supposed to be by many recent writers." (Article entitled 'Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John', in the book 'The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, C.U.P., 1964, p.162). See also Dale Moody, The Letters of John, Waco, Texas, Word, 1970, p.14. Any man with the ability to portray clearly systems such as those of the Simonians and the Marcosians should have been well able to verify such simple statements as those in which he mentions the Apostle John and the Fourth Gospel and Epistles. (He had years in which to do so.)

- ³⁰⁹ Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord, found in Eusebius' H.E.3,39. The quotation is also printed in Barrett's Commentary, p.89.
- ³¹⁰ The Gospel According to John (in 2 volumes), Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1966.
- ³¹¹ For what follows, see pp. XCVIII ff.
- ³¹² pp. XXXV, CVII and CVIII. For more details regarding the Epistles see Brown's article 'Epistles of St. John', in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1967, Vol.7, pages 1078 - 1080.
- ³¹³ Cf. W.F. Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, Epworth, London, 1945, pp.109 ff, especially p.121.
- ³¹⁴ See Brown, p. XXXIV: " We posit five stages in the composition of the Gospel. These, we believe, are the minimal steps, for we suspect that the full details of the Gospel's prehistory are far too complicated to reconstruct."
- ³¹⁵ See below, Chapter 1, pp. 78 ff
- ³¹⁶ i.e. they come from 3:31-36, 6:51-55, 11, 12, and 15-17. See Brown, pp. XXXVI ff.
- ³¹⁷ 21:24 and perhaps little else.
- ³¹⁸ See below, Chapter 1 . The whole question of the validity of 'school' theories is raised again in Chapter 1.
- ³¹⁹ p. LXXXVI
- ³²⁰ p. CIII
- ³²¹ For further details, see Chapter 1, (below).
- ³²² Does he endorse Sanders on the issues?
- ³²³ The Epistles of John volume of the Expositor's Bible, Hodder & Stoughton, London, pp.5 ff, 11, 291 ff, 301.
- ³²⁴ Ibid, pp.288,289. Guthrie suggests that the peculiarities of 1 John make it easy to memorise. New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation, p.198.
- ³²⁵ pp.283-5
- ³²⁶ On p.304 the comment is made that "Diotrephes in all probability was a bishop".

- 327 p.301
- 328 In 1905 Bartlet made the same identification. See Brooke, p.lxxxvi.
- 329 1904; pp.357 ff and 517 ff
- 330 A commentary on the Gospel According to St. John, A.& C.Black, London.
- 331 p.45
- 332 On pp.50,51
- 333 pp.46,7. Earlier (in 1943) Sanders asserted that Charles' analysis of the Fourth Gospel and Apocalypse "appears to furnish decisive evidence against their being works of the same author or even of the same school". The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church, Cambridge, p.5.
- 334 p.47. On page 11 of 'The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church', Sanders had concluded that the Gospel and Epistles were by different authors (cf. Ibid, p.86): indeed this was for him almost the sine qua non for placing the Gospel's point of origin outside Asia Minor.
- 335 p.47
- 336 As he admits; p.49.
- 337 See, e.g., p.30
- 338 p.312
- 339 See also the article 'The Message of the Epistles, The Letters of the Presbyter' (Expository Times, Vol.45, 1933,34, pp.486-490), by J.G. Simpson, who comes closer still. Three interesting claims are:
- (1) that the Johannine Epistles are "a series of letters addressed to a community, to a family group, and to an individual",
 - (2) that all three letters are to one church (though Gaius and the 'Lady' are placed in different families within it),
 - (3) that the 3 John 9 writing is 1 John. Robert Grant suggests that 2 and 3 John were perhaps "addressed to members of one church at one time". 2 John is therefore (for him) the letter of 3 John 9. A Historical Introduction to the New Testament, Fontana Edition, 1971, pp.233,234.
- 340 Hodder & Stoughton, London
- 341 pp.3 and 4
- 342 pp.8-10. Findlay argued that the church was that of Pergamum (See pp.30,31 and 37).
- 343 p.7: the conclusions to the two letters are particularly in view here.
- 344 pp.7, 9, 10
- 345 p.10
- 346 p.59
- 347 p.70

348 pp.5, 6, and 23-32

349 p.3

350 A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles, A. & C. Black, London, 1973.

351 He also writes concerning the Epistles: "their writer or writers - the Johannine guardians -".

352 p.38 and pp.11 ff. The Gospel is reckoned more speculative, more theologically daring than 1 John in respect of Christology and eschatology, though the former does retain the primitive Christian teaching on the Last Day, the resurrection of believers, and enigmatic references to Jesus' true humanity. 1 John, then, represents a retrenchment on the part of its author; by contrast the heretics had adopted the adventurous spirit of the Fourth Gospel and gone further - too far for the Elder and his associates. The supposed character of the 1 John author is further indicated by the description on p.3: " - tenacious and inflexible insistence on a small number of points which he hammers again and again."

353 p. 18

354 p.11; cf.p.4

355 p.8; cf.p.14

356 p.8

357 p.8

358 p.7

359 pp.7 and 8. See below, p. 275, note 33.

Unquestionably Houlden is more perceptive than N. Alexander or Lewis in the matter.

360 p.11 also expresses doubts about timing: "whether at roughly the same time or over a period". The Epistles as a whole are dated after the Gospel of John (p.18); they are testimony to a Johannine "rearguard action" (p.19).

361 p.140

362 It can just as easily be maintained that the visit did come about and that both 2 John and 1 John (as well as the Third Epistle) were aimed at preparing for it - the shorter Epistles for one loyal family and 1 John for the local church as a whole.

363 p.38

364 Even those of Schnackenburg, Dodd & Hunter - see above pp. 23, and 30 ff.

365 i.e. the present hypothesis

366 It may of course be argued that 2 and 3 John were preserved because God wanted them preserved. Very well, but He usually uses means.

367 Especially that of 3 John 9, but also other hypothetical companion letters of various kinds. See above, p. 30.

368 See above, p. 10 (W.G. Kümmel's view)

³⁶⁹ΤΕΚΝΑ occurs five times in 1 John, but not as a vocative.

³⁷⁰ Cf. 3 John 9

³⁷¹ See below, Chapter 6, pp. 278 ff

³⁷² J.A.T. Robinson says that the Epistles' writer "had evidently been their evangelist and pastor from the earliest days". See above p. 12.

³⁷³ In 2 John 8, 10, and 12

³⁷⁴ In 2 John 6, 8, and 10

³⁷⁵ VV 1 - 6, 11, 12, 14, 15

³⁷⁶ In common of course with other views that take a stand on the individuality of the 'Lady', and which regard the ΤΕΚΝΑ as real children and not just as spiritual progeny.

³⁷⁷ See Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, Gospels & Acts, p.85: "Luke, as a Gentile, would know much of the degradation of women and would be concerned to emphasize all he had heard of the attitude of the Lord towards them."

³⁷⁸ 2 and 3 John almost certainly anticipate 1 Clement and provide a norm for it and other later writings on the subject. See below, p.260 and notes there.

³⁷⁹ Cf. 1 John 2; 18, 19

³⁸⁰ i.e. public so far as the church body was concerned, and public also so far as Christian principles but not perhaps personal details were concerned.

³⁸¹ 1 John

CHAPTER ONE

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE JOHANNINE GOSPEL AND EPISTLES

It was stated in the Introduction that six points had to be demonstrated before the validity of the hypothesis could be accepted. The first requirement was 'That one author wrote the three Johannine Epistles'. The present chapter deals with this question. Strictly, only the Epistles are relevant to the discussion, yet it is necessary to relate them not only to each other, but to the Fourth Gospel in terms of authorship on account of some succeeding chapters. If it be demonstrable that the Gospel and Epistles were written by one person, then consideration of this information is an essential pre-requisite in assessing the date of the Epistles. One reason is that common authorship would reduce the writing of the four books to a maximum period of probably 2 or 3 (perhaps even 4) decades, i.e. the likely duration of literary activity for one man. A second (and connected) reason is that there is much more material in the Fourth Gospel than in the Epistles, and so a likelihood of a more precise date based on the internal evidence. Thirdly, there are more extant references in early church writings to the Gospel than the Epistles. Thus the Gospel may prove to be of great importance in establishing the probable period of writing for the Epistles.

The question of common authorship, therefore, leads on to the question of dating, though, of course, common authorship may not by any means finally determine the date within narrow limits. The conclusion reached regarding the date of the Epistles, moreover, interacts with that of the error attacked and resisted in them.

In addition to the study of the relation between the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles' authorship in regard to date and heresy, the structure of the Gospel² may prove important in assessing the classification of 1 John into some literary genre or other.

For all these reasons, the Fourth Gospel demands inclusion here in Chapter 1.

It must be emphasized however, that the actual authorship is not the prime question, but the matter of common or different authorship (as the case may be) is. It is possible to assess authorship in terms of either internal

or external evidence. Of the two, the internal evidence is the more satisfactory criterion, and it will receive more attention.

In recent years it has been less usual to debate whether one man wrote the Gospel and another (or others) the various Epistles. The debate has moved rather to a third option, viz. that a 'school' of closely associated authors or writers stood behind the Johannine books³ (sometimes but not always including Revelation) .

Accordingly, a survey of the (mainly) internal evidences for and against common authorship is followed in this chapter by a discussion of the theory that the Johannine books are the product of some combination of scholars in a 'Johannine School'.

The five canonical books which share the superscription "John" differ greatly in the statements they contain apropos their authorship. The Fourth Gospel is very enigmatic.⁴ The Apocalypse in 1:1 and 1:4 refers to "John" and a few verses further on says "I John, your brother -"⁵ without saying explicitly which John. The First Epistle does not name or indicate its author except by its introductory section, which reads most naturally as a claim to personal involvement in the events of the earthly ministry of Christ.⁶ Only 2 and 3 John share any kind of common formulation. As one would expect from writings which unequivocally follow a letter pattern^{7,8} a designation - *ὁ πρεσβύτερος* - appears in the first verse of each.

The identity of this *πρεσβύτερος* has, of course, been discussed frequently.⁹ In his commentary¹⁰ Rudolf Schnackenburg summarises the position as follows:

- (a) There was never a name in the text which accompanied the title *πρεσβύτερος*,¹¹ and nor is this terminology a kind of pseudepigraphy.
- (b) A case of the "same pregnant formulation without mentioning a name" is found in a Papias fragment preserved by Eusebius.¹²
- (c) Opinion is divided as to whether "this 'old man'" (of Eusebius, not 2 and 3 John!) is the Apostle John

or another. Distinguished investigators take up positions on either side; but "The more recent investigation inclines ever more to the second assumption".

- (d) The evidence for the existence of a "Presbyter John" apart from the Apostle John rests entirely on the Papias fragment, all other references being based on this. Nevertheless (says Schnackenburg), the Papias evidence may carry the day in favour of the existence of the Presbyter.¹³
- (e) There is nothing to prove any identity of the *πρεσβύτερος* of 2 John and 3 John and the "Presbyter John" of Papias, though a similar function of presbyters as "bearers of the apostolic tradition, above all disciples of the apostles" is quite possible.

Bultmann shows his agreement with Schnackenburg's summary by saying "who this 'elder' is, is completely uncertain". Both of these writers observe that the comparative force of *πρεσβύτερος* need not be retained,^{14,15} and so it is possible to translate the Greek as "der Alte", "the old man".

Little comment is necessary on Schnackenburg's summary except to note that (as he says in (d)), the Papias fragment stands alone in supporting the independent existence of an 'Elder John' distinct from the Apostle. Furthermore, this support stems from one possible interpretation of the evidence. It may well be that the time is ripe for a re-appraisal here in the light of renewed confidence in the essential reliability of Irenaeus as a heresiologist.¹⁶

Whatever the decision taken about whether or not Papias' Elder enjoyed independent existence, Schnackenburg is of course correct when he avers:¹⁷ "There is nothing that can be inferred from the transmitted Papias - citations on this question (i.e. a possible identification of the 2 and 3 John and Papias 'Elders'), because the two small Johannine letters are nowhere mentioned".¹⁸

Still less can the Fourth Gospel be attributed to the independent elder of Papias with any degree of confidence at all.

FOURTH GOSPEL / 1 JOHN AND OTHER INTER-JOHANNINE RELATIONSHIPS

(A) THE GOSPEL and 1 JOHN

Schnackenburg says that "The early much dealt with enquiry after the relationship of the Gospel of John and 1 John has lost its interest today, but is still important for judging the author -"¹⁹ In the past the various arguments for and against the unity of authorship of the Fourth Gospel and 1 John (in particular) were set out by a number of writers,¹⁹ notably by W.F. Howard²⁰ and C.H. Dodd²¹ respectively. The total arguments may be summed up as follows:

FOR COMMON AUTHORSHIP

- (1) There is a close similarity between about 50 verses in 1 John (out of a total of only 105 verses) and verses in the Fourth Gospel.²²
- (2) Identical verses are fairly rare. In only 16 verses²³ are there three successive words or more which are exactly duplicated in the Gospel. This "suggests a writer who varies his own phrases, rather than a mere copyist."²⁴
- (3) In both books the vocabulary is severely limited.²⁵
- (4) There is a great overlap in vocabulary in the two books, the words concerned being "either exceptionally frequent in these writings, or peculiar to them".²⁶
- (5) Pairs of synonyms: "an interchange of synonyms in the same sentence, or in the same context"²⁷ appears in both books.
- (6) The demonstrative pronoun $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ is used of Christ "almost as a proper name".²⁸ The designation occurs elsewhere,²⁹ but is predominantly Johannine.
- (7) Parallelism and antagonism are very common in both the Gospel and the Epistle.
- (8) Asyndeton. Brooke gives examples from both books³⁰ - his list

could easily be lengthened.

- (9) Uses of ἵνα : (a) the word is found much more frequently in the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles than it is in the New Testament generally.³¹
- (b) ἵνα plus the subjunctive is used very often "where the idea of purpose is not even latent".³²
- (c) in particular ἀλλ' ἵνα is used elliptically seven times (six in the Gospel and once in 1 John³³) as against only one other such use in the New Testament.³⁴
- (d) it is to be found after demonstratives where the New Testament writers generally prefer an accusative and infinitive construction.³⁵

(10) Uses of the relative pronoun.³⁶ A Johannine peculiarity is the collective use of πάντες three times in the Gospel (and ὅς once) where πάντες would have been expected.³⁷ In 1 John 5:4 πάντες τὸ is used in a similar manner. Howard calls these expressions "collective masculines" - i.e. they are grammatically neuter but masculine plural in sense.³⁸

(11) πάντες ὅς with the present participle. The use of this in the Johannine books is not startling, but the frequency is.³⁹

(12) The thought of the Gospel and 1 John.

(a) Eschatology. "The two conceptions of eschatology, partly as realised already, partly as still a future event, are both present in the mind of the Evangelist".⁴⁰ The First Epistle is not in conflict with this (says Howard) but stresses the future event of the Parousia more on account of the current crisis: in any case "The Parousia" was nevertheless a spiritual fact rather than an apocalyptic display".⁴¹

(b) The Death of Christ.⁴⁰ Howard concedes that "The metaphors indeed are different (in John which refers to the "Lamb of God" who is to "take away the sin of the world", and 1 John with its ἁμαρτία terminology) but is not the underlying conception the same?"⁴²

(c) The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This doctrine also is conditioned by the deadly heresy threatening the church. The Epistle's teaching, while rather different from that of the Gospel, "is in full harmony with it and serves to elucidate and define it."⁴³

(d) The two books and Gnosticism. Both the Fourth Gospel and

1 John oppose gnosticism: "In the Epistle the writer goes further in the use of technical terms which the seceders may well have borrowed from the religious vocabulary of the Gnostics. But in the words of Dr. Dodd himself, he was 'using the weapons of the heretics against themselves'". Thus there is nothing strange in the appearance of *στέφανος*, *χρίσμα*, and "God is light" in 1 John, but not in the Gospel.⁴⁴

AGAINST COMMON AUTHORSHIP

- (1) 1 John has "no fewer than thirty-nine words or expressions which are not to be found in the Gospel".⁴⁵ Because of the length of the Fourth Gospel and the narrowness of the vocabulary, this is of more significance than the same kind of finding with respect to the Pauline Epistles.
- (2) There are 33 terms which are frequent and also of great theological significance in the Gospel, yet which are entirely absent from the First Epistle. Most of these words are soteriological, eschatological, christological or else they relate to the Old Testament.
- (3) Grammatical words and particles. There are more different prepositions, conjunctive particles etc. in the Gospel than in 1 John, and many more adverbial particles.⁴⁶
- (4) The use of the relative pronoun is commoner in the Gospel.⁴⁷
- (5) Compound verbs occur 11 times in 1 John, but 105 times in the Gospel.⁴⁸
- (6) Aramaisms. There would appear to be no doubt about the presence of some Aramaisms in the Fourth Gospel,⁴⁹ but none in 1 John "unless one should regard as Aramaism the use of asyndeton and parataxis,⁵⁰ and the somewhat excessive use of personal pronouns".⁵¹
- (7) Idioms and rhetorical figures. Important points are
 - (a) the use of *πρὸς* with the articular participle - this is approximately 10 times as common in 1 John as in the Fourth Gospel.

- (b) the rhetorical question occurs four times in 1 John⁵² but not at all in the Gospel.
- (c) the conditional sentence - which is very common in both books - is several times employed in 1 John in a "freer or looser way than is to be found in the Gospel".⁵³ In several of these instances the apodosis is not really contingent upon the protasis.

(8) The thought of the Gospel and 1 John.

- (a) John's Gospel has a lot of Old Testament allusions and quotations as well as some arguments "which presuppose Rabbinical interpretations of the Old Testament";⁵⁴ John contains but one Old Testament allusion.⁵⁵
- (b) Eschatology.⁵⁶ Dodd says that it is generally recognised that the Fourth Gospel represents the most radical New Testament transformation of the eschatology "inherited... from Judaism". In contrast to that, the eschatology of 1 John is "fully alive" and "popular": *ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως* (4:17), *παρουσία*, and the term *φανερῶθῆναι* (2:28 - used with future signification) are all used in the Epistle but not the Fourth Gospel. Two important elements of 1 John eschatology which are not present in the Gospel are the transfiguration of believers at the second Advent⁵⁷ and the relating of the coming Advent to Antichrist's coming.⁵⁸
- (c) The Death of Christ is interpreted in 1 John as an *ἔλασμός* for the sin of the world, "much as Paul describes it as *ἔλασθήριον*." Dodd says that *ἔλασμός* connected with verbs which in a pagan context mean "to propitiate or placate" probably means "'expiation', i.e. a means of removing guilt, or of forgiveness".⁵⁹ In the Gospel Christ's death is the means of His being "glorified" or "exalted"; the means of His "drawing" all men into eternal life. His death is a sacrifice, but "not a sacrifice for the expiation of sin".
- (d) Dodd claims that the Holy Spirit is viewed in a "neuter and impersonal sense"⁶⁰ in much of the Old Testament and generally in the New Testament and early church. By contrast, "in the closing discourses of the Fourth Gospel the Spirit is more unequivocally personal than anywhere else in the New Testament. He is, so to speak, Christ's alter ego"⁶⁰; pronouns used of Him are often masculine. The First Epistle uses *παράκλητος* of Christ alone, and uses *πνεῦμα* in the 'popular' way of Paul and Acts. Dodd says "In John⁶¹ iv 1-6 there is no suggestion of personality in the Spirit."⁶²
- (e) Gnosticism. Four passages or terms in 1 John stand closer than anything in the Gospel to the "gnosticism" (broad sense!) against which both are directed. These are the

statement that "God is light",⁶³ the claim that the act of seeing Christ makes Christians like Him,⁶⁴ the indwelling divine "σπέρμα" - which guarantees sinlessness"⁶⁵ and the χρίσμα, which term was (or became) a gnostic one having to do with gnostic initiation.

- (9) General Impression. Dodd wrote: "There is surely to be felt in the Fourth Gospel a richness, a subtlety, a penetrating quality of style to which the (First) Epistle cannot pretend in the Epistle regularity often descends to monotony ... the Epistle.. does not suggest the pen of a ready writer".⁶⁶

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ABOVE ARGUMENTS MAY NOW BE MADE:

NEGLIBLE OR WEAK POINTS

The 39 terms in 1 John which are not present in the Gospel are to be placed here. Dodd himself is hesitant about the criterion, and in fact lists no more than four examples. He says: "Including the phrases πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως, ὁμολογεῖν ἁμαρτίας, ὀνόματι πιστεύ-
ξιν, where, though the constituent words are found in the Gospel, their combination forms a distinct locution which is not found there".⁶⁷

The Aramaisms are also to be included under this head. Concerning them Howard says: "The explanation may be that the sources and Palestinian traditions largely account for the greater prominence of these locutions in a Palestinian narrative."^{68,69}

Idiosyncrasies and Frequencies

Idiosyncrasies shared by the Fourth Gospel and 1 John number no less than eight,⁷⁰ of which some, e.g. limited vocabulary and parallelism/antagonism, are clearly very important. The characteristic "pairing" of synonyms is also such an unexpected phenomenon that it binds the books together too. The same can be said for some of the peculiar uses of ἵνα and for πᾶν ὅ.

Idiosyncrasies not shared by the two books, but evident in the First Epistle only, include rhetorical questions and 'incomplete' conditional sentences.⁷¹ With regard to the former, the four rhetorical questions, two verses are part of the framework of definition and identification⁷² which understandably has no parallel in the Sitz im Leben of the Gospel. The unusual conditional

sentences represent the most weighty evidence Dodd has adduced in this area for dividing the authorship.⁷³ A third idiosyncrasy in this group is the wider use of prepositions and particles in the Gospel.⁷⁴ This appears one of the strongest weapons mustered by Dodd, but the most impressive category, the adverbial particles, is lessened in its impact because a number of the words concerned have a merely temporal or local sense in the Gospel which would be inappropriate in the 1 John situation.⁷⁵

In 1948 W.G. Wilson crossed swords with C.H. Dodd in his article "An Examination of the Linguistic Evidence Adduced against the Unity of Authorship of the First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel".⁷⁶ Wilson's study extended over the whole New Testament so far as prepositions were concerned, but surprisingly he omitted the Pastorals, Hebrews, James, the Petrine Epistles, Jude and Revelation from all the other tables he constructed (i.e. adverbial particles, conjunctive particles, and compound verbs).

Bearing in mind the length of book and the nature of book (Gospel, Epistle and so on) Wilson said "the difference between them (Fourth Gospel and 1 John) in the number of different prepositions used is proportionally less than exists between the Lucan writings", or between pairs of Epistles reckoned as Pauline - e.g. 2 Corinthians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians and Philipians. Wilson's case is unanswerable at this point.

The numbers of different adverbial particles in the 18 New Testament books considered is much more variable than the numbers of different prepositions. Regarding the frequency of adverbial particles, the Johannine Epistles are among the lowest of the New Testament books listed, and the Gospel the second highest (after Galatians). However, since a similar range is discoverable within the Pauline corpus, the evidence supports Dodd and Wilson about equally here.

The number of different conjunctive particles and their frequency in the Fourth Gospel and 1 John (again allowing for the inadequacy of Wilson's 18 - book list) is about what would be expected from one writer in two books of such different length. There is, in fact, a much greater variation between pairs of Pauline Epistles than between the Fourth Gospel and 1 John.

In the above areas - viz. different particles and their frequency, Wilson definitely has a better case than Dodd.

The use of peculiar expressions⁷⁷ is undoubtedly a better criterion of style than an assessment based on the comparative frequencies of various words. Thus the arguments for and against common authorship on the grounds of similar or dissimilar ratios of certain words are not by any means decisive.⁷⁸

The primary linguistic argument on Dodd's side, and possibly the most important of all his arguments, is the existence of 33 theologically vital Fourth Gospel terms which do not once appear in the First Epistle. Howard has no great difficulty in reducing this list dramatically by observing:

- (a) The distribution of these concepts in the Gospel
- (b) The relevance of such words to the subject matter in each case
- (c) The longer process of composition in the case of the Gospel
- (d) The richer subject matter of the Gospel
- (e) That written and oral sources were used for the Gospel but not for the Epistle
- (f) That the Epistle was less subject to Jewish influences (Aramaic sources and the like) than the Gospel, which was written 'straight off' in Greek.⁷⁹

The only words which are still relevant here after appropriate weight has been given to the above are κρίνειν (19 times) κρίσις (11), δόξα (18) κύριος (Howard leaves only 10 of its 41 Fourth Gospel references to Christ), σώζειν (6 plus σωτηρία once) and δεῖ (of divine necessity - 8).

Howard thus concludes, in effect, that only eight of Dodd's 33 words constitute real support for the latter's position.

The argument which many have found decisive for common authorship is that "imposing list of over 50 phrases"⁸⁰ set out in Brooke's commentary. Howard rightly affirms: "In its impressiveness it overwhelms the examples of contrast which have just been examined."⁸⁰ (i.e. Dodd's arguments based on style and language). Dodd himself is moved to say "That the two works are, at any rate, very closely related is obvious."⁸¹

When then, is left of Dodd's case considered from the linguistic point of view? There are only two real effective criteria - the unusual use of conditional sentences in the First Epistle, and the (fairly) frequent

appearance of eight important terms in the Gospel but not in the Epistle (where they might have been expected). Compared with the weight of contrary evidence, these are (to use Schnackenburg's description) "unimportant". Schnackenburg concludes: "Against the discrepancies pointed out by the critics, the agreements of both writings in vocabulary, phraseology and style are so significant, that from this angle the acceptance of a common author has no obstacle in its way."⁸²

It is now necessary to turn to an assessment of the thought, especially the theology, of the Fourth Gospel and 1 John.

FIRST, the "Jewishness" of the Fourth Gospel may be partly explained (as Dodd himself admits) "by the fact that the Gospel purports to transmit the teaching of Jesus, which has a Jewish context".⁸³ Howard mentions the same fact in passing,⁸⁴ but Barrett is far from satisfied with it.⁸⁵ The matter remains something of a problem for those who advocate common authorship of the Gospel and Epistles (2 and 3 John are of course to be bracketed with 1 John and not the Gospel here).

SECONDLY, the more satisfactory judgment in matters of eschatology is that of Howard, viz. that there is no conflict between the Gospel and 1 John. Long ago Robert Law asserted that "the fundamental similarities between the eschatology of the Epistle and that of the Gospel are vastly more obvious than the differences".⁸⁶ That is true. Both books teach a future presence of Christ perceptible to the senses.⁸⁷ Regarding the personal transformation of the believer, the Fourth Gospel asserts that

- (i) the believer's knowledge is not what it will be (16:13)
- (ii) his abode is not what it will be (John 14:2,3)
- (iii) his relationships are not what they will be (John 13:35)
- (iv) his 'ontological' unity with others is not what it will be (John 17:11,21)⁸⁸
- (v) his 'mystical union' with Christ is not what it will be (John 15:1 ff, 17:21(b))⁸⁹.

These passages all show that 'the best is yet to be'. Since that is so, is 1 John incompatible with the Fourth Gospel when it describes Christians as finally being ὁμοιοι αὐτῷ (1 John 3:2)?⁹⁰

THIRDLY, though the Fourth Gospel does not contain any term like ἰλασμός, various statements are obviously compatible with the concept. These include sinbearing (John 1:29), Christ as "Saviour of the world" (John 4:42), God's outgoing love towards a world in need of salvation (John 3:16), and the use of ὑπερ "which expresses the thought of the vicarious atonement-offering of Christ" (John 6:51, 10:11,15, 11:50 ff, 15:13, 17:19 and 18:14).⁹¹

FOURTHLY, the differences in pneumatology in the two books are not significant. Dodd denies the full personality of the Holy Spirit in 1 John because (as Schnackenburg says) he denies the part played by the Holy Spirit in connection with spiritual rebirth (1 John 3:9) and does not interpret the χρίσμα of 1 John 2:20,27 (who performs a function similar to that of the Paraclete in John 16:13) as the Holy Spirit. The passages in 1 John⁹² which ascribe witnessing in some form to the Spirit are also compromised and weakened.⁹³

FIFTHLY, the assertion that 1 John stands closer than the Gospel to Gnosticism in the sense that it indicates a more sympathetic view of it, is not justified.⁹⁴ Schnackenburg⁹⁵ has answered Dodd with typical thoroughness, but something may be added to his treatment in one area. Dodd writes that both Philo and the Fourth Gospel writer describe the Logos as light, but in the Fourth Gospel "God the Father is never described as light".⁹⁶ Yet, true as that may be, certain verses in the Gospel, taken together, seem completely to dispose of Dodd's argument (see John 10:30, 14:9 - ὁ ἑώρακώς ἐμὲ ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα; 1:1, 17:11). If the son is "light", and the Father and Son are ἓν, then the Father is also "light", even if not explicitly so described in the Fourth Gospel.

A further theological point was raised by M. de Jonge⁹⁷ in 1970, viz, the manner in which the word Χριστός is used in the Johannine Epistles and Gospel. In the Epistles the word is unequivocally a Christian term, "which has lived its own life in the Christian church, and especially in the Christian communities to which the epistles were addressed."⁹⁸ Χριστός is not the most important term applied to Jesus; that is "Son of God" (or "His son", "The Son", and so on) which occurs 22 times in 1 John and twice in 2 John.

In the Fourth Gospel $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ is used twice in the double expression $\text{Ἰησοῦς } \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ "in the same way as in the epistles, i.e. without reference to the Jewish background of the word $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ and in a context which presupposes the unity of Father and Son".⁹⁸ de Jonge goes on: "in all other instances (in the Gospel) where $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ occurs (14 altogether!) this term is used in the Jewish (Samaritan) sense of the word or with a Christian meaning presupposing or correcting Jewish usage".⁹⁹

Generally, then, the claim is made that the Epistles and the Fourth Gospel differ to some extent, but it is "a difference on the basis of a fundamental agreement".¹⁰⁰ The Epistles' use is a development or an interpretation, not a contradiction, of the commoner Fourth Gospel use.

The findings of de Jonge are essentially neutral regarding authorship, since his position is compatible with either one author (facing two sets of problems) or two authors who both occupy a basically 'Johannine' theological position.

Schnackenburg summarises the positions taken by recent scholars with respect to the theological content of John and 1 John.¹⁰¹ He begins by saying: "every judge is compelled to speak of a particular Johannine theology" (because of the same "atmosphere" and "main concepts" in the two books). Using Howard's arguments, Schnackenburg demonstrates that there is nothing of a theological nature to prohibit common authorship.¹⁰² Nor is "another author for the large letter who indeed must have stood in very close touch with the evangelist" ruled out. Though Schnackenburg does not give a categorical answer here, the tone he adopts seems to indicate a degree of preference for identity of author.¹⁰³

The assessment of the general impression made upon the reader by the Fourth Gospel and 1 John respectively is necessarily a somewhat subjective exercise. Dodd's judgment that the Epistle is more monotonous than John's Gospel has been supported quite recently by J.L. Houlden, who calls the Gospel "the finest literary fruit" of the Johannine group, and describes the 1 John author as "less penetrating and vigorous in mind" than the Evangelist.¹⁰⁴

In complete opposition to C.H. Dodd, G.D. Kilpatrick has a very low opinion of the literary prowess of the Fourth Gospel writer himself.¹⁰⁵ He judges 'John' to be a poor man from a poor province, a man of Palestinian origins

who is not "bookish".

The view of Dodd was of course opposed by Howard, who said: "The pastoral disquisition has a beauty of its own, but it is not the splendour of the Incarnate Glory - the theme of the Gospel".¹⁰⁶ Dodd's position is adequately countered above¹⁰⁷ by material drawn from Howard's presentation of his case.

Schnackenburg also has no doubts about the great ability of the 1 John writer - e.g. he speaks of the Epistle as "an incomparable accomplishment".¹⁰⁸ A little later, in his discussion of the Proemium, Schnackenburg says that the early verses of 1 John "betray a writer who controls his style medium with innate certainty".¹⁰⁹

M. de Jonge has very recently given his judgment against Houlden¹¹⁰ and Dodd. De Jonge asserts : "The Epistles are at least as subtle in thought and wording as the Gospel and as careful in their balancing of the various elements of Christology and ethics. Their scope is limited to the crisis situation at stake (whereas the Gospel serves more than one purpose) but that does not mean that their author/s is/are less gifted theologians than his/their predecessor/s."

CONCLUSION TO FOURTH GOSPEL/1 JOHN COMPARISON

Dodd produced enough evidence for his point of view to be considered seriously, but in no major area does that evidence come near to upsetting the traditional view of common authorship.¹¹¹

(B) 1 AND 2 JOHN

FOR COMMON AUTHORSHIP -----

- (1) The verbal agreement between the two books is startling. No less than seven verses in 2 John repeat or echo verses in the First Epistle-viz. 2 John 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 12.¹¹² Moreover, verses 6 and 7 each correspond fairly closely with two verses in 1 John, and 2 John 5 with three. In other words, 2 John, which has only 13 verses, has a total of eleven close affinities with 1 John. In fact the only verses not repeated¹¹³ or echoed in the larger writing are either those with an "epistolary" significance,

or else those which prohibit the giving of hospitality to enemies of the Faith.

Schnackenburg highlights four significant characteristics found particularly in 2 John 4-9 and in 1 John:¹⁴

- (i) Love, and its practical realisation in brotherly love
- (ii) Faith - i.e. the right Christological faith
- (iii) The rejection of the heresy as innovation, almost the same confession formula being used in 2 John 7 as in 1 John 4:2
- (iv) The use of θεὸν οὐκ ἔχει in 2 John 9 and 1 John 2:23 "forms a strong clamp between both letters".

Another instance of significant verbal agreement¹⁵ is the formula μένειν ἐν. 1 and 2 John and the Fourth Gospel use it quite excessively compared with the rest of the New Testament.

- (2) Vocabulary: A few words are employed with unusual frequency in 1 and 2 John compared with the New Testament as a whole:

	<u>1 John</u>	<u>2 John</u>	<u>3 John</u>	<u>Fourth Gospel</u>	<u>Apocalypse</u>	<u>Rest of New Testament</u>
ἀλήθεια	9	5	6	25		65
ἀντίχριστος	4	1				
ἀρχή	8	2		8	3	35
αὕτη	10	2		7	1	53
ἐντολή	14	4		11	2	37
κόσμος	22	1		76	3	80
μένω	23	3		40	1	50
ὁμολογέω	5	1		4	1	15 ¹⁶

- (3) Apparent dependence of passages in one book on passages in the other, whether this phenomenon be viewed as a process of abbreviation or expansion¹⁷ (depending on which book is conceived to have been written earlier). Examples: 2 John 7 and 1 John 1:1-4, 2:18ff, 4:1ff
 2 John 9 and 1 John 2:22ff, 5:1-6
 2 John 12 and 1 John 1:4

- (4) The acceptance of 2 John into the canon via 1 John (so to speak) may be evidence of common authorship.¹⁸

- (5) The undeniable theological agreement makes common authorship probable.¹¹⁹

AGAINST COMMON AUTHORSHIP

- (1) Two arguments have been advanced on the basis of the contents of 1 John and 2 John: First, that 2 John is so clearly dependent on 1 John and 3 John that it must be an imitation by a different author;¹²⁰ and secondly, that the prohibition of hospitality to heretics, which is noted in most commentaries as being the only subject in 2 John not treated in 1 John, may be viewed as introducing a note contrary to the injunction to love in 1 John.¹²¹
- (2) Expressions: two formulae - *βλέπετε ἑαυτοῦς* and *μισθὸν πλήρη* - are said to be more in harmony with the Synoptics than John.¹²²
- (3) Vocabulary. The total number of words in 2 John is 245; there are 94 different words.¹²³ Of these 31 are extremely common and have no particular theological or other special significance. Among the remaining 63 words *κυρία* and *χάρτης* ('papyrus' or 'paper') are peculiar to 2 John. The following are absent from 1 John: *πρεσβύτερος, ἐκλεκτός, χάρις, ἔλεος, εἰρήνη, χαίρω, λίαν, εὐρίσκω, πλάγος, βλέπω, ἀπόλλυμι, ἐργάζομαι, μισθός, πλήρης, ἀπολαμβάνω, προάγω,¹²⁴ διδαχή, φέρω, οἰκία, κοινωνέω, βούλομαι, ἐλπίζω, στόμα, ἀσπάζομαι,* and *ἀδελφή.*¹²⁵
- Out of the 63 relatively common words in 2 John, then, 27 are not found in 1 John. considering significant words alone, this means that almost 43 per cent of the words in the shorter Epistle - a very impressive proportion - are absent from 1 John, a book which is at many points similar in content.
- (4) Both 1 John and 2 John appear to be letters, yet their structural resemblance to each other is minimal.¹²⁶
- (5) There were some objections to the acceptance of 2 John into the Canon at first, and these indicate reservations about whether the

author of 1 John wrote 2 John also. The relevant evidence comprises (i) Origen's comments about "a second and a third (epistle of John) all do not hold these to be genuine" ¹²⁷

- (ii) Eusebius' similar remarks ¹²⁸
- (iii) All pre-Philoxenian Syriac translations, which omit 2 John (as well as the other minor catholic Epistles and Revelation) ¹²⁹
- (iv) Remarks by Amphilocius, Bishop of Iconium from cAD.373, who wrote in his Iambi ad Seleucum: "Of the Catholic Epistles some say that seven, others that only three, ought to be received, one of James, one of Peter and one of John. And some receive the three (of John)" ¹³⁰

An assessment of the strength of the various arguments follows:

A weak point is that based on the appearance of the two formulae *βλέπετε ἑαυτοῦς* and *μισθὸν πλήρη* in 2 John 8. ¹³¹ The first of these occurs in one other New Testament verse, ¹³² and can therefore scarcely be labelled typically synoptic (or anything else!) *μισθὸν πλήρη* appears nowhere else in the New Testament.

Ambiguous points

The argument about verses in 2 John which more-or-less correspond with the (generally larger) 1 John verses ¹³³ proves nothing about authorship, because either one writer could be referring to another work of his own, or else a second writer could be alluding to the epistle of the first. Perhaps the former possibility is the more likely, since the other view necessitates accessibility to the original as well as unacknowledged allusions to it. According to the hypothesis advanced in these pages, no acknowledgment is necessary because the writer is merely echoing his own work. Moreover, he is doing so while the other composition is quite fresh in his mind; perhaps it was even lying in front of him.

The arguments surrounding the entry of 2 John into the Canon are also ambiguous. Against the four points made above ¹³⁴ may be arrayed a considerable list of quotations or references which apparently indicate entire acceptance of 2 John as a canonical book. ¹³⁵

A third ambiguous matter is that of the differing structures of 1 and 2 John.¹³⁶ The phenomenon cannot count against common authorship unless the purpose of the two Epistles is similar - i.e. unless, for instance, they are both intended as regular contemporary letters. If they have an "interlocking" purpose (as maintained in the hypothesis) the difference in structure not only does not tell against common authorship, but is peculiarly comprehensible in the light of it.

The argument against common authorship based on the alleged imitation of 1 John by the 2 John writer¹³⁷ (a different man) is also difficult to answer unequivocally. If 2 John were an imitation, it is hard to see the reason for it.¹³⁸ A further psychological improbability in that case is the lack of a specific writer's name.¹³⁹

Stronger points

ΜΈΝΕΙΝ ΕΪ (or ΕΪ...ΜΈΝΕΙΝ¹⁴⁰) is obviously an idiosyncrasy which is almost exclusively 'Johannine' in the New Testament. It is used in a theological sense (the indwelling of Christ in the believer and similar concepts as distinct from geographical senses) in 18 places in the Fourth Gospel, 21 places in 1 John, 3 times in 2 John, and only 5 times in all the rest of the New Testament. Similarly, all of the eight words¹⁴¹ which are especially common in 1 John and 2 John (and the Fourth Gospel) except αΪΤΗ are of unquestioned theological significance. They all appear in the doctrinal heart of 2 John.

It is right here that the strongest argument of all against common authorship - the 27 words absent from 1 John but present in 2 John¹⁴² - reveals its essential weakness. Out of the 27, twelve are what might be called "epistolary" terms which have no counterpart in 1 John since that book lacks some of the distinctive features of ordinary epistles. Of the other 15 words, six are everyday words with no technical significance.¹⁴³

The remaining 9 words¹⁴⁴ (six of them used but once) are less important as a group than the theological terms shared by 2 John and 1 John.

The theology of 2 John is to be compared with that of 1 John in a later chapter.¹⁴⁵ 2 John does not disagree with 1 John. Either the two say essentially the same thing in matters of theology, or else a theological topic is found in 1 John only. Even the question of the boycott of the

heretics is not at variance with such a judgment. It is a natural corollary to the intense concern of the writer of the First Epistle for his converts and follows straight on from his assertions that those who "went out from us were not of us", and that "many false prophets have gone out into the world", and his injunction "Do not love the world".¹⁴⁶ An undying love for his converts corresponds to a fierce jealousy for their spiritual welfare.

Finally, the 'for' argument based on the 2 John/1 John overlap carries quite exceptional weight. Eleven close parallels in thirteen verses cannot be set aside. They are virtually determinative for common authorship.

CONCLUSION TO 2 JOHN/1 JOHN COMPARISON

Internal evidence, consisting primarily of impressive theological and verbal agreement, practically demands the acceptance of common authorship.

(C) 2 JOHN AND JOHN'S GOSPEL

Ten references in 2 John (in verses 1, 2(bis), 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12) are parallel to substantial portions of fifteen verses¹⁴⁷ in the Gospel. On examination, it is evident that five of these 2 John passages have no parallel in 1 John. This strongly suggests a more direct 2 John/Fourth Gospel link than one merely mediated through the First Epistle.

There are twelve words^{148, 149} used in 2 John but not in the Fourth Gospel. When the Epistle is compared on the one hand with the Gospel, and on the other hand with the New Testament Epistles generally, it emerges that half the words concerned could be called "epistolary" vocabulary - i.e. they fit naturally into the context of correspondence whoever the writer be rather than into a Gospel. Thus meaningful differences between the vocabulary of 2 John and the Fourth Gospel¹⁵⁰ are relatively few.

Common authorship is extremely likely.

(D) 2 JOHN and 3 JOHN

It is probably scarcely necessary to examine 2 and 3 John very closely to

see whether they came from the pen of one writer or not. No modern writer whose works were examined actually repudiates common authorship,¹⁵¹ though Bultmann and Houlden (presumably following Bultmann) cast various doubts on 2 John's antiquity and/or authenticity.

Briefly, the points of similarity are

- (1) the same designation for the sender
- (2) almost identical endings
- (3) very nearly equal length
- (4) a very similar structure,¹⁵² and
- (5) a discerning policy in matters concerning hospitality.

Such differences as there are are explained readily enough by the difference in recipients and circumstances.¹⁵³

The one jarring note in the 2 John/3 John comparison is vocabulary.¹⁵⁴ Examination reveals that 36 of 2 John's 63 significant words are absent from 3 John, while 46 of the Third Epistle's noteworthy words are not in 2 John. That these proportions are very high cannot be denied. However, as noted above, the contents of the two works must be compared. If, as is maintained in this thesis, the letters are complementary, being sent to a husband and wife on one occasion, but dealing with different aspects of one larger problem, a considerably different vocabulary is to be anticipated. Actually a count reveals that 22 of 3 John's 46 significant words (i.e. the 46 absent from 2 John) are directly related to the special circumstances calling forth the Third Epistle, (i.e. those circumstances in the total situation which particularly concern Gaius).

Furthermore, it is apposite to observe the comparatively unusual words which are common to 2 and 3 John. Ten of them¹⁵⁵ do not even appear in 1 John. Some would be quite unexpected if different authors were responsible; especially is this so with *πρεσβύτερος*, *λίαν* (only 12 times in the entire New Testament), *στόμα* and the rare word *μέλανος*.

There is necessarily a certain air of unreality about the whole subject of terms in such short books as 2 and 3 John. When it is recalled that Shakespeare is said to have used about 24 000 different words, Milton 7 000, and a reasonably capable matriculation student of the present day 3 000,

the perspective on the vocabulary and usages in the minute works under consideration perhaps needs correction. One thing is clear, viz. that the inclusion of the unusual becomes a much more persuasive criterion than the exclusion of the usual. Quite rightly, therefore, many have accepted common authorship for 2 and 3 John on various weighty grounds even though the vocabulary employed differs considerably ¹⁵⁶ in some important respects.

(E) BERGMEIER'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST COMMON AUTHORSHIP

Roland Bergmeier wrote an article in 1966 entitled Zum Verfasserproblem des II und III Johannesbriefes,¹⁵⁷ in which he commented upon the indecisive results for the authorship controversy obtained by linguistic methods. As a 'new' approach, he proposed a comparison of the theology of the Fourth Gospel and 1 John on the one side and 2 and 3 John on the other.¹⁵⁸ In his article the whole emphasis is on two interrelated concepts -

- (i) the Johannine-type dualism; the same type of dualism is found in the Qumran scrolls and the Gospel and First Epistle of John.¹⁵⁹
- (ii) the Johannine view of ἀλήθεια as one pole of the dualism.¹⁶⁰

Now, with respect to 2 John and 3 John, Bergmeier finds

- (i) that the dualism of the longer Johannine books is missing:
"It is chiefly noticeable that in II John the antithesis of ἀλήθεια and ψεῦδος or πλάνη is missing, although from the content of the letter it would be highly significant".¹⁶¹
- (ii) that "The ἀλήθεια - concept" merely "presents a 'Johannine' coloured word for that which can be described just the same as διδαχὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ."¹⁶²
He continues: "περιπατεῖν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ II/III John 4 therefore means nothing else than 'to abide by the teaching of Christ' i.e. by that which Christ has entrusted to the church. In other words: ἀλήθεια here implies not the divine reality, but the orthodox teaching".¹⁶³

Bergmeier concludes that there is, theologically speaking, a certain (smallish) gap between the Gospel and 1 John, and a larger gap between these two books and the shorter Epistles. Situationally, the implied conclusion is that 2 and 3 John belong together at a later period than the two longer Johannine books,¹⁶⁴ which may themselves belong together. At least two

authors are therefore implied.

The thesis of Bergmeier is suspect because

- (1) It is not entirely correct to label the dualistic elements as "missing" in 2 John. Ἀλήθεια appears five times and (on the other side) πλάγινος¹⁶⁵ twice and ἀντίχριστος once. It is merely that the ideas are not in juxtaposition in 2 John.
- (2) The base is too narrow. A single term, albeit a key one, has been chosen. Thus Houlden says that "a whole galaxy of doctrinally weighty Johannine terms, 'know', 'dwell', 'love' and 'walk', speak against Bergmeier's view".¹⁶⁶
- (3) Bultmann has pointed out that "truth" and "doctrine" are not always used in either 2 or 3 John in identical ways.¹⁶⁷

Bergmeier's decision to divide the authorship of the four books must be rejected, then, because too much is based on too little.

'SCHOOL' THEORIES OF THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE JOHANNINE BOOKS

A number of 'school' theories have already been considered.¹⁶⁸ There are many others.¹⁶⁹ The essence of such theories is the idea that various members of a particular group or community in the early church each made a contribution to the production of the Johannine writings. Usually the literary activity¹⁷⁰ is conceived of as having taken place in successive stages. Thus Barrett conjectures that there were five or six contributors working - for the most part - at different times and finally producing the complete Johannine corpus of five books. R.E. Brown believes that the Fourth Gospel itself went through a minimum of five fairly clearly defined stages.¹⁷¹ Rudolf Bultmann suggested something different - viz. a radical revision by an ecclesiastical redactor. The revision is stated not to be a sympathetic expansion of the original Gospel, but to incorporate direct counters to its Gnostic orientation.¹⁷²

The reason for the development of school theories is to be found in the belief that a generally consistent background and outlook is discernible throughout the Johannine literature, but that at the same time there are great obstacles to the acceptance of a single author.

As far as the Fourth Gospel itself is concerned, R.E. Brown agrees with Teeple that "difficulties have been created by not respecting the intention of the author, and complicated hypotheses have been constructed where simple explanations are available"¹⁷³, but he still sees three major problems. First, there are stylistic differences between chapter 21 and the rest of the Gospel and between the Prologue and the rest of the Gospel, Secondly, there are breaks in sequence,¹⁷⁴ Thirdly, there are repetitions and insertions.¹⁷⁴

School theories seem to provide a via media, a new approach ¹⁷⁵ between the traditional 'same author or different author' positions.¹⁷⁶

It is not necessary here to evaluate each of the numerous and very different school theories. What is essential is an answer to the more fundamental question: Is the school theory concept itself capable of providing a satisfactory answer to the problems of the origin and nature of the Johannine books?

Perhaps the best way to deal with this basic query is to frame and answer two separate questions, the first of which is preparatory in relation to the second:

- (1) Was there a "Johannine Circle"¹⁷⁷ within orthodox Christianity but relatively independent of first century 'mainline' Christianity?
- (2) Could different members of such a group have been responsible for major contributions to the Johannine books?

These two investigations are obviously distinct from each other. In particular an affirmative answer to the first does not demand an affirmative answer to the second.

(A) THE JOHANNINE COMMUNITY

Four recent and significant articles or books merit special attention here: articles by Meeks and Moody Smith respectively, and books by Cullmann and Barrett.¹⁷⁸

The existence of a distinct Johannine community is taken for granted by

Wayne A. Meeks.¹⁷⁹ He visualises it as an isolated group of people ("probably a cluster of small congregations")¹⁸⁰ set over against two other groups, viz. "the sect of John the Baptist" and "a rather strong Jewish community".¹⁸¹ The group existed in a state of tension with these other bodies, and, partly as a result of this, "suffered defections, conflicts of leadership, and schisms".¹⁸¹ Evidence of internal schisms is most obvious in the Johannine letters, which (it is implied) belong to a later time than the Gospel of John. The Epistles depict "tighter internal discipline, more hostility towards 'the world' and everything 'in the world'", and "schism occasioned by a docetic group - "¹⁸² Even before this an increasing theological difference from Jewry, most of all of course in the realm of Christological claims, resulted in alienation and finally expulsion from the synagogue. In the end the group perhaps became proto-Valentinians: in the Fourth Gospel and in the isolationist anti-worldly sect which developed with it "all the forces were present for the production of a myth of the Valentinian type."¹⁸³

It cannot be stressed too strongly that the basis of Meeds' theory of a separate group is theological and social, So far as theology is concerned, the focal point is Jesus conceived of as literally unique. He is above all the One who "descends" then "ascends". Meeks says: "The descent and ascent of the Son of Man - becomes not only the key to his identity and identification, but the primary content of his esoteric knowledge which distinguishes him from the men who belong to 'this world'".¹⁸⁴ It is this that separates Jesus from all earthly men,¹⁸⁵ though "the future ascent of the disciples is promised."¹⁸⁶ Socially, the community is a group of "insiders" something like the Qumran community or the Nazareans¹⁸⁷ "that evidently persisted with some consistent identity over a considerable span of time",¹⁸⁸ and was largely negative or "counter-cultural"¹⁸⁹ in outlook.

There is no reason to doubt Meeds' basic conviction that a distinct Johannine group existed. However, two serious flaws are present in his reconstruction. First, he makes the Johannine group too prominent - that is to say, it occupies the whole Christian stage, being the great foe of Jewry, and leaving no place for 'synoptic' or Pauline Christianity. Secondly, there is a conflict in identifications. In some places the disciples of Jesus (Peter,¹⁹⁰ Thomas¹⁹¹) are the enlightened and blessed, while in most other places it is the members of the Johannine community who are. Are these the same? Is all early Christianity Johannine? It would almost seem so from what Meeks says.¹⁹²

D. Moody Smith Jr begins his article "Johannine Christianity: Some Reflections on its Character and Delineation"¹⁹³ by distinguishing Johannine Christianity from the concept of the Church in the Johannine writings. The two may be closely related, but one must not be confused with the other. The Johannine writings betray the existence of a particular "sectarian consciousness, a sense of exclusiveness, a sharp delineation of the community from the world" which is "sharper in 1 John than in the Gospel."¹⁹⁴

Smith offers six main "Evidences of the Existence of a Johannine Community in the Johannine Literature and Elsewhere".¹⁹⁵ Foremost among these are the arguments based on form critical considerations. The arguments are:

1. Since the Fourth Gospel narrative tradition is often widely divergent from the synoptic narrative tradition, its existence is "prima facie evidence, on form-critical grounds, for the existence of a traditioning community".¹⁹⁶
2. It is possible (but in this case not so obvious) that there may also have been "a Johannine tradition of dominical sayings"¹⁹⁷ which would enable a similar inference to be made.
3. The Johannine Epistles - whether or not they were by the Gospel author/s - "presuppose the existence of - a Johannine orbit".¹⁹⁸
4. A similar conclusion (though it engenders less confidence) is to be derived from the Book of Revelation, which shares inter alia charismatic or prophetic utterance with the other Johannine books.¹⁹⁹
5. John 21 is later and not by the original writer; it "attests the existence of a constituency for which the Gospel was published ... The most obvious implication of 21:20-23 is that such a constituency exists".²⁰⁰
6. The figure of the Beloved Disciple appears to be historical and no fabrication. If that be so, his appearance implies "the probability that the Johannine circles (not only existed but) held and cultivated the belief that their tradition extended back to Jesus himself."²⁰¹

The development and shape of the Johannine group can perhaps be elucidated (according to Moody Smith)²⁰² by comparison of the 'Gospel of Signs' in the Fourth Gospel with the characteristics of Paul's Jewish-Christian opponents at Corinth. Connections of a more certain sort can be seen with "less orthodox forms of Jewish life and thought"²⁰³, viz. Qumran, John the Baptist, the Odes of Solomon, Samaritan religion, and the Mandaean sources. In a word, "sectarian Judaism was the germinal ground of the Johannine tradition".²⁰⁴

Summarily, then, in Smith's view, Johannine Christianity and the growth of its tradition owe their origin to processes centring on Judaism and Jewish Christianity. It was, it would seem, a close-knit society.²⁰⁵

Oscar Cullmann is quite convinced of the existence of what he calls "the Johannine Circle"²⁰⁶ in the first century Church. This comprised a group of Christians distinct from the main body of believers (whose tradition and theological position - exemplified by Peter and the rest of the Twelve - can be described as 'synoptic'²⁰⁷). The Johannine Circle or Transjordanian Circle, was not at first so discrete as a 'church' or 'sect'.²⁰⁸ In part it owed its origins to 'marginal' Judaism, bringing various strands together from it. The marginal forms of Judaism differed significantly from the official Jewish position and were close in outlook to the Hellenist movement in early Christianity. The 'Circle' was in existence in the very earliest days of the church, going back to the Beloved Disciple (not the Apostle John) and to Jesus Himself.²⁰⁹ Its members were 'orthodox', yet they had their own distinctive theological emphases. They apparently maintained quite good relations with other Christians,²¹⁰ but for all that preserved their separate identity.²¹¹ The Johannine writings are products of the 'circle'.²¹²

The evidence advanced by Cullmann for the existence of a distinct Johannine community comprises:

- (1) John 21:24 "This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true." This and the following verse "suggest that one or more disciples of the author published the Gospel after his death, and are therefore already an indication of the existence of a Johannine 'circle'".²¹³

(2) Affinities of varying closeness between John and more-or-less contemporary non-Christian sources. In chapter 5 Cullmann explores the first century Jewish milieu of Palestine and some of its neighbours. In describing the religious environment of John (as he sees it) reference is made to the older clear-cut 'Hellenism or Judaism?' choice of background²¹⁴ and the later 'Palestinian Judaism or Diaspora Judaism?' options²¹⁵ proposed by scholars. Both of these choices are rejected today;²¹⁶ syncretism is all too obvious in first century Palestine itself. (Previously Cullmann had called such Judaistic syncretism "esoteric" or even "gnostic", but now he prefers "non-conformist", "heterodox" or "marginal Judaism").²¹⁷

- (a) Qumran definitely provides "a background for certain liturgical ideas in the Gospel of John"²¹⁸ in respect of ritual ablutions, sacred meals, and criticism of the Temple and priesthood in Jerusalem. (Cullmann thinks that the Johannine circle may have been influenced by Qumran via John the Baptist).
- (b) Mandaean writings: "the Gospel of John is in contact with at least a kindred world of ideas".²¹⁹
- (c) The Odes of Solomon represent "a common cultural milieu",²²⁰ but they are probably independent of the Fourth Gospel.
- (d) The Revelations of Hermes Trismegistos were probably "revised in a Christian direction", but "here too the similarities (e.g. logos, second birth) suggest a common sphere".²²⁰
- (e) The Pseudo-Clementines and Coptic works from Nag Hammadi may be dependent in part on the Fourth Gospel, but some of the Coptic documents may be pre-Christian, making the dependence the other way round.²²⁰
- (f) Samaritan religion, preserved in the Samaritan Pentateuch, the chronicles, the liturgy, and the work Memar of the fourth century, has been under-rated so far as its bearing on Fourth Gospel origins is concerned (says Cullmann).

None of the above directly proves the existence of a Johannine circle, of course; it merely shows that people holding some 'Johannine'-type ideas existed, probably in considerable numbers, in and near first century Palestine.²²¹

(3) Direct New Testament Evidence

- (a) The existence of the Johannine Epistles, not necessarily by the same writer as the Fourth Gospel,²²² presupposes a 'community'.²²³

(b) The 'Hellenists' of Acts 6:1 ff (contrasted with the "Hebraists" - RSV "Hebrews") constitute "a special group which was more open to foreign influences and adopted a freer attitude to the Jewish law and the temple cult than the other members of the early church".²²⁴ These Hellenists, says Luke, belonged to the church from the very beginning. Their leaders were the Seven, whose authority seems to have been similar to that exercised by the Twelve, but at a secondary level. Cullmann says that the evangelizing work of the Hellenists was regarded with a degree of mistrust by the Twelve since Apostles or their representatives were sent to consolidate and impart recognition to pioneer work done by Stephen and Philip and their followers.²²⁵ The near-certain identification of the Hellenists in Jerusalem with the Johannine group rests on three considerations:²²⁶

- (i) theological conceptions, including Christology and liturgy ("above all the setting of worship")
- (ii) an interest in the mission to Samaria (Acts 8 and John 4:31 ff)
- (iii) dependence on heterodox Judaism ("above all - Samaritan theology")²²⁷

All three points characterise both Hellenists and John's Gospel.²²⁸

(c) The Book of Revelation provides important evidence for the existence of a 'Johannine' circle because of certain "images" such as the designation of Christ as "lamb", "shepherd", and "living water" and concepts like *μαρτυρία* which are significant for it as well as the Fourth Gospel.²²⁹

(d) There is some doubt about the value of the Epistle to the Hebrews as additional testimony to the 'circle'. The possibility "must be considered very seriously", however, because of

- (i) the anti-Temple attitude (and pro-tabernacle bias)
- (ii) liturgy
- (iii) Christological views.²³⁰

(4) The tone and contents of later writings such as the heretical Jewish Christian Kerygmata Petrou and the 'orthodox' letters of Ignatius of Antioch strongly suggest not only the existence of a 'circle' but its continuance into the second century.²³¹

Did a distinct Johannine circle (in Cullmann's sense) exist, then? It seems that the answer should be affirmative, though acceptance of this

conclusion does not by any means necessitate total acceptance of the picture Cullmann presents. For one thing, the links with non-Christian sources are unsatisfyingly tenuous. At best the contact between them and the Johannine community has been shown to have been in the realm of thought and literary derivation and not direct.

In his review of *The Johannine Circle*,²³² Stephen Smalley questions Cullmann's tendency to overseparate the Synoptic and Johannine traditions;²³³ presumably he is also criticising the separateness of the alleged synoptic and Johannine communities. Diversity existed even in the Person of Jesus; why not, then, in a single large Christian community? The answer here is that Cullmann does not conceive of the Johannine circle as separated at first,²³⁴ but only as recognisably distinct from the main body of Christians. He goes to some lengths to show the generally high level of co-operative effort between the two groupings within the church.²³⁵²³⁶

In his recent book 'The Gospel of John and Judaism', C.K. Barrett²³⁷ comes fairly close to Cullmann's position. The latter speaks of a two-fold influence of "heretical marginal Judaism on the Gospel of John":²³⁸

- (i) that on the community at the very beginning, accepted to a considerable extent, and
- (ii) that later which was resisted in a polemical fashion.

Barrett writes of "a similarity between John and the Judaism of his time and a dissimilarity between John and contemporary Christianity".²³⁹ However, Barrett does not equate regular Judaism with the Johannine community teaching any more than Cullmann does, for his conclusion is that "the Gospel is found to contain 'Judaism, non-Judaism and anti-Judaism'. John is both Jewish and anti-Jewish... similarly it 'combines Gnosis and anti-Gnosis'".²⁴⁰ Barrett and his reviewer explain this phenomenon more fully: " - the mutual interpenetration of Judaism and Gnosis which is found in the Gospel is not the writer's own invention, but something he found already in existence in his environment and which he used as a medium for expressing his view of the Christian faith".²⁴¹

There is no doubt whatever about Barrett's acceptance of the existence of a distinct Johannine community.

Obviously there are many differences in the positions advanced by the four writers, Meeks, Moody Smith, Cullmann and Barrett. However, there is an impressive fundamental agreement. Their conclusion that a distinct Johannine circle, sect, or community²⁴² did exist in the first century is plain and unequivocal. It need not be contested²⁴³, but can be accepted as having been demonstrated in an essentially satisfactory manner.²⁴⁴

To assume from the conclusion that a Johannine community existed, that a number of individual persons within that community each played a significant part in the production of the Johannine writings is, however, unwarranted.

The reasons are numerous and weighty:

(B) ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE 'JOHANNINE SCHOOL' CONCEPT OF AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPEL AND EPISTLES²⁴⁵

- (1) In the first place, school proposals are unnecessary. Certain of the issues which have led to such theories have been answered satisfactorily. An example of this is the plausible view of Pierson Parker that significant "disjunctures" have come about as a result of the original writer (of the Fourth Gospel) adding material in a rather careless manner to a shorter Gospel which he himself had carefully compiled at an earlier date.²⁴⁶ A further example concerns the repudiation of the idea of Bultmann and Haenchen that the Fourth Gospel and 1 John must be by different (but associated) authors because they "are directed against different fronts."²⁴⁷ A difference of objective certainly does not necessitate a different author. Other problems²⁴⁸ are probably as answerable. However, these need not be considered in detail. Common authorship can be established without answering all Johannine problems one by one provided the positive evidence for it is great enough. The arguments which follow appear to demonstrate that that is in fact the case.
- (2) Secondly, the 'school' concept has no ancient support.²⁴⁹
- (3) Thirdly, school theories commonly involve the total disappearance of a number of the Church's greatest theologians and teachers from the pages of history.²⁵⁰ This is not entirely true in all cases, of course, since the Apostle John is accorded a position of some prominence in some schemes.²⁵¹

- (4) Fourthly, the complete lack of agreement among modern writers as to the number of contributors to the Johannine literature, and the extent and nature of their various contributions, engenders serious doubt about the whole procedure. Cullmann, referring to the alleged revision of the Gospel alone, speaks of "countless solutions but the most striking thing about them is their dissimilarity".²⁵²

The four points noted so far are primarily negative, though not in any way negligible on that account. Those which follow are positive:

- (5) Fifthly, there is a sense in which the total impact of the four Johannine books is so much of a piece that even some of the most ardent advocates of school theories unwittingly speak of 'John'²⁵³ or 'the author' in passage after passage. It seems to require a deliberate effort not to do so. Thus Barrett gives the impression again and again that there is only one writer of the Fourth Gospel. On pages 70 and 71²⁵⁴ passages from chapters 5, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18 and 19 are quoted as if by a single man.²⁵⁵ It is true that Barrett carefully says "the author, or the author of one of the sources, or the editor who put the sources together" on page 20, and on page 90²⁵⁶ he comes back to a possible "ecclesiastical redactor" as one explanation for the occurrence of the 'Last day' passages. Yet even here he does not really accept this answer, at least not for every such passage. Numerous highly personal judgments are attributed to "John" on pages 73 to 75. These persist to the very last sentence of the book. Cullmann²⁵⁷ and even Bultmann²⁵⁸ speak in like terms. Such thoughts bring to mind the clear-cut affirmations of earlier writers: Adolf von Harnack said "During the two generations after Paul there was but one theologian that one was John -"²⁵⁹, and still earlier Alfred Loisy wrote: "the Fourth Gospel from beginning to end bears the mark of the great genius who created it".^{260, 261}

- (6) Sixthly, the uniformity of language and theology throughout the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles is quite at variance with school theories. Since these topics have already been explored comprehensively in the first part of the current chapter, nothing need be added. Parker (in discussing the Gospel alone, though he might just as readily have included the Epistles in themselves or in relation to the Gospel) sums up admirably: "every attempt to

analyse the Gospel into sources breaks down under the linguistic test.²⁶² Unlike the various parts of Matthew & Luke, the writings supposedly to underlie John exhibit the same theology and the same language and style throughout."²⁶³ The linguistic argument constitutes very strong anti-school evidence.

- (7) Seventhly, the all-pervasive air of authority in the Gospel and Epistles strongly indicates that they are the work of one man and not a school.
- There is no equivocation at all in any part of the four books. The writer in each case is utterly assured of his understanding of the Gospel and of his 'Divine right' to proclaim it. Nowhere is this more plain in the Fourth Gospel than in the Prologue,²⁶⁴ where with measured confident tread he sets forth the doctrine of the eternal Λόγος and the mysteries of the Incarnation. The same characteristic is seen in the claims within the book to historicity.²⁶⁵ Cullmann is obviously impressed by the air of authority of the Fourth Evangelist. In 'The Johannine Circle' he uses the phrase "a strong personality" (or an expansion of it) at least six times.²⁶⁶ Once he refers to the "towering personality"²⁶⁷ of the Evangelist, and twice he remarks on the "sovereign manner" in which even Jesus' speeches are dealt with in the Fourth Gospel compared with the Synoptics.

The Fourth Epistle does, if anything, reveal the writer's awareness of authority and "holy indignation" against all that would oppose the Faith even more clearly. So obvious is this that illustration is almost superfluous.²⁶⁸ The most pertinent fact regarding 1 John is the anonymity of the book - not the anonymity of the insignificant, but that of the unquestioned leader, the authority, one who - inter alia - was there when the Gospel events took place.²⁶⁹ When the public reader of the missive disclosed its contents to the local congregation, he did not have to justify the authority of the writer - his acknowledged identity and office was indelibly stamped on every line.

The organisational (as distinct from the merely spiritual) authority of the writer is most explicit in 2 and 3 John. In

both the title *πρεσβύτερος* is used, presumably carrying with it not only the dignity of age and respect, but also a reference to a recognised important official position.²⁷⁰ At least this is strongly implied in both books. In 2 John 10 an explicit practical instruction is given without either hesitation or embarrassment: "If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting." It would not be easy to find a more assured statement encompassing both theological truth and personal conviction in the whole Johannine corpus than 2 John 9: "Any one who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son."²⁷¹

The Third Epistle is permeated with awareness of authority also.²⁷² The very tone of verse 2b:²⁷³ "I know that it is well with your soul" is that of a dignified leader. Versus 2 and 3 in fact prepare the present-day reader for the revelation that the writer is the spiritual father of Gaius (verse 4). In verse 11 the unfaltering doctrinal conviction which is to characteristic of the other Johannine books appears once more: "Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. He who does good is of God; he who does evil has not seen God."

3 John 9 ff, far from showing that Diotrephes has any real authority (as Käsemann suggested)²⁷⁴, does the opposite. The import of the passage is that the Elder is settled in his position as the recognised church leader in the area. So established is he that he is pained that someone (and someone, in particular, who is exhibiting an evil unchristlike spirit) should "not acknowledge my authority". The writer - the legitimate authority - may find it necessary to come and contend with a man whose insubordination is both verbal and practical.²⁷⁵

The crux, then, in the matter of the writer's air of authority is this: to divide the authorship of the corpus among two or more different writers is not really to imply a master/disciple relationship, but to imply that several people, the details of whose doctrine and practice and circumstances so closely correspond as to virtually force the scholar to place them in one small area, are all undisputed masters. It is a far more natural hypothesis to postulate a single writer.²⁷⁶

(8) Eighthly, the intellectual capacity exhibited in the various writings is uniform, a fact which is at variance with school theories. To be sure, some have denied the point,²⁷⁷ but usually as a corollary to the largely-abandoned belief that the theology itself is markedly different.²⁷⁸

In the first place, it may be stated that the high intelligence of the author of the Fourth Gospel is almost universally affirmed.²⁷⁹ Secondly, the writer/s of the Epistles is/are close enough to the Fourth Gospel in style and doctrine to make even scholars opposed to common authorship acknowledge the marked similarity.²⁸⁰ There is, for example, no such gulf in approach, method, and sheer intellectual grasp as there is between, say, 'Barnabas' and Hebrews.²⁸¹ Yet the writer of the Epistles is not creative, i.e. he is not creative, relative to the Fourth Gospel. In neither ideas nor diction is there obvious development or real difference. He repeats distinctive Johannine concepts,²⁸² doing so sometimes in the phraseology of the Gospel, but often in subtly varied ways. This phenomenon was described by A.E. Brooke,²⁸³ who demonstrated his contention that "the similarity (between the Gospel and 1 John) is not confined to actual phrases used, but extends to common types, in which the same outline is variously filled up".

It seems inconceivable that an imitator with a truly creative mind would have employed so subtle and yet so narrow a type of dependence;²⁸⁴ he would surely have shown more basic originality.

The combination of high intellectual capacity and achievement in the Epistles with little originality (from the angle of a comparison with the Fourth Gospel) finds its most natural explanation in the conclusion that one writer wrote all the books, a writer who is theologically and conceptually self-consistent, but who employs his tricks of diction in somewhat varied ways.

Another point indicating a type of mentality - a mental quirk - rather than ability or lack of it, may be mentioned here. The writer/s of the various Johannine books show a propensity for either omitting his/their name/s altogether, or else of taking it for granted that the simplest signature will suffice.²⁸⁵ In this connection it is not only that 1 John lacks any author's ²⁸⁶

name and that 2 and 3 John have only a designation but no name. The shorter books differ from all other New Testament letters²⁸⁷ in that the latter contain both a name and a biographical note of the type "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle -"; "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. -"; "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ -"; "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James -".²⁸⁸

There is perhaps nothing really noteworthy in this, but it is an element in the total picture of a single writer with his own distinctive habits.

(9) Ninthly, there are passages in the books (and to some extent testimony in ancient extra-biblical works) which show that the writer was a man of advanced years. If this be exhibited consistently throughout the corpus, it makes school theories improbable, since the centre of those views is usually the belief that the literary part of the community consisted of an older theologian and younger disciple/s. The evidence:

- (i) The Fourth Gospel is often said to have gone through a long process of composition, "the result of a life-time of thought and enquiry".²⁸⁹ While this opinion must be treated with some reserve,²⁹⁰ it must be admitted that external corroboration is provided by Clement of Alexandria's and Eusebius' oft-quoted remarks about the Fourth Gospel being written subsequently to, and with a view to supplementing, the Synoptic Gospels.²⁹¹
- (ii) If John 21 be accepted as an integral part of the Fourth Gospel,²⁹² then 21:23 indicates the passage of considerable time because, first, a particular idea had had an opportunity to "spread abroad among the brethren", and secondly, the longevity of the disciple (= the author?) was apparently the occasion of puzzlement among Christians.
- (iii) Both 1 John and 2 John speak of the heritage²⁹³ of the readers which they "have" or "have heard" $\alpha\pi' \alpha\rho\chi\eta\varsigma$. This phrase, "from (the) beginning", indicates a longish Christian history on the part of the recipients. In all the verses concerned the writer always uses the second person plural - "you have -" etc. but far from deliberately dissociating himself from the earliest days of the Church, he uses similar but still more explicit statements when

he includes himself. He is presented as a foundational witness of ὁ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς²⁹⁴; he employs an impressive build-up of no fewer than six first person plural perfect or aorist verbs²⁹⁵ to underline the true historicity of what he describes, and his own part as an observer of the earthly life of Christ.²⁹⁶

The picture presented, then, is that of readers who had been Christians for a considerable period, but for all that they were not among the original followers of Jesus. The writer was: he was therefore a man of fairly advanced years when writing 1 and 2 John.

(iv) The title πρεσβύτερος in 2 and 3 John probably also indicates an older person,²⁹⁷ as does

(v) the fatherly spirit portrayed in terms like πατρίδια²⁹⁸, τεκνία²⁹⁹ and τέκνα³⁰⁰ in the three Epistles. In fact this usage surely has to do not only with age, but with a distinctive psychological frame of mind as well.³⁰¹

(vi) In 1 John 2:12-14 there is the double triad of injunctions to τεκνία / πατρίδια, παιτέρες, and νεανίσκοι. It is perhaps possible to discern here an indirect allusion to all the phases that the writer has himself passed through during his long Christian pilgrimage - i.e. he enjoins others in the light of his own experience.

(10) An apparently consistent social and racial background reflected in the Gospel and Epistles tells against the validity of the school concept. The allusions in the Fourth Gospel are notoriously difficult to reconcile completely.³⁰² The Epistles give no details of a direct nature about the author's background. Once again, therefore, any comparison must be based on criteria of subjects and treatment of them. Now, there is no more socially telling criterion than habits of speech (as Peter found!).³⁰³ The point has been made often enough in different contexts in the foregoing that the literary style of the four writings is essentially indivisible.³⁰⁴ This at least points towards a single writer for the entire corpus. Two other observations are apposite:

(i) The Greek of the Johannine books, though simple, is "correct".³⁰⁵

(ii) The obvious Semitisms of the Fourth Gospel (two doubtful examples in the Epistles)³⁰⁶ seem to belong rather to the original speakers and milieu than to the writer of the Gospel. Additionally,

however, there is (according to Barrett) a Semitic flavour to the whole Fourth Gospel.³⁰⁷ If such be the case with the Gospel, it is also the case with the Epistles.³⁰⁸ All of this is compatible with the 'marginal Judaism' background advocated by Cullmann and Barrett.

The fact that the Gospel and the Epistles all reflect an apparently identical combination of Greek and Jewish elements entirely fits the concept of a single author, and is correspondingly more difficult to reconcile with the school concept.

(C) CONCLUSION TO 'SCHOOL' DISCUSSION

The choice for the present-day student of the Johannine literature is between postulating a plurality of authors who all had an air of authority, a fatherly pastoral spirit,³⁰⁹ who were probably elderly,³¹⁰ who enjoyed a similar social standing, who lived at about the same time in the same province, whose educational background coincided, whose intellectual ability, theology, and linguistic style down to the smallest details were apparently identical, and who were all actually in positions of considerable (diocesan?) authority, or simply accepting the simplest and most natural hypothesis, viz. that one author penned the four books.³¹¹ To conceive of two different men who corresponded to each other so closely is difficult, three almost impossible, and four frankly incredible. To choose even two in preference to recognising only one author appears to be accepting a more difficult and unlikely hypothesis and rejecting the natural, obvious, and logical one.

(D) THE 'ONE AUTHOR' CONCEPT

What is meant by saying that the four Johannine books had just one author? Cullmann begins his treatment of "The problem" of Johannine authorship by asking several questions: "Of which author are we speaking? Of the author of the original Gospel? Of the final redactor? Of intermediary redactors? Of the author of a particularly important source? Of a man revered in the Johannine circle who could have been regarded by tradition as the author of the Gospel, because his testimony stood behind the real author, although he himself had not composed the Gospel?"³¹²

Cullmann then goes on to speak of three phases in the completion of the Fourth Gospel - oral tradition (perhaps it also existed in part in writing),

written Gospel ("whole outline and basic theological aim") and complete revision by a redactor or redactors.

Now, the view of the present writer is not out of accord with these stages. The point being made, however, is that, whatever sources were used, however the work progressed, and whatever subsequent revisions took place,³¹³ one writer wrote all (or nearly all) of the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles exercising a very tight personal control over all his material. Nothing else will suffice to explain the astounding uniformity between and within the Gospel and Epistles. Whether the Christian concerned be called 'author' or "evangelist" is immaterial. He was both.

The position advocated here, then, is compatible in its essentials with that described in the Muratorian Canon.³¹⁴

Various sources or traditions must have been used,³¹⁵ since the Gospel and Epistles of John do not constitute a denial of basic 'Synoptic' or 'Pauline' Christianity,³¹⁶ but only a peculiar view or emphasis within or alongside others. No Johannine book is a rock in the first century Christian sky, an entity which like Melchizedek "is without father or mother or genealogy."³¹⁷

Moreover, consultations³¹⁸ must surely have taken place (as the Muratorian Canon suggests).

Finally, revisions there may have been, but these were by the same writer as the original.³¹⁹

As with the Gospel, so with the Epistles: the hypothesis strongly suggests one writer for the whole of 1 John (as do Nauck and Schnackenburg in different ways).³²⁰

2 John and 3 John are also entirely the work of one author, and he is the same person as the author of the Fourth Gospel and 1 John.

FOOTNOTES:

- ¹ p. 3 (above)
- ² See below, pp. 143 ff.
- ³ In modern times the Johannine 'school' theory of authorship can be traced back to Johannes Weiss, whose book *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (1904) was discussed by W.F. Howard in 'Christianity According to St. John', Duckworth, London, 1943, pp.14 and 15. "Johannes Weiss" (says Howard) "made one significant remark. These writings all came from the same circle, in the same region of the church, about the same time". R.H. Strachan, in his article on the Fourth Gospel in Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels (1906) favoured the testimony of a group of eyewitnesses with John the Apostle as "the guiding mind".
- ⁴ John 1;14, 19;35, 20;30,31, 21;24.
- ⁵ Rev. 1;9. See also 22;8: "I John am he who heard and saw these things".
- ⁶ See pp. 253 ff
- ⁷ See below, pp. 164 ff.
- ⁸ Rudolf Bultmann expressed the opinion that "the letter form (of 2 John) should probably be taken as a fiction". Commentary, p.1. Houlden suggests that 2 John might be a genuine letter; he thinks that it could perhaps have served as a brief initial sketch of the material which later comprised 1 John. (Commentary, p.140). C.H. Dodd saw some merit in the suggestion of Bultmann, but rejected it on two grounds, viz. 2 John's generally Johannine nature and colouring, and the early acceptance of 2 John before 3 John (Commentary, p.lxv). Neil Alexander claims that 2 John cannot be reckoned a consciously imitative fabrication based on 1 John both because of the incomprehensibility of such an act and the extreme ingenuity which would have been involved (Commentary, p.139). Schnackenburg rejects the idea that either 2 John or 3 John is a fictitious letter. Elements favouring his position (he says) are lay-out, style, concise treatment of concrete questions, and the naming of individual persons (in 3 John): Commentary, p.295; cf. p.305. Bultmann's claim cannot be regarded as totally disproven, but for all the above reasons it is neither necessary nor likely. (See also p.15 above).
- ⁹ Significant treatments include those of W.F. Howard in 1945, C.K. Barrett in 1955, Donald Guthrie in 1965, Raymond E. Brown in 1966, and Sanders/Mastin in 1968.
- ¹⁰ pp.295 ff
- ¹¹ See also Bultmann's commentary, p.107, note 1.
- ¹² Ibid, p.296. The reference is to Eusebius, HE III 39:15.
- ¹³ Irenaeus, plainly alluding to 1 Cor. 1:29, calls the Apostle Paul a Presbyter: "The Scripture has thus sufficiently reproved him (Solomon), as the presbyter remarked, in order that no flesh may glory in the sight of the Lord". Ante-Nicene Fathers (American reprint), Buffalo, 1885, p.499. Why, then, should Papias not

so describe the Apostle John? (cf. 1 Peter 5:1, where the Apostle Peter called himself σὺμπροσβύτερος).

¹⁴p.95 - Bultmann's Commentary.

¹⁵In the Pericope Adulterae πρεσβυτέρων is used as a superlative (John 8:9).

¹⁶See pp. 70 and 71 above. It is interesting, for instance, that C.K. Barrett postulates no fewer than three groups between Jesus and Papias. This puts the latter at a greater distance from the former in terms of the number of intervening witnesses than is the case with Irenaeus (even though he lived later). As far as Irenaeus was concerned the only intermediaries between Jesus and himself were the Apostles and Polycarp. In Adv. Haer, 3:3,4 Irenaeus explicitly says: "Polycarp also was not only instructed by Apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by Apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth -". It has, moreover, often been observed that Eusebius had a special reason for postulating the existence of 2 'Johns'. He wished to assign the Apocalypse to a different John from the author of the Gospel (HE 3:39,6); accordingly, "his interpretation may not have been impartial." (Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, Gospels and Acts, Tyndale, 1965, p.243). Lastly, it is worth noting the verbs in the quotation from Papias by Eusebius: " - if ever any man came who had been a follower of the elders, I would enquire about the sayings of the elders; what Andrew said, or Peter, or Philip, or Thomas, or James, or John, or Matthew, or any other of the disciples; and what Aristion says, and John the Elder, who are disciples of the Lord". (The Quotation is taken from H. Bettenson, Documents of the Christian Church, 2nd Edition, Oxford, 1963, p.38). The key verbs "said" and "says" are translations of εἶπεν and λέγουσιν respectively in the Greek text used by J.B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, MacMillan, London, 1891, p.516). The distinctive tenses employed appear to indicate a difference between the apostles who had died and John the one apostle who had not. Guthrie, on this basis, disagrees with Schnackenburg: "It seems on the whole a more intelligible understanding of Papias' words is obtained if it be assumed that the two Johns are to be identified and that Papias is distinguishing between what John had said in the past and what at the time of his enquiry he was still saying". (Ibid, p.242). It is quite impossible to prove either that Papias meant to indicate one John the apostle or two prominent Johns. The evidence is insufficient. Nevertheless, Irenaeus deserves to be taken very seriously. Raymond Brown writes: "There are some valid points in the objections raised to this tradition (of Irenaeus), but Irenaeus' statement is far from having been disproved". The Gospel according to John, Vol. 1, p.XCII

¹⁷See (e) on p. 77

¹⁸Commentary, p.297

¹⁹Ibid, p.34

- ²⁰The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, Epworth, London, 1945, pp.118 and 252 ff. Also the article by the same writer in The Journal of Theological Studies, 48, 1947, pp.12 ff.
- ²¹The Johannine Epistles, pp.xlviiff, and (especially) the article "The First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel" in The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 1937, pp.129 ff.
- ²²See Brooke, pp.ii ff
- ²³Brooke shows only 12, but Law included another 4; The Tests of Life, pp.342,3.
- ²⁴Brooke, p.V
- ²⁵See the lists in Brooke, pp.229 ff. "The Gospel of John contains 15 240 words, only 1 011 of them different....In proportion to its size, the Gospel employs the smallest vocabulary in the New Testament". Robert Grant, a Historical Introduction to the New Testament, Fontana, 1971, p.149.
- ²⁶Westcott, pp.x1, xli
- ²⁷Howard, p.120. Of seven such pairs listed, two occur in the Epistles: αἰτέω/ἑρωτάω - John 16:23, 24, 26 and 1 John 5:16; γινώσκω/οἶδα - John 14:7. (Actually γινώσκω twice in the U.B.S. text; cf. the margin. 8:19 has οἶδα thrice) and 1 John 2:29. Actually the matter of Johannine 'synonyms' may not be so simple as Howard implies. In discussing the various Johannine words for sending (ἀποστέλλω/πέμπω) and seeing (θεωρέω/δράω/βλέπω) C.C. Tarelli came to the conclusion that the criteria of their use was not "difference of meaning, but difference of tense or mood, - a preference for one verb in certain of its grammatical forms, and for the other in other forms." In the case of αἰτέω/ἑρωτάω "It seems as though the difference of subject determines the difference in verbs." Article, 'Johannine Synonyms', Journal of Theological Studies, 47, 48, 1946/7, pages 175-177. See also Robert Grant, Ibid, pp.150,151.
- ²⁸Brooke, p.iv
- ²⁹Fourth Gospel - 10 times; 1 John - 5; the Apocalypse - 5; rest of New Testament - 5.
- ³⁰p.vi
- ³¹See Moulton & Geden, A Concordance to the Greek Testament, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1897, pp.489-494.
- ³²Howard, p.119. Cf. Barnabas Lindars, The Gospel of John, p.45.
- ³³There are about eight other non-elliptical uses of ἄλλ' ἵνα in the New Testament.
- ³⁴The non-Johannine text concerned is Mark 14:49, which has to do with the fulfilment of Old Testament Scripture, as have John 13:18 and 15:25.

- 35 The distribution is: Fourth Gospel - 7 instances; 1 John - 6;
2 John - 1; 3 John - 1.
- 36 Brooke asserts (p.V) that the relative is used infrequently.
This is true of the Epistles, but Moulton & Geden show $\delta\varsigma$
etc. to be about as common in John as in other parts of the
New Testament.
- 37 John 6:37,39; 17:2; and 17:24
- 38 Dodd (Rylands article, p.136) calls $\pi\alpha\upsilon\delta$ a possible
Aramaism, or at least an example of a class of "peculiar
idioms - characteristic of the style of the Fourth Gospel."
He ignores 1 John 5:4, which is parallel to Fourth Gospel use,
and not opposed to it.
- 39 Howard, p.120: John - 13 times; 1 John - 13; 2 John - 1, but
Matthew only 5 and Luke 5.
- 40 Howard, The Common Authorship of the Johannine Gospel and
Epistles, pp.21 ff.
- 41 Ibid, p.23 (Howard borrowed the words from Brooke).
- 42 Ibid, p.24
- 43 A quotation Howard uses from E.F. Scott, and which he himself
approves. Ibid, p.23. Howard himself says "the writer of the
Epistles applies the Johannine teaching of the Paraclete."
- 44 Ibid, p.24
- 45 Dodd (Rylands Bulletin article) pp.138,9.
- 46 Ibid, pp.131,2. Dodd gives the appropriate figures for different
particles, but not so much about the disproportionate frequency
of a few particles. He notes that $\delta\tau\iota$ is twice as common
in 1 John as in the Gospel. Strangely, however, he dismissed
 $\gamma\alpha\rho$ with the statement " $\gamma\alpha\rho$, which is frequent in the
Gospel, occurs only twice in the Epistle." In fact the word
occurs 3 times in 1 John, once in 2 John, and once in 3 John
(1 John 2:19, 4:20, 5:3; 2 John 11; 3 John 3). By contrast,
it is found 66 times in the Fourth Gospel (more or less the
usual New Testament frequency). $\Delta\epsilon$ is not mentioned by Dodd
(except in his list on p.132), though it appears 212 times in
John and only 9 in 1 John. $\circ\upsilon\upsilon$ is still more surprising;
it occurs in 3 John 8 and nowhere else in the Epistles. In
John it appears far more than in any other New Testament book,
though it is to be observed that all these occurrences are found
in narrative parts of the Gospel.
- 47 See above, note 36.
- 48 Dodd (Rylands article), p.132
- 49 Ibid, pp.136,7. See also Barrett's commentary on the Fourth
Gospel, pp.8-11.

- 50 i.e. the placing of clauses one after another without words to indicate co-ordination and subordination.
- 51 It is probably on the basis of the latter that H.P.V. Nunn said that the Greek of 1 John "has an obvious Aramaic tone." Article, 'The First Epistle of St. John', Evangelical Quarterly, 17, 1945, p.296. So also Ralph Russell, '1, 2, and 3 John' in A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, edited by R.C. Fuller, Nelson, London, 1969, p.1257.
- 52 1 John 2:22, 3:12, 3:17, and 5:5
- 53 Ibid, p.135
- 54 Ibid, p.141
- 55 that of 1 John 3:12
- 56 Chronologically, of course, this and the succeeding points preceded Howard's observations noted above, pp. 79 and 80.
- 57 1 John 3:2
- 58 2:18. Dodd says that in the Fourth Gospel Satan is already judged. Ibid, p.144.
- 59 Yet he also admits that the designation of Christ as *παράκλητος πρὸς τὸν πατέρα* in close proximity with *ἰλασμός* could just possibly indicate "propitiation" as traditionally understood by the Reformers. See below, p.196 note 38.
- 60 Ibid, p.146
- 61 A misprint for 1 John iv -
- 62 Ibid, p.147
- 63 1 John 1:5. Dodd calls this not a New Testament concept, but "a commonplace of current Hellenistic religious thought, deriving from an amalgam of Platonism and Zoroastrianism. Ibid, p.149
- 64 1 John 3:2
- 65 Ibid, p.150
- 66 Dodd (Commentary), p.xlix. Baur had referred to 1 John as "a weak imitation of the Gospel", and had complained of its "poverty of thought - tautology - lack of logical energy." See Robert Law, The Tests of Life, p.339.
- 67 Dodd (Rylands article) pp.138,9. See above, p.80, point (1).
- 68 Howard (J.T.S. article), p.16
- 69 C.K. Barrett, whose general concern is more with Semitic nuances than easily recognisable instances, objects to Howard's assessment: "That would indeed be a convenient explanation, but the Semitic colouring is a trait of the uniform style of the entire Gospel." The Gospel of John and Judaism, SPCK, London, 1975, p.59. Earlier Barrett has a useful passage (based in part on the work of C.F. Burney), where he defines an Aramaism as "a grammatical

or syntactical construction which, although unusual in Greek, is normal in Aramaic." He stresses the importance of "the distinction between actual and virtual translation (from, say, a Semitic to Greek milieu). "Actual translation needs no definition; virtual translation occurs when an author, although composing freely, introduces Semitic constructions because he naturally thinks in Semitic forms of expression". Ibid, p.21. However it is not merely the background (Palestinian as far as the Fourth Gospel events are concerned), but the foreground (the wider - mostly pagan - world as far as 1 John is concerned), which would influence a bilingual writer.

⁷⁰ Points (3), (5), (7), (8), (9)(b), (9)(c), (9)(d), and (10) on pages 78 to 80 above.

⁷¹ Points (7)(b) and (c) on p. 81 above.

⁷² See 1 John 2:22; "Who is the liar - ?" Also 1 John 5:5: "Who is it that overcomes - ?"

⁷³ Howard's reply is that "we should expect these rhetorical devices in an epistle which conform to the style of the Diatribe rather than in the narrative or the polemical discourses of the Gospel". J.T.S. article, p.16. Howard is less than convincing here.

⁷⁴ p. 80 above, point (3).

⁷⁵ See Howard (J.T.S. article), p.15

⁷⁶ J.T.S. Volume 49, pp.147-156.

⁷⁷ See page 82 and the corresponding earlier sections.

⁷⁸ See (6), (9)(a) and (11) on pages 78 and 79 and points (4), (5), and (7)(a) on page 80. The first three considerations (the 'fors') are about balanced by the last three (the 'against's'). A few remarks are, however, called for with respect to compound verbs. Dodd notes only eleven different compound verbs in 1 John, but no fewer than 96 in John. He states that the use of a variety of such verbs provides "a significant indication of the character of a writer's style". If this be the case, it is surprising indeed to find five compound verbs in 2 John, and seven in 3 John. Since the tentative conclusion Dodd offers is that the three Epistles are from one hand (Commentary, p.lxvi), it seems that there is a conflict of evidence at this point. If the Gospel is "richer, more varied, and more flexible" than 1 John according to this criterion, are the shorter Epistles richer than either? See also Howard (J.T.S. article), p.15. W.G. Wilson came to the interesting conclusion that compound verbs appear "more suitable for narratives (i.e. the Gospels and Acts) than for discourses or epistolary writings." Ibid, p.154.

⁷⁹ See Schnackenburg (Commentary), p.35, as well as Howard (J.T.S. article), p.17. W.G. Wilson took up the question of the inclusion or exclusion of similar important words in connection with the ten more generally acknowledged Pauline works. At the end he said: "Thus it would appear that the number of important terms used in any particular book varies according to the length and subject-matter of the book."

- ⁸⁰ Howard (J.T.S. article), p.16. See p. 78 point (1).
- ⁸¹ Rylands article, p.129. He says very much more to the same effect.
- ⁸² Commentary, p.35. Cf. Robert Grant, A Historical Introduction to the New Testament, Fontana, 1971, p.231, and John Painter, John: Witness & Theologian, SPCK, London, 1975. Cf. H.P.V.Nunn: "The coincidence in language and thought between the two books is as close as it can possibly be". 'The First Epistle of John', Evangelical Quarterly, 17, 1945, p.296.
- ⁸³ Rylands article, p.142
- ⁸⁴ J.T.S. article, p.16
- ⁸⁵ See above, p. 117 note 69
- ⁸⁶ The Tests of Life, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1909, p.353
- ⁸⁷ John 5:28: ἀκούσουσιν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ; 1 John 2:28 and 3:2: φανερωθῆ / ἐφανερώθη. Recent studies amply confirm this: " - Rica & Blank each maintain that the evangelist looks toward a future resurrection and that resurrection is not to be understood as demythologized or spiritualized by the evangelist. The advancement of contemporary scholarship on this point is found in the fact that there is no appeal to a post-Johannine redactor theory in order to account for the presence of future resurrection texts in the Gospel." Robert Kysar, p.213. John Painter also disagrees with Dodd and with Bultmann (who says that the future eschatological emphasis in the Fourth Gospel is due to a redactor). Painter adds: "What is more, the element of realization is not absent from the Epistle (2:8; 5:20)". John: Witness and Theologian, p.106. See also F.F. Bruce, The Epistles of John, Revell, New Jersey, 1970, p.31.
- ⁸⁸ Both verses use the neuter ^αἐν, which is employed in the Fourth Gospel to express the essential Father/Son relationship, as, e.g. in 10:30 ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐσμεν.
- ⁸⁹ The same thought appears to be present whether the U.B.S. text αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῶν ὥσιν or margin (αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῶν ἐν ὥσιν) be adopted.
- ⁹⁰ The compatibility of Fourth Gospel and 1 John eschatology (to put it no higher) is defended by C.F.D. Moule in his article "The Individualism of the Fourth Gospel" in Novum Testamentum, Vol.5, 1962, p.180. Moule writes that, while there are no explicit references to Christ's coming again in the Fourth Gospel (Cf. 1 John 2:28, 3:2), the Ascension "in the 'Lucan' manner", i.e. visibly and non-mystically, implies a return. Cf. Moule's article "A Neglected Factor in the Interpretation of Johannine Eschatology" in the supplementary volume to Novum Testamentum Vo. XXIV, pp.155 ff. Moule's contention is that another criterion besides the 'linear or realised' choice must be introduced, "namely, the difference between individualistic and collective eschatologies". An individual person may be in the realm of realised eschatology, but "one cannot say of the whole society that, for it, the kingdom of God has come, or that it has passed from death to life." Moule's main point is that the Johannine

message is an individual one. Having found this principle in the Fourth Gospel, he finds no difficulty at all in discerning it in 1 John also; realised eschatology is by no means absent there (2:8b, 3:14, 3:24, 4:16b), but it once again relates to the individual. Moule thus finds the same principle in the Gospel and 1 John, "and I find no difficulty in believing the Epistle to be by the same author as the Gospel."

⁹¹ For these concepts and the appropriate 1 John parallels, see Schnackenburg, p.37 and p.38. Cf. Painter, *Ibid*, pp.107,108.

⁹² 3:24, 4:13, 5:6-8

⁹³ Two passages require special mention. It was noted above (on p. 81) that Dodd disclaimed any reference to the personality of the Spirit in 1 John 4:1-6. His statement is not wholly true. 1 John 4 does use neuter articles to denote the different ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΑ, but says Πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ in verse 2 and Πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ in verse 3. The verb here is more appropriate to spirits conceived as personal (including τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ) than to what Dodd calls mere "prophetic inspiration". With regard to 1 John 5:6-8 Dodd says that the πνεῦμα must somehow be "external and objective" like the other two witnesses. This is not necessarily so just because strict grammatical consistency seems to require it. In fact Dodd himself notes the masculine gender of the statement τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες. He says "if this is a personifying of the spirit, it also personifies the water and the blood." Against this it may be said that all three words (πνεῦμα, ὕδωρ, and αἷμα) are grammatically neuter, and that there is nothing in the last two to justify the masculine, but there is in πνεῦμα , which, therefore, as the initial and key term, is responsible for the all-embracing masculine plural. The masculine terms are present, therefore, just because the Holy Spirit is referred to in the passage, and in personal terms at that. See also Painter, pp.106,107.

⁹⁴ Cf. Painter (p.104): "Contrary to Dodd, the Epistle is more consciously anti-Gnostic than the Gospel. In the Gospel terms are used without explanation which could only be used in the Epistle with careful clarification."

⁹⁵ pp.30 ff

⁹⁶ Rylands article, p.149

⁹⁷ "The use of the word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ in the Johannine Epistles" - an article in *Studies in John*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1970, pp.66 ff.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p.71

⁹⁹ Cf. Kysar, p.112: "Studies of the use of the title CHRISTOS in the Fourth Gospel have tended to confirm the hypothesis that the evangelist presupposed the Jewish use of the term arising out of Old Testament interpretation."

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p.74

¹⁰¹ pp.35-37

¹⁰² For a contrary view, see Norman Perrin, *The New Testament, An Introduction*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York etc., 1974, p.223.

¹⁰³ Schnackenburg is opposed to theories which deny the unity of 1 John, or which advocate an extensive editing. Thus he says on p.13: "the thought-world of 1 John - is to be understood as a unity. One must follow the original methodically, and only go over to such hypotheses (as those of Preisker and Windisch) when a unified explanation of the work proves to be impossible", and on p.15 he says that the 'prototype' and 'double revision' theory of Bultmann "awakens little confidence". In his recent book, *John: Witness and Theologian*, SPCK, London, 1975, John Painter supports Schnackenburg: "The author was responsible for the whole composition." (p.117).

¹⁰⁴ Commentary, pp.18 and 19

¹⁰⁵ The judgment is based not on impressions (as Dodd's is at this point), but on stylistic criteria, e.g. the use or absence of the optative, future participle, future infinitive, οὐκ, ἔτι, etc (9 criteria in all). On this basis the "lowest linguistic stratum" in the New Testament includes Mark, John, Revelation, and the Pastorals. The highest stratum comprises the Lucan books, Paul, and Hebrews. (Matthew, Ephesians, James, and 1 Peter are placed in between, and the remaining New Testament books are ignored). A little later Kilpatrick repeats that "the raw material of John's Greek was of the lowest level in the New Testament"; one reason given for this is the astonishingly frequent occurrence of οὐκ: "Hermas, another writer whose level of style is low, has many instances of it." The above information comes from the article "What John Tells Us about John" in the book *Studies in John*, a supplement to *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. XXIV, pp.75 ff. Kilpatrick's conclusions are interesting but narrowly based; e.g. he admits to using α to § words only in comparing John's Gospel with the LXX, Philo, Josephus, and the Hermetica (pp.77-79). He is radically opposed by W.F. Albright, who subscribes unreservedly to the conclusions of J.A. Montgomery: " - the Gospel of St. John is the composition of a well-informed Jew ... excellence of the historical data and the philological phenomena of the book." "Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John" - an article in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, C.U.P., 1964, p.162

¹⁰⁶ Howard (J.T.S. article), p.25

¹⁰⁷ Points (c) to (f) on page 84

¹⁰⁸ Commentary, p.34

¹⁰⁹ p.50

¹¹⁰ Whose commentary he reviewed in *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol.28, 1975, p.83.

¹¹¹ More will be said later about the 'school' theories of authorship.

- ¹¹² The table on p.lxxiv of Brooke's commentary may be usefully consulted here. Cf. Charles C. Ryrie: "The arguments for the common authorship of the Gospel and the Epistle are conclusive." The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, edited by C.F. Pfeiffer and E.F. Harrison, Moody Press, 1962, p.1464. Cf. I.H. Marshall, article 'John, Epistles of' in the New Bible Dictionary, IVF, London, 1962, p.644.
- ¹¹³ Some such word must of course be used, though strictly its use appears to prejudice the order of writing.
- ¹¹⁴ Commentary, p.297; the first two are mentioned on p 26 above.
- ¹¹⁵ Points (i) to (iv) involve verbal agreement, but more than that - viz. theological agreement as well.
- ¹¹⁶ The following are also to be noted (though they do not occur in 2 John):
- | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|----|---|----|
| μαρτυρία | 6 | - | 1 | 13 | 9 | 8 |
| μαρτυρέω | 6 | - | 4 | 33 | 4 | 29 |
- Additionally, εἶναι ἐκ is found once in 3 John and 16 times in 1 John; half of the remaining New Testament occurrences are in the Fourth Gospel.
- ¹¹⁷ The 2 John reference is the shorter in every instance except the last, where they are of equal length.
- ¹¹⁸ Or at least a very widespread belief in common authorship. See Schnackenburg, p.303.
- ¹¹⁹ For details see chapter 4 (below), especially pp. 209 ff and above, p. 89 points (i) to (iv)
- ¹²⁰ Bultmann does not actually say this: he states that "complete clarity (regarding the mutual relations of the Johannine Epistles) is not possible". Yet he says (a) that "2 John is definitely a secondary work" (p.1.), (b) that the first three verses of 2 John show "dependence on tradition formulations (which) may be an indication that 2 John came from a relatively later period of Christian literature". (p.109), (c) that 2 John 12 is "obviously copied" from 1 John 1:4 (p.115).
- ¹²¹ So Alexander says "These... verses - sound thoroughly uncharitable. They suggest an exclusivism and spiritual arrogance more typical of Gnosticism than healthy Christianity". Commentary, p.155. Superficially, this might seem to support the thesis of E. Käsemann, but that thesis cannot be accepted for a number of very satisfying reasons (see above, pp. 21 and 22).
- ¹²² See Schnackenburg, p.298
- ¹²³ Dodd (Commentary, p.lxi) says that the total is 84. In the above count the U.B.S. text, which of course was not available to Dodd, was used.
- ¹²⁴ Irenaeus later described his Gnostic opponents as "those who imagine that they have hit upon something more beyond the truth". Book 5:20,1 (American Edition of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, p.548).

¹²⁵ But sixteen of these are found in the Fourth Gospel: *πρεσβύτερος, χάρις, εἰρήνη, χαίρω, εὐρίσκω, βλέπω, ἀπόλλυμι, ἐργάζομαι, πλήρης, διδαχή, φέρω, οἰκία, βούλομαι, ἐλπίζω, στόμα,* and *ἀδελφή* Cf. p. 93.

¹²⁶ See chapter 3 below.

¹²⁷ Eusebius, H.E., 6:25. The implication is probably that Origen himself accepted all three.

¹²⁸ H.E. 3:25

¹²⁹ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, Clarendon, Oxford (2nd Edition), 1968, pp.70,71.

¹³⁰ For this quotation and further details on the above evidences, see A.H. McNeile/C.S.C. Williams. *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, Oxford, 1953, pp.369 ff.

¹³¹ See p. 90 (2)

¹³² Mark 13:9

¹³³ p. 89 (3)

¹³⁴ p. 91

¹³⁵ McNeile/Williams (2nd Edition, 1953) pp.353-370, Donald Guthrie (*New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation*), pp.207,8, and Schnackenburg, pp.202,3 list a total of 19 quotations, references, canonical lists, etc. before AD.400 which involve 2 John. Additionally, Tertullian may perhaps be counted (see A.E. Brooke's *Commentary*, p.lviii).

¹³⁶ p. 90 (4)

¹³⁷ p.90 (1)

¹³⁸ Perhaps "in order to give the Johannine writings a personal stamp" ? Schnackenburg, p.295

¹³⁹ Bultmann says: "The often repeated conjecture concerning 2 John and 3 John, that the proper name has disappeared or been expunged, may be put down as fanciful". *Commentary*, p.107

¹⁴⁰ p. 89

¹⁴¹ p. 89 (2)

¹⁴² p. 90 (3)

¹⁴³ *λίαν, εὐρίσκω, βλέπω, ἐργάζομαι, φέρω, οἰκία.* Although not in 1 John, all of these except the rare word *λίαν* are common in the Fourth Gospel.

¹⁴⁴ *χαίρω, πλάνος, ἀπόλλυμι, μισθός, πλήρης, ἀπολαμβάνω, προάγω, διδαχή* and *κοινωνέω.*

¹⁴⁵ See pp. 206 ff; See also p. 89 (Schnackenburg's contribution)

- to the discussion of the 1 John/2 John comparison in the area of theology), and pp. 96 and 96 (Bergmeier).
- ¹⁴⁶ 1 John 2:18, 4:1, 2:15 ff.
- ¹⁴⁷ John 8:32; 14:16,17; 5:38; 15:7; 10:18; 13:34; 15:12; 14:15; 1:14; 4:36; 8:31; 15:11; 16:24.
- ¹⁴⁸ ἔκλεκτός, ἔλεος, λίκν, πλάνος, ἀπολαμβάνω, προάγω, κοινωνέω, ἀσπάζομαι, κυρία, ἀντίχριστος, χάριτης, and μέλανος. But see p. 123 note 125.
- ¹⁴⁹ Another, πρεσβύτερος, is found in the Pericope Adulterae only, and is used as a superlative in that passage.
- ¹⁵⁰ And the theology too; this scarcely merits a specific analysis here (see however, pp. 95 and 96 on the views of Roland Bergmeier).
- ¹⁵¹ Schleiermacher and Clemen supposed that 2 and 3 John were by different hands. Moffatt, Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1912, p.480.
- ¹⁵² More similar than is sometimes realised - see below pp. 186 ff note 211.
- ¹⁵³ Schnackenburg (p.297) says " - the different concerns which motivated the author in the church letter 2 John and the private letter 3 John".
- ¹⁵⁴ Cf. p.90
- ¹⁵⁵ i.e. πρεσβύτερος, εἰρήνη, χάρις, λίκν, ἐργάζομαι, βούλομαι, ἐλπίζω, στόμα, ἀσπάζομαι and μέλανος.
- ¹⁵⁶ How far the same thinking applies to the (still very short) First Epistle compared with the other books is a moot point. Perhaps the very intensity of New Testament studies relative to the study of any other body of literature generates its own pitfalls, throwing up criteria which would be regarded as capable of bearing less weight had they occurred in other contexts.
- ¹⁵⁷ Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche, Vol. 57, 1966, pp.93-100.
- ¹⁵⁸ A division of the authorship of the Epistles in this way was regarded as possible by Origen and other ancient writers. (see p. 91 above) and by C.K. Barrett in his Fourth Gospel Commentary (p.113).
- ¹⁵⁹ For Bergmeier it is a radical "existence dualism" in both cases, though developed in its "believing and not believing" aspect in the Fourth Gospel and in the direction of "true and false confession towards Jesus Christ" in 1 John, pp.94,5. Kysar surveys some modern treatments of two central questions relating to the dualism of the Fourth Gospel: (1) the kind of dualism in the Gospel: "Is it a radical, cosmic, even physical dualism of the gnostic kind; or is it an ethical and eschatological type of dualism typical of first century Jewish thought; or is it a modification of one or both of these?"

(2) the kind of relationship between John and Qumran.

On the first matter, Stemberger, Böcher, and Schnackenburg all refuse to identify Fourth Gospel dualism with radical cosmic dualism; all three writers link John's concept with Judaism in some form or another. For Stemberger, John's ethical dualism arises from Isaiah, the Jewish wisdom literature, and Jewish apocalyptic and sectarian thought. By contrast with ethical dualism, the Fourth Gospel dualism of servitude and freedom appears to have been influenced, inter alia, by Stoicism. Böcher traces Johannine dualism back to Old Testament thought which has been reshaped under Iranian influence. Schnackenburg grants some Syrian-type gnostic influence as a contributing factor to the Johannine concepts of 'truth' and 'life', but the influence "was conditioned by extra-biblical Jewish thought". By contrast with Stemberger, Böcher, and Schnackenburg, Schultz maintains that in the Fourth Gospel the world is set over against God, the dualism concerned being thoroughly cosmic and physical. The fact that Schnackenburg's concept of Johannine dualism is much more limited than that of Bergmeier is also very evident in *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament*, Burns and Oates, London, (E.T.) 1965, p.310.

On the second question - the Fourth Gospel/Qumran relationship - four recent and important writers agree: "Raymond Brown, Leon Morris, James Price, and James Charlesworth have all argued that the similarities between Qumran and the Fourth Gospel on the matter of dualism necessitate that one establish some association of the two, but that the influence of the former on the latter must be regarded as indirect rather than direct". Robert Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel*, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1975, pages 131 to 137. Much important additional material is included by Kysar under the heading 'The Johannine Dualism', *Ibid*, pages 215 to 221.

¹⁶⁰ i.e. in the Fourth Gospel and 1 John ἀλήθεια represents "the divine reality"; in one place it is described as "dualistically - metaphysically orientated." (p.96).

¹⁶¹ p.96

¹⁶² John 9. It is here that Bergmeier finds his starting point.

¹⁶³ p.96. Bergmeier sees a parallel theological shift in the use of πίστις in the Pastorals relative to the generally acknowledged Pauline Epistles; in the Pastoral Epistles πίστις, and in the shorter Johannine Epistles ἀλήθεια, both stand for sound doctrine concerning Christ (p.100).

¹⁶⁴ Because of the theological development from a basically dynamic emphasis to that of the Faith seen as orthodoxy.

¹⁶⁵ But not πλάνη, which in any case is found only once even in 1 John, and not at all in the Fourth Gospel.

¹⁶⁶ Commentary, p.143

- ¹⁶⁷ Commentary, pp. 108,9, footnote 8: " - in what follows upon VI (of 2 John) 'truth' is the object of knowledge, and this cannot be said of doctrine. Also (re 3 John 3 ff), one cannot very well speak of 'walking in the doctrine', as he can of 'walking in the truth'."
- ¹⁶⁸ See above, p. 14 (Bultmann); pp. 16 and 17 (Dodd); p. 23 (Schnackenburg); p. 42 (Barrett); p. 43 (Brown); p.48 (Houlden).
- ¹⁶⁹ Three more are involved in the discussion of the Johannine Community in pp. 97 ff (below).
- ¹⁷⁰ Sometimes the contributions are regarded as being merely verbal and not written. See Oscar Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle* (E.T.) S.C.M., London, 1976, page 5. Ancient justification for this idea appears in the famous passage in the Muratorian Canon about the consultations between the Apostle John and his colleagues: "'Fast with me for three days from today, and then let us relate to each other whatever may be revealed to each of us.'" On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John should narrate all things in his own name as they remembered them...." Henry Bettenson (Ed.), *Documents of the Christian Church*, O.U.P., London, 1963, p.40.
- ¹⁷¹ More than one by the Evangelist, Commentary, p.xxxvi. Barnabas Lindars' scheme is like that of Brown in certain respects - e.g. they both conjecture that there were two or more editions of the Fourth Gospel, but Lindars removes the earliest and latest stages from the 'Johannine' environment, while Brown does not. See Barnabas Lindars, *Behind the Fourth Gospel*, SPCK, London, 1971, chapter 4. The importance of "the homilies of John" (regarded as "large self-contained pieces" which form the basis of the Fourth Gospel) to Lindars is evident on pp. 51, 52 and 59 of his commentary, *The Gospel of John*, Oliphants, London, 1972. Robert Kysar gives synopses of Brown's and Lindars' proposed stages in the development of the Fourth Gospel on p.49 of 'The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel'. Kysar quite rightly regards both Brown's and Lindars' developmental theories as "provocative and imaginative but essentially unprovable". *Ibid*, p.53.
- ¹⁷² *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in Göttingen, 1968. For a very brief statement of Bultmann's view of the Fourth Gospel as comprising contributions from (i) three sources; (ii) the evangelist; (iii) a later redactor; see Kysar, pp.14 ff. See the similar process alleged for 1 John in Bultmann's commentary on the Epistles, page 2.
- ¹⁷³ Commentary, p.xxiv. An example of a plausible "simple explanation" is the theory of Pierson Parker, who claimed in 1956 that John 21 and 6, probably 4 and possibly 2:1-12 were later additions to an earlier shorter Gospel by the same author. J.B.L., 1956, pp.303-14.
- ¹⁷⁴ The same point has been made regarding 1 John, most of all perhaps by Bultmann. See *The Johannine Epistles*, especially p.30 (re the position of 2:12-14 and 2:15-17); p.43 (re the apparent conclusions at 2:27 and 3:24); and p.83 (re the effective conclusion at 5:12).
- ¹⁷⁵ But see above, p. 113 note 3
- ¹⁷⁶ With respect either to different parts of the Fourth Gospel and

1 John, or the Johannine Epistle books severally.

¹⁷⁷The expression belongs to Oscar Cullmann: His book, 'The Johannine Circle' (see p. 126 note 170) is of very great importance in the 'school' discussion. Cf. E.R. Goodenough, 'John a Primitive Gospel', J.B.L., 1945, p.160.

¹⁷⁸Reference should also be made to Ernst Käsemann's views: see pp. 21 and 22 (above).

¹⁷⁹The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism, J.B.L. Vol. 91, 1972, pp.44 - 72. Terms such as "Johannine Christians", and "the group" appear about a dozen times.

¹⁸⁰ p.49, note 16

¹⁸¹ p.49

¹⁸² p.71

¹⁸³ p.72

¹⁸⁴ pp.60,61

¹⁸⁵ " - in every instance (where the descent/ascent portrayal appears in John) the motif points to contrast, foreignness, division, judgment" (p.67). Briefly, Jesus is depicted "as the Stranger par excellence". (p.50).

¹⁸⁶ p. 65

¹⁸⁷ pp.69,70. Cf. D. Moody Smith Jr., 'Johannine Christianity', N.T.S., 21, 1974, p.224.

¹⁸⁸ p. 49

¹⁸⁹ p.71

¹⁹⁰ p.64

¹⁹¹ p.65

¹⁹² Oscar Cullmann's treatment is much more satisfactory. See pp.100 to 103 (above).

¹⁹³ New Testament Studies, 21, 1974, pp.222-248

¹⁹⁴ p.224

¹⁹⁵ pp.228-238

¹⁹⁶ p.230

¹⁹⁷ Seen in the Johannine form of John the Baptist's utterances, and in the peculiar Johannine statements about the seed falling into the earth, saving one's life and losing it, following Jesus (12:24-26), and in the love commandment of John, 1 John, and 2 John; p.230.

¹⁹⁸ p.234

- 199 pp.234,5
- 200 p.235. John 13 to 16 (or 13 to 17) and 6:51-58 have a similar evidential value for Smith.
- 201 p.236
- 202 He is following Fortna here - see p.239.
- 203 p.240
- 204 p.243
- 205 "It is likely ... that the Johannine community was coterminous with specific Christian congregations who lived both in it and from it.... distinctly Johannine communities, rather than communities in which the Johannine option was one of several." p.237.
- 206 See the book by that name, p.ix
- 207 Ibid, p.7
- 208 On page 15 Cullmann says that he finds Käsemann's description of "an 'ecclesiola in ecclesia'" apt (though of course he does not subscribe to that writer's very original views).
- 209 p.41. J.A.T. Robinson says of the Johannine tradition that "there is a real continuity, not merely in the memory of one old man, but in the life of an on-going community, with the earliest days of Christianity." Twelve New Testament Studies, S.C.M., 1962, p.106; Cf. p.102. See also p. 99 point (6) (above).
- 210 p.15; cf.p.42, and especially pp.55 and 56.
- 211 Kysar suggests that it is likely that "the Johannine community was excluded from the 'normal' development of institutionalisation in the church". The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel, p.247; cf.pp.261, 275, 276.
- 212 p.53. Cullmann's primary concern is the Fourth Gospel.
- 213 Ibid, p.2.
- 214 Cf. C.K. Barrett, John and Judaism, S.P.C.K., 1975, p.35.
- 215 i.e. a Judaism believed to consist simply of the Pharasaic and Sadducean factions presented in the Synoptic Gospels.
- 216 Cf. Kysar, pp.103,4.
- 217 p.32
- 218 p.33
- 219 p.35
- 220 pp.36,37

- 235 He never shows how the third stream, Pauline Christianity (pp.39 and 62), relates to the other two.
- 236 Though at a later stage "we may term the 'Johannine' circle' a church.... The group certainly had the structure of a community at the time when the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles were written". p.86.
- 237 S.P.C.K., London, 1975.
- 238 pp.58,59
- 239 pp.45,6. The criteria are the non-apocalyptic attitude and the individualism of the Fourth Gospel and Judaism (in the late first century) in contrast to Synoptic Christianity. Cf. J.A.T. Robinson, Twelve New Testament Studies, S.C.M., 1962, p.103.
- 240 A quotation taken from the review in the Expository Times, January, 1976. p.98. Cf. Barrett, pp.71 and 72.
- 241 The Gospel of John and Judaism p.35 and the Expository Times review, p.97.
- 242 Probably with Jewish antecedents - Cf. Kysar, pp.80, 270, 271, 278, 279.
- 243 The validity or otherwise of particular points need not be debated here.
- 244 Almost equally impressive is the consensus about the origins of some of the group's beliefs (and perhaps the people within the group) within the confines of sectarian Judaism.
- 245 Once again the Apocalypse is not included. Cf. p. 4 above.
- 246 Two Editions of John, J.B.L., Vol. 75, 1956, pp.303 ff. Parker does not answer all problems of the kind in this way, but for all that his article is impressive.
- 247 Bultmann, The Johannine Epistles, p.1, see above, p. 58 note 94.
- 248 Cullmann, the Johannine Circle, p.2.
- 249 With the dubious exception of the Muratorian Canon, which ascribes all the actual writing to one man, but not the consultations which preceded the writing. See above, p.126 note 170.
- 250 Cf. p. 45 above. Leon Morris (in defending apostolic authorship) complains of school theories that: "The big weakness in all views of this type is what we might call 'the disappearance of the hero'... He is a great and honoured figure. Why then should he be ignored so completely that his name is not so much as mentioned even once?"...
- 251 e.g. those of R.E. Brown, R. Schnackenburg, and F.M. Braun, who see the Apostle as the authority behind the Fourth Gospel, though they do not regard him as the actual author. See Cullmann, The Johannine Circle, p.64.
- 252 Ibid, p.3. Cf. Robert Kysar, The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1975, p.14.

- ²⁵³ It is hard to do otherwise, perhaps, but the point here is not that C.K. Barrett, e.g., calls the author John, but that he calls the author John - i.e. one dominant person. Cf. Barnabas Lindars, The Gospel of John, Oliphants, London, 1972, p.34.
- ²⁵⁴ The Gospel of John and Judaism
- ²⁵⁵ See also pp.13, 14, 17, 35, 36, and 38.
- ²⁵⁶ Note 44
- ²⁵⁷ Especially pp. 8 and 9, but in many other places as well.
- ²⁵⁸ Theology of the New Testament (E.T. New York and London, 1955), p.13: "the author's background it was not out of an orthodox but out of a gnosticising Judaism that he came."
- ²⁵⁹ Quoted on p.358 of W. Kümmel's book, The New Testament - The History of the Investigation of its Problems, S.C.M.(first British Translation), 1973.
- ²⁶⁰ Ibid, p.299
- ²⁶¹ Cf. Kysar's summary of recently expressed views of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel: "scholars have recently converged on the view of the evangelist as a 'creative redactor' ... He shaped - traditional material in a new way, allowing it to come to expression in his document but harnessing it as a vehicle of his own theological views." The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel, p.80. Post-form- and redaction criticism studies do not - in one sense- greatly affect the issues. See Kysar, pp.87/8.
- ²⁶² Cf. Lindars, The Gospel of John, Oliphants, 1972, pp.45,6.
- ²⁶³ J.B.L. article. Two Editions of John, Vol. 75, 1956,p.304.
- ²⁶⁴ Practically all scholars regard either a significant part of the Prologue or else all of it as by the Fourth Evangelist himself. See the Article by J.S. King in the Expository Times, Vol. 86, NO.12 (September 1975), pp.372-5.
- ²⁶⁵ 19:35 in particular; cf. 20:30,31 and 21:24.
- ²⁶⁶ pp.4, 5, 7, 9, 40, and 63.
- ²⁶⁷ p. 10
- ²⁶⁸ e.g. every verse of 1 John 1 breathes this spirit. See also 2:1,2,8,23; 3:6,9; 4:8,16,18; 5:12,18 ff, and especially 4:6. Bultmann notes that the plural of the first verses of 1 John (e.g. γράφομεν in 1:4) soon changes to the singular (e.g. in 2:1ff); this, and terms like τεκνία, shows that "the author of this Epistle is conscious of himself as having a personal authority". Comm., p.11. On p.118 of his commentary on the Epistles Schnackenburg notes the single occurrence of ἄσελφος (and then in a special context) compared with the frequent use of τεκνία: this is perhaps "connected with the position of authority of the author".
- ²⁶⁹ 1 John 1:1-3; 4:14; cf. 3:5 (see chapter 5, below, p. 253 ff)

- ²⁷⁰ The last point is virtually denied by Bultmann, but affirmed by Haenchen (The Johannine Epistles, p.95). Schnackenburg says that the term *πρεσβύτερος* had lost its original comparative meaning. Commentary, p.305. See the article in S.J.T. (Vol.27, 1974) on 'the Rôle of the Presbyter: An Investigation into the Adversus Haereses of Saint Irenaeus', by Jeffrey Sobosan. Sobosan speaks first of Jewish and Greek *πρεσβύτεροι*, who are "the 'notables', whose age, dignity of life, fortune, family ascendance, clothe them with a natural authority, and impose upon them the respect of the other members of the community". (p.133). In both Jewry and the church "Presbyter (with a capital 'P', as it were) was a title of honour applied to certain distinguished and especially authoritative teachers (e.g. Gamaliel the Presbyter). This use of the term is found in 1 John, 1 Peter, as well as Irenaeus." Sobosan is (i) distinguishing presbyters from *ἐπίσκοποι*, who are functionaries, supervisors, or overseers - and who are generally to be found only in the later New Testament period - and (ii) is reckoning both Peter and John as Elders, above bishops - on p.138 he writes: " - Saint John, near the end of his life, gave 'Bishops' to the cities in the region of Ephesus". Presumably Sobosan is basing his statement mainly on 3 John and Eusebius' H.E.3:23. It is of course unfortunate that Sobosan names only 1 John in connection with the Presbyter, but ignores 2 and 3 John, where the appellation actually occurs. Alan Richardson agrees with Sobosan about the importance of the *πρεσβύτερος* in New Testament times; even an apostle can "fittingly" be so described. An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, S.C.M., 1958, pp.325-9.
- ²⁷¹ The emphatic *ἔσται* in 2 John 3 breathes the same spirit. In discussing epistolary addresses of the period, Dodd says regarding verse 3: "Instead of expressing a wish that God would grant grace, mercy, and peace to his correspondents, the writer turns it to a promise or assurance of these divine blessings to all Christians: Grace, mercy, peace, will be with us - ". Commentary, p.147.
- ²⁷² Significantly, after some discussion of the position and activity of the author of 3 John, Dodd says: "such a figure can hardly be identified with a subordinate figure of a Johannine school". Commentary, p.lxiv.
- ²⁷³ And verses 3, 5ff, and 11.
- ²⁷⁴ See above, pp. 21 ff
- ²⁷⁵ Verse 10
- ²⁷⁶ If 2 and 3 John were written by a different person from 1 John, a usurpation of authority by the Elder seems to be implied, since he has taken over the pastoral functions of the 1 John writer without explanation. Nor does he explain his theological dependence on the First Epistle. Some sort of explanation would be expected even if 1 John were to a wider area and 2 John (by another writer) to a single church within it.
- ²⁷⁷ Dodd (Commentary), pp.xlvii; Bultmann, Haechen.
- ²⁷⁸ See Schnackenburg, pp.35 ff, for details.

- ²⁷⁹ See, for instance, Dodd (Commentary), p.xlix and Houlden, p.19.
For a dissenting opinion see p. 87 above
- ²⁸⁰ So, e.g., Dodd (Rylands) pp. 129,130.
- ²⁸¹ One frequently reads remarks of the type "If Barnabas wrote Hebrews, he could not have written the epistle which bears his name". Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation, p.18. That this is a sound conclusion is immediately apparent; so is the contrast with the Fourth Gospel/Johannine Epistles comparison.
- ²⁸² e.g. of Eschatology, the Atonement, the representation of the Holy Spirit. Schnackenburg, pp.35 ff.
- ²⁸³ pp.ii ff, especially p.v
- ²⁸⁴ A person of limited intelligence (like Houlden's "pedestrian" writer of 1 John) could scarcely have done it consistently.
- ²⁸⁵ and to the modern reader, ambiguous.
- ²⁸⁶ Hence προσβύτερος ; cf. "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20; 13:23) and "another disciple" (John 18:15-16) - if in fact these refer to the author - and the unadorned "John" in Revelation 1:4 etc.
- ²⁸⁷ except 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and, of course, Hebrews.
- ²⁸⁸ Romans 1:1, and the first verse of James, 1 Peter, and Jude.
- ²⁸⁹ W.F. Howard (J.T.S. article), p.13.
- ²⁹⁰ See chapter 2, below. The book might have been written as early as the 60's.
- ²⁹¹ H.E. 3:23,24; 6:14
- ²⁹² That very careful scholar, W.F. Howard, originally thought the final chapter by a different hand, but "to his surprise" a study of the stylistic characteristics of it and the rest of the Fourth Gospel convinced him that all (except perhaps 21:24 and 25) is by one author. The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, 1945, p.121. Parker was equally adamant in 1956 when he wrote "John 21 was written by the same hand that wrote the Greek text of 1 - 20". J.B.L., article, p.306.
- ²⁹³ i.e. commandments, doctrine, or promises: 1 John 2:7; 2:24(bis); 3:11; 2 John 5,6.
- ²⁹⁴ If this means the beginning of the Gospel events and not the beginning of all things.
- ²⁹⁵ Plus the dramatic statement καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν.
- ²⁹⁶ Cf. chapter 5, pp. 253 ff, below, regarding Bultmann's idea that the "'we' ... are the 'eschatological' contemporaries of Jesus".
- ²⁹⁷ See note 270 on p.132

298¹ John 2:13,18; 3:7.

299¹ John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21.

300¹ John 3:1,2,10(bis); 5:2; 2 John 1, 4, 13; 3 John 4.

301¹ Thus there are two "temperamental" criteria which are ubiquitous in the Epistles; an authoritative air (see above), and a fatherly attitude towards the church flock. Schnackenburg refers to "the genial, God-illuminated religious personality of the author." Commentary, p.34; cf. p.304. It has sometimes been claimed that the Elder was a kind of 'archbishop' (e.g., by F.B. Clogg, An Introduction to the New Testament, Hodder & Stoughton, London, Third Edition, 1948, p.284), but Schnackenburg seems to reflect the situation portrayed in the Epistles more accurately when he says of 3 John, "the 'Old Man' exercises a more patriarchal than jurisdictional supervision over the congregations." Commentary, p.299. (1 and 2 John imply nothing different).

302¹ They include the references cited above (p.133 note286) as well as that to "the sons of Zebedee" in John 21:2. The primary emphasis in this section is on the characteristics of the author, and in the whole chapter on the question of common authorship, not on the identity of the author.

303¹ Matthew 26:73

304¹ For instance, on pp. vi and vii Brooke noted "small points ... worth noticing in view of the assertion that the similarities of style and expression are mostly in the case of obvious points, which are easily imitated."

305¹ Even Houlden, who has a low regard for the 1 John writer, says that the Epistle "never aspires to literary heights -", but also admits that never again (after 1 John 1:1-4) "does it lapse into grammatical impossibilities." p.45.

306¹ Howard (J.T.S. article), p.16.

307¹ It is, he says, too "convenient" an explanation to say that the Semitic colouring is limited to Jesus and John - it "is a trait of the uniform style of the entire Gospel". The Gospel of John and Judaism, p.59.

308¹ See, e.g. footnote 304 (above)

309¹ "A man at once kindly and fatherly, and yet most sensitive to evil and quick to rebuke it. Is not such a character a reflection of the Divine Character itself, as revealed in Scripture as a whole?" G.T. Manley, The New Bible Handbook, I.V.F., London, 1950, p.405.

310¹ But see p. 132 note 270

311¹ It has been claimed here that 'school' theories are unnecessary. That is the opinion of the present writer. The demonstration of even a more modest view, viz. that the Epistles alone were by one author, would be sufficient for present purposes. School theories

are only decisively against the hypothesis when they either separate the Epistles from each other, or when they subdivide an Epistle (in practice almost invariably 1 John). More will be said about the Epistles' structure in chapter 3.

³¹²The Johannine Circle, p.64

³¹³" - the dominance of a single mind is so powerful that we have the impression ... that 'la tradition - c'est moi'". (A quotation from Menoud in J.A.T. Robinson's 'Twelve New Testament Studies', S.C.M., 62, p.105).

³¹⁴See above, p. 126 note 170; it is to be noted, however, that the point being argued in these pages is not the identity of the author (the Apostle John as far as the Muratorian Canon is concerned) but the identity of the authorship of the four books (cf. p. 75 and p. 134 note 302).

³¹⁵See Kysar, The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel, especially pp.267-9.

³¹⁶e.g. in relation to christology, pneumatology, or even eschatology.

³¹⁷Hebrews 7:3

³¹⁸Neither the use of traditions nor the holding of consultations is a denial that one person is to be called 'author' without equivocation. After all, any writer makes use of memories or records of previous events and conversations he has had without thereby forfeiting the right to call a work his own.

³¹⁹One of the greatest obstacles - indeed a fatal obstacle - to a scheme such as that of R.E. Brown is that the vocabulary and style of the passages inserted by the final redactor are of a piece with the rest of the book. That so little change should have taken place that the work of different writers over a period are inseparable on linguistic grounds is incredible. (cf. pp. above). Cf. Barnabas Lindars, The Gospel of John, Oliphants, London, 1972, p.45.

³²⁰See chapter 3 below, pp. 154 ff

CHAPTER TWO

THE DATING OF THE JOHANNINE BOOKS

The second of the six basic points¹ to be examined concerns the dating, or (more accurately), the timing of the Johannine books in relation to each other. Were the four - or at least the three Epistles - written on one occasion, or at more-or-less widely separated times? Obviously common dating of the Epistles is crucial for the hypothesis. If they were not contemporaneous the whole hypothesis is impossible in its present form.²

In theory it should be possible to date each book of the corpus with the aid of internal and external criteria, and then to compare the results gained for the different books. In practice of course a procedure of this sort is utterly out of the question on account of the paucity of data available. Numerous attempts have nonetheless been made to establish the period of writing. Over the last century and a half, for instance, the date assigned to the Fourth Gospel has varied from the middle of the second century or even later³ down to dates prior to A.D.70.⁴ Indeed, one writer suggested that the evangelist may have made notes of Jesus' discourses shortly after hearing them,⁵ and that these formed the basis of the Fourth Gospel. The range of dates assigned to the Gospel has thus varied within a period of nearly 140 years, though the higher dates have long since been abandoned,⁶ and a date of AD.90-100 generally accepted, even by scholars who adhere to very different ideas respecting the Johannine literature.⁷

In the case of the Epistles the dates proposed have not fluctuated so widely. One major controlling factor has of course been the existence of a number of echoes or quotations from them⁸ or references to them from the earlier part of the second century,⁹ and, in one or two instances, perhaps even from the end of the first century.¹⁰ As in the case of the Fourth Gospel, the commonly assigned date for the Epistles at the present time is AD.90-100.¹¹ Few writers would go so far as to commit themselves more exactly with respect to any of the four books.¹²

Zones of even that magnitude are far too wide to be of any significance in answering the question 'Were the Johannine writings completed at the same time as each other?' and the related question, 'Do the three Epistles reflect the same situation?'

There has, of course, been considerable discussion concerning the order of writing, with or without attention being paid to the actual date. No consensus exists here.¹³ Many place the Gospel first, most persuasively on the ground that the briefer statement of doctrine presupposes the longer rather than vice versa.¹⁴ Similar reasoning results in 1 John more usually being dated slightly before the shorter Epistles rather than slightly after them.¹⁵ The debate about priority does not really come any closer to providing an answer to the primary question of this chapter than attempts to assign actual dates do.

The investigator is left, then, with no external evidence of any kind on which to base a judgment. So far as internal evidence is concerned, there is nothing specific, which in so many words says that the books were or were not contemporaneous. What, then? Is evidence entirely lacking? No; there are four fairly strong arguments favouring common dating, the first binding all four Johannine books together, and the others each connecting two of the Epistles. In addition, two less impressive arguments involving the Epistles are to be noted:

- (1) The extraordinary closeness in thought and particularly in expression noted above between the Fourth Gospel and 1 John,¹⁶ the Fourth Gospel and 2 John,¹⁷ 1 John and 2 John,¹⁸ and 2 John and 3 John¹⁹ virtually demands not only common authorship, but also very close dating indeed.²⁰
- (2) The astounding structural similarity²¹ of 2 John and 3 John appears to indicate that those Epistles were written in quick succession,²² i.e. that one was very fresh in the writer's mind when he wrote the other, or even that it was on the table before him.
- (3) The probability that the verses 2 John 12, 3 John 10, and 3 John 14 refer to one and the same visit²³ strongly supports the contention that 2 and 3 John were compiled within (at most) a few days of each other.
- (4) An indication of a relatively narrow time-zone is evident in a comparison of 1 John 4:1 - πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐξηλεύθησαν εἰς τὸν κόσμον
and 2 John 7 - πολλοὶ πλάνοι ἐξήλθον εἰς τὸν κόσμον -²⁴

The action described - as well as the wording used and the error alluded to²⁵ - seems to suggest one particularly critical period.

The weaker arguments are :

- (5) The common subject of hospitality²⁶ in 2 and 3 John possibly links the Epistles chronologically, but does not necessarily do so.
- (6) The position of opponents within the church is probably indicated by 1 John 2:26 - *ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανῶντων ὑμᾶς*²⁷ and in 3:7 - *τέκνιά, μηδεὶς πλανᾷτω ὑμᾶς.*

Certainly that is where opponents are to be found according to 3 John 9 ff. If the same people are intended, a short-lived crucial transitional period seems to be in evidence in both the 1 John and 3 John situations. That these situations are one and the same appears more than likely.

The most satisfactory explanation of the chronological relationships would seem to be that the Gospel was completed first, in its present form being perhaps the product of a life-time of reflection, instruction, and pastoral ministry.²⁸ Within a short time of its completion - perhaps a mere matter of days or weeks - the First Epistle was written. Next, while the thoughts (and a number of the phrases) still came readily to mind, the Elder wrote 2 John to the Elect Lady. Last of all, while the first two Epistles lay before him, the author wrote his final missive of the series,²⁹ the short explicit note to Gaius.³⁰

By way of summary and conclusion it must be asserted that any argument from actual dates is hopelessly inconclusive regarding common timing³¹ or otherwise. On the basis of internal data no cast-iron case can be made out either. Nonetheless, the indications are in the direction of common timing. Certainly nothing is against it.³²

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Page 3 above

² Modified schemes would not necessarily be ruled out: e.g. 1 John could perhaps have been written first and sent to a church with other introductory epistles, or with 2 John only, or with 3 John only. It must be observed, though, that if only 1 John and 2 John were despatched together, the address would have been vague and apparently unsatisfactory. Had 1 and 3 John been sent together without 2 John the relationship between them would have been puzzling to the recipients. If copies of 1 John were sent out more than once, both the hypothesis and certain modified schemes would be theoretically possible. See above, page 3 Dale Moody says "It is altogether possible that II, III John were covering letters sent forth with copies of I John. I John was a general letter". The Letters of John, Waco, Texas, Word, 1970, page 16.

³ F.C. Baur 160-170; Volkmar 155, Zeller and Scholten 150; Hilgenfeld 130-140; Keim 130; Schenkel 115-120; Reus, Nicolas, Renan, Sabatier and Hase 110-125. See William Hendriksen, John, Banner of Truth, 1954, p.27, note 5. R.E. Brown has a most useful discussion on 'the latest plausible date' and 'the earliest plausible date' for the Fourth Gospel in his commentary, pp.LXXX - LXXXVI.

⁴ So E.R. Goodenough, 'John a Primitive Gospel', J.B.L., 1945, pp.145-182, especially pp.147 and 150 note 12; W.F. Albright, article 'Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John', pp. 153 ff in "The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology", C.U.P., 1964; F. Lamar Cribbs, 'A Reassessment of the Date of Origin and the Destination of the Gospel of John' J.B.L., Vol. 89, 1970, pp.38-55. Robert M. Grant, A Historical Introduction to the New Testament, Fontana Edition, 1971, pp.159,160; Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1971, p.34; and J.A.T. Robinson, Redating the New Testament, S.C.M., London, pp.254-311. Robinson names about 20 scholars who over the years have placed the completed Fourth Gospel before the fall of Jerusalem, and others who have thought it not long after that event, though "they have not till very recently been backed by any substantial arguments". (pp.307,8). Robert Kysar lists seven reasons which have been advanced for a pre-AD.70 date. These are:

- (1) Since the evangelist did not know the synoptic gospels he must have written first.
- (2) He used the present tense in referring to geographical sites.
- (3) The evangelist has affinities with the Qumran movement which terminated in AD.70.
- (4) The powerful Jewish offensive against Christianity witnessed in the Gospel is probably pre-70 "when Christianity was still part of the Jewish faith."
- (5) The Fourth Gospel has general Palestinian characteristics such as anticipation of the advent of the "Prophet like Moses".
- (6) It possesses primitive traits - e.g. *Χριστός* is not used as a name for Jesus.
- (7) It contains emphases such as the polemic against John the Baptist which best fit the period 40-70.

Kysar affirms that these arguments have only minority support among Johannine scholars, but concludes that they are not negligible. pp.167,8.

- ⁵ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction, Gospels and Acts*, p.261. Guthrie is in that context discussing V. Burch's theory that "John's original contents and structure must be dated near to the date of the crucifixion and its final editing before AD.70".
- ⁶ The death-knell to excessively late dates consists of the discovery and reasonably agreed dating of two papyri, Rylands Papyrus 457 and Papyrus Egerton 2. The former was discovered in 1920. It contains a fragment of John 18, i.e. verses 31 to 33, 37 and 38 (see Barrett's Commentary, p.92). A.M. Hunter says the papyrus "proves that the Gospel was circulating in Egypt about AD.130". The Gospel According to John, C.U.P., 1965, page 1. In the *New Testament Apocrypha*, J. Jeremias dates Egerton 2 "before 150" (Vol. I, pp.94 ff). Some scholars at least would concede that there is satisfactory evidence for a still lower Fourth Gospel dating in the parallels between the letters of Ignatius and the Gospel. (See R.E. Brown, Commentary, P.LXXXI, and C.K. Barrett's Commentary, p.93. In addition to instances cited by Barrett, 'Ephesians' 5:1 and John 17:23 and 'Romans' 7:3 and John 6:54,55 should be noted). Whether the parallels indicate dependence is debatable, though Ignatius' passages could easily be read in that light (so J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, p.260). More significant for the dating of the Johannine books, however, is the growing awareness of affinities between them and first century and even pre-Christian writings, particularly the Qumran scrolls and Samaritan religious works (see above, pp. 101 ff).
- ⁷ Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, p.254; Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel*, p.167.
- ⁸ or from a source behind both them and the Epistles?
- ⁹ Papias is credited by Eusebius with making use of "testimonies from the First Epistle of John" (ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰωάννου προτερῆς ἐπιστολῆς) H.E.3:39:17. Eusebius' comment does not indicate whether Papias knew of other Epistles of John, or even if Papias regarded this letter as Johannine. Ignatius, in his letter to the Ephesian church, speaks of "God having become in flesh" 'Ephesians' 7:2; cf. 1 John 4:2,3. Polycarp 7:1 reads: "For whoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is antichrist - ". There can scarcely be any doubt that Polycarp was referring to 1 John 2:18, 2:22, 3:8, and more-or-less quoting 1 John 4:2 and 3 and 2 John 7. Hermas M 3:1 possibly reflects 1 John 2:27 (see J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, MacMillan, London, and New York, 1891, p.423), and Barnabas 6:9 should also be mentioned. That verse has been alleged to echo 2 John 7 as well as certain verses in 1 John, but as Dodd says, the context in Barnabas militates against dependence. C.H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, 1946, p.149. The Didache 10 bears some resemblance to 1 John 4:18.

- ¹⁰ 1 Clement 49:5 and 50:3: neither of these coincides very exactly with any Johannine Epistles verse, but Clement's statements "There is nothing base, nothing arrogant in love" and "made perfect in love" remind the reader of 1 John 4:18. The Ante-Nicene Fathers, American Edition, 1885, Vol.1, p.18. Though few would agree with him, J.H. Charlesworth reckons the Odes of Solomon very early; "the earliest Christian hymn-book". (The Odes of Solomon, edited and translated by J.H. Charlesworth, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973). If this judgment be correct, the work is highly significant for Johannine dating since the best New Testament parallel to Ode 3:3 is 1 John 4:19, and the second best is verse 10 of the same chapter. There may be a reference to 2 John 5 (together with other Johannine verses) in Ode 41:6. It must be borne in mind, however, that no verse in the Odes is very like any New Testament verse, though parallels of a sort are fairly numerous.
- ¹¹ Robinson, Redating the New Testament, p.254.
- ¹² Though Greville Lewis says c.85 for the Fourth Gospel and c.87 for the Epistles (see above, p. 20). Alexander is equally precise. He says "about AD.96" for both the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles. Commentary, pp.27 and 143.
- ¹³ With respect to John and 1 John, Schnackenburg says that the question "permits of no answer". Die Johannesbriefe, p.39. Cf. Sir Edwyn Hoskyns' Commentary on the Johannine Epistles in 'A New Commentary on Holy Scripture', edited by Charles Gore et al, S.P.C.K., 1951, page 659. See also F.F. Bruce, The Epistles of John, Revell, New Jersey, 1970, page 31.
- ¹⁴ See Robert Law, The Tests of Life, pp.359-363; A.E. Brooke, pp.xxii ff; Dodd (Rylands Article), pp.154,5; McNeile/Williams, pp.304,5; J.A.T. Robinson, Twelve New Testament Studies, S.C.M., 1962, page 128.
- ¹⁵ So, e.g. N. Alexander: "- all in all, II John is better described as a 'cut-down' I John than is 1 John as a 'blown-up' II John." Commentary, p.140. For a contrary view see Wilhelm Bousset, Kyrios Christos (translation by John E. Steely), Abingdon, New York, p.378.
- ¹⁶ pp. 78 ff. Sanders/Mastin make the Fourth Gospel and 1 John practically contemporaneous, claiming that the latter is an introduction to the former. Commentary, p.47. B.W. Bacon suggested all three Epistles served as an introduction to the Fourth Gospel. Making the New Testament, Williams & Norgate London, p.217. That is unlikely. Cf. Schnackenburg, p.3.
- ¹⁷ p. 93
- ¹⁸ p. 88
- ¹⁹ pp. 93 ff
- ²⁰ Providing deliberate imitation is ruled out, as in fact it is by almost all scholars.
- ²¹ Which in both cases differs from conventional contemporary patterns (see below, pp 164 ff)

²² See above, p. 48

²³ See Chapter 5, pp. 261 ff

²⁴ Point '4' on pp. 252 and 258 ff.

²⁵ See Chapter 4, pp. 206 ff below.

²⁶ 2 and 3 John are complementary in this respect.

²⁷ The R.S.V. unjustifiably translates: "I write this to you about those who would deceive you - ". There is no reason to import the word "would" into a translation of the participle ΠΛΕΥΩΝΤΩΝ in 2:26: its use largely obscures - for the English reader - the closeness of 2:26 to 3:7 and 3 John 9 ff. Cf. Chapter 6, pp. 284 ff below.

²⁸ Cf. Eusebius' H.E. 3:24: "John, who during all this time was proclaiming the gospel without writing, at length proceeded to write it."

²⁹ Cf. p. 5 note 24

³⁰ Cf. pp. 286/7 below

³¹ In the exact sense required by the hypothesis.

³² C.H. Dodd asserts that the chronology of the Epistles cannot be determined, "But in any case the difference of time cannot be great". Commentary, p.lxvii.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE OF THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES

The object of this chapter is to investigate the structural peculiarities of the Johannine Epistles in order to determine whether they are most satisfactorily accounted for by the hypothesis.¹

The procedure adopted involves giving a sketch of the more significant types of theory of the structure of the Fourth Gospel, 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John, focussing attention on the literary genre of the Epistles, and reviewing individual verses or short passages in them which are relevant to the hypothesis.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE JOHANNINE GOSPEL AND EPISTLES

In the present context the analysis of the Gospel as a whole is of comparatively minor importance²; 1 John demands a much fuller treatment because of the special problems it presents, and the shorter Epistles require some attention before individual clauses and concepts are studied.

(A) ANALYSIS OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

B.F. Westcott may be taken as an example of a typical "traditionalist": he divided the book (excluding the prologue) into two main parts: "The self-revelation of Christ to the world" and "The self-revelation of Christ to the church". (Chapters 1 to 12 and 13-21 respectively)³

C.H. Dodd's analysis is, on the surface, similar to the above, "The Book of Signs" (2:1 - 12:50) preceding "The Book of the Passion". However, with Dodd, as with most Twentieth Century writers, the whole outworking of his Fourth Gospel studies is conditioned more by theology than by the historical sequence of events claimed by the Evangelist.⁴

Another very influential analysis is that of Rudolf Bultmann:

Die Offenbarung der $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ vor der Welt (Chapters 2 to 12)
and Die Offenbarung der $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ vor der Gemeinde (Chapters 13 to 20).⁵

Bultmann's scheme of course echoes his concept of a Signs Source and a Revelation Discourse (Offenbarungs Reden) within the Fourth Gospel.⁶

A novel analysis was suggested in 1968 by David Deeks⁷, who noted that attempts had been made to subdivide Revelation and 1 John on a numerical basis.⁸ Deeks postulated an arrangement "told in terms of three, four, and seven" in John's Gospel: the whole book (except Chapter 21) consists of four sections. The first of these is the prologue, which itself has four subsections corresponding (in subject matter) with the four main sections: section A, then, turns out to have 4 parts, B (1:19 to 4:54) 3 plus 4, C (5:1 to 12:50) 4 plus 3, and section D (13:1 to 20:31) 3.⁹

One conception of the Fourth Gospel development and structure deserves special mention. That is what Barnabas Lindars calls "the homiletic view".¹⁰ Lindars is very critical of theories of multiple sources.¹¹ In the first place, he believes, the writer had "short written collections closely parallel to ¹²the sources of the Synoptic Gospels",¹³ and also access to oral traditions. Using these, "the Gospel had its genesis in homilies preached by John, which he used as the basis for his work".¹⁴ The homilies were "large, self-contained pieces", which were sometimes broken up in the formation of the Gospel.¹⁵ Other new material was specifically composed for the Gospel.¹⁵ The second edition included more new matter, viz., the Prologue, Chapter 6, the Lazarus story and Chapters 15 to 17. Later again, post-Johannine additions (the Pericope Adulterae, Chapter 21, and 19:35)¹⁶ were incorporated, perhaps not all at the same time.

The interest of the 'homiletic' theory of the Fourth Gospel's development lies (for present purposes) in the similarities J.L. Houlden proposes between that hypothetical process and the development of 1 John.

Houlden suggests, tentatively,¹⁷ that 1 John may have been formed "as the result of putting together a number of discrete sections" and not be the product of a "single act of writing."¹⁸ The suggested discrete sections correspond with the original separate "episodes" postulated for the Fourth Gospel. The alleged difference is that the 1 John material is more interwoven "with a whole web of reflective or homiletic theological material". Houlden favours the view that one person alone was basically responsible for 1 John.¹⁹

Houlden's view - which has considerable merit²⁰ - adds weight to the view that there was only one author, one "towering personality" behind the two books.²¹

The same result is reached on the basis of the ideas of Norman Perrin.²² He holds that the Fourth Gospel and 1 John share a lack of structure in the sense that they do not simply deal with points successively: "The Gospel and letters of John give the impression of carefully composed wholes, of being a response to the internal dynamics of the genius and vision of the author rather than to the external dynamics of a concrete historical situation and need."²³ This does not mean a lack of any structure,²³ but the absence of a mere sequential pattern. Perrin quotes Fuller with approval: "The author states a thought, contemplates it from every angle, and apparently finishes up where he started. Yet, there is a slight but perceptible movement to another thought, and the process is repeated."²⁴

Although Perrin holds to such close Fourth Gospel/1 John correspondences, he does not advocate an identity of authorship, as one might well have expected him to do. Instead of that, the 1 John writer is considered as being responsible for some theological insertions²⁵ in the Gospel. Uncertainty surrounds 2 and 3 John in relation to the Fourth Gospel and 1 John authors: "the most we can say is that probably at least two authors are involved in the Gospel and letters of John, and perhaps three."²⁶

A further contribution asserting close Fourth Gospel/1 John structural correspondences appeared in 1973. André Feuillet²⁷ claimed that both books followed a four-fold pattern beginning with a prologue and closing with an epilogue. In each book, too, there is (he says) a later additional note:

FOURTH GOSPEL

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Prologue | 1:1-18 |
| 2. | The Preparation of the Hour of Jesus | 1:19-12:50 |
| 3. | The Hour of Jesus | 13:1 - 20:29 |
| 4. | Epilogue | 20:30,31 |

(Chapter 21 a later appendix)

FIRST EPISTLE

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Prologue | 1:1-4 |
| 2. | The Demands of the Fellowship with God who is Light | 1:5-2:28 (or 2:29) |
| 3. | The Demands of the Fellowship with God, or the conduct of the Authentic Children of God | 3:1 - 5:12 |
| 4. | Epilogue | 5:13 |
- (A long additional note ; 5:14-21)

Feuillet says that it is the "structure of Christian life which essentially governs the literary structure of the epistle."

The structural similarity just noted has very little bearing on the present chapter's concerns, but rather - if its validity can be accepted²⁹ - it furnishes some additional evidence for the case made out for common authorship in Chapter 1. It is a very different matter with a second point of Fourth Gospel/1 John comparison, viz. the Prologues. The conclusion which is reached in this area is important for the hypothesis at this stage.

(B) THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND 1 JOHN PROLOGUES

There is plainly a resemblance between the first four verses of 1 John and the first 18 verses of the Gospel.^{29,30} Schnackenburg, in his commentary on the Epistles, says: "To understand this proem (of 1 John) one must put it closely alongside³¹ the Prologue of John. Already the initial avoiding of the name of Jesus Christ, the same starting point from the $\alpha\rho\chi\eta$, the central position of the logos concept, the importance of the $\sigma\omega\eta$ declarations, lead on to the same level. But more important is the common root thought that the logos, who bears in Himself the fulness of the divine life, 'became flesh' (John 1:14) in an historical hour, or 'was manifested' (1 John 1:2), and reveals Himself in His being to the eyes of faith ($\epsilon\theta\epsilon\alpha\sigma\alpha\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha$ John 1:14; $\epsilon\omega\rho\acute{\alpha}\kappa\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu$ 1 John 1:2). Verse 2 of the letter's proem sounds like a summary of the Gospel prologue."³² (As well as appreciating the similarities between the two prologues, Schnackenburg of course is aware of the differences. Thus he says that the Prologue of John is "a comprehensive hymn on the Logos,"^{33,34} while the writer is in 1 John "more strongly filled with the regard for his own time, for his Christian readers" who are being assailed by their foes).

Long ago Westcott noted that the Gospel Prologue deals successively with

- (i) the Word of God (1:1-5), then
- (ii) the historical manifestation of the Word (1:6-13), and then
- (iii) the personal apprehension of the Word (1:14-18). The Epistle's Preface is remarkably close to this in style and content:

- (i) the message of the Gospel as this is witnessed to by the apostles (1:1), then

- (ii) the historical manifestation of the Gospel (1:2), and then

- (iii) the personal results of this manifestation (1:3).³⁵

Westcott was, of course, accepting each Prologue as a single composition. Now-a-days very many Johannine specialists have divided the Fourth Gospel Prologue on the basis of original portions plus additions, the former often being conceived of as metrical and the latter as prose. In 1975 J.S. King wrote a brief review of the analyses provided by different scholars.³⁶ He named fourteen scholars³⁷ who divide the Prologue into its alleged elements; no two of them expouse exactly the same pattern. Nonetheless, several very able scholars³⁸ accept the Fourth Gospel Prologue as it stands.

In point of fact, as one attempts to evaluate the closeness of the two Prologues to each other, the existence or non-existence of an underlying source of the Fourth Gospel Prologue³⁹ is seen to be irrelevant (for present purposes) because it is the resultant Prologue in each case that matters, not the process by which it came about.

Another important observation is that in both books an intimate connection can be seen between the teaching of the Prologue and the rest of the book concerned.⁴⁰ The structural and theological resemblances between the Fourth Gospel and 1 John, and the major correspondence in each case between the Prologue and the remainder of the book, illustrates the method of the writer when compiling anything of a formal or semi-formal nature.⁴¹ His method is to state his main themes in a preliminary manner before turning them round and viewing them from different angles. A hint is provided, therefore, as to the nature of the First Epistle by comparing it with the Gospel.

This leads to an important conclusion, the first major conclusion of this chapter, viz: It demonstrates that 1 John never had any other beginning.⁴² In particular, it never had an address which has been lost.⁴³

(C) ANALYSIS OF 1 JOHN

All commentators agree on the extraordinary difficulty of analysing 1 John neatly.⁴⁴ Dodd, for instance, says: "The argument is not closely articulated. There is little direct progression."⁴⁵ The writer 'thinks around' a succession of related topics".⁴⁶ Three decades earlier Brooke declared pessimistically: " - perhaps the attempt to analyse the Epistle should be abandoned as useless."⁴⁷ Nearly 30 years earlier still Alfred Plummer had expressed a similar conviction superbly. He wrote: "That S. John had a plan, and a very carefully arranged plan, in writing his Gospel, those who have studied its structure will scarcely be able to doubt. It is far otherwise with the Epistle. Here we may reasonably doubt whether the Apostle had any systematic arrangement of his thoughts in his mind when he wrote the letter. Indeed some commentators have regarded it as the rambling prattle of an old man, 'an unmethodised effusion of pious sentiments and reflections'. Others, without going quite these lengths, have concluded that the contemplative and undialectical temper of S. John has caused him to pour forth his thoughts in a series of aphorisms without much sequence or logical connexion."^{48,49}

From the many different plans suggested, three types emerge:

(1) AN EXQUISITE CONSTRUCTION BY A SINGLE WRITER BASED ON THE SYSTEMATIC RECURRENCE OF TWO OR THREE THEMES.

A threefold pattern found favour with both von Soden and Robert Law; according to the latter the most adequate description which can be applied to the 1 John author's manner of thinking and writing is "spiral"⁵⁰ or "contrapuntal".⁵¹ Three leading themes provide the necessary clue to the understanding of the whole book; the idea is eloquently set out in the sentence: "As some masterbuilder of music takes two or three melodious phrases and, introducing them in due order, repeating them, inverting them, skilfully interlacing them in diverse modes and keys, rears up from them an edifice of stately harmonies; so the Apostle weaves together a few leading ideas into a majestic fugue in which unity of material and variety of tone and effect are wonderfully blended."⁵² The three terms are righteousness, love, and belief. These are related and amplified by the use of some sixty other themes. Law regarded 1 John as a series of 'tests' or criteria by which the readers

may be assured that they are "born of God".⁵³ He observed a three-fold statement of the tests, and application of them. The "three-theme/three-test" theory is vitiated in two ways:

First, the system is nowhere near as regular and symmetrical as the reader is led to expect,⁵⁴ and

Secondly, (as C.H. Dodd has shown) there are not really three themes at all, but only two. The concept of "love" is clear in 1 John, and so is "belief", but "righteousness" is not; it is almost equivalent to "love".⁵⁵

The "two-theme" theory of structure was elaborated by Theodor Häring and adopted by A.E. Brooke.⁵⁶ Häring also traced a pattern of cycles in 1 John: "He finds in the Epistle a triple presentation of two leading ideas, which may be called an ethical and a Christological Thesis."

Apart from the Introduction (1:1-4) and the Conclusion (5:12-31), Häring divided the book into six main sections. The "ethical" parts are 1:5 to 2:17, 2:28 to 3:24 and 4:7-21; the "Christological" sections comprise 2:18-27, 4:1-6, and 5:1-12.⁵⁷ The first four sections fit into the scheme fairly well, but in the latter part of 1 John the system breaks down - with regard to 4:7 to 5:12 Brooke admits that the two theses "are so intertwined that it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate them." A further criticism applies to Brooke's references to the passages 1:8-10 and 2:1(b)-2 as "subordinate". While there may be some syntactic warrant for this conclusion, the passages themselves are surely of paramount theological significance. Häring & Brooke both ignored the "lies" implied in 1:8 and 10. For some writers the lies indicated in vv.6, 8, and 10 are so significant as to form part of the essential structure of the whole book.⁵⁸ The second "subordinate" passage (like the first) is an expression of the writer's view of the Atonement. The Incarnation, whose reality is stressed by the introduction, is also forcefully asserted in 1:7. It is nothing less than the prior fact making ἰλασμός (2:2) and ἄφεσις (see 1:9) possible. Schnackenburg concedes that the alternation of ethical and Christological themes may express the "literary feel" of the author, but not his formal divisions,⁵⁹ in fact clear turning points (especially that at 3:24) are not heeded in the scheme. On this basis Schnackenburg says the "whole construction totters."

It must be admitted that both Häring and Law⁶⁰ devised ingenious systems. These are (as has been shown) reasonably coherent in the first two-thirds of 1 John, but then both founder with respect to the end of the Epistle. It has to be concluded either that the author lost his way in working according to his pre-arranged plan, or else that the modern writers have imposed their scheme on the writing. The evidence suggests that the latter is the case.

A recent pattern, which differs greatly from the above, but which also embodies the belief that 1 John is a superbly conceived work, is that of J. Smit Sibinga.⁶¹ Sibinga begins his hypothesis with the study of Melito of Sardis and his homily *περὶ τοῦ Πάσχα* - "a rather impressive specimen of the 'Asiatic' rhetorical style, appears to conform to a scheme of syllables in such a way, that the length of smaller and larger sections amounts to a certain, often round number of syllables, and, presumably, was determined by the author according to this criterion."

Sibinga's analysis on a numerical basis according to the number of syllables in different sections and subsections seems arbitrary; there is scarcely any duplication of a number (the most impressive exception to this is the two 1450's for the parts of 1 John which are called 'A' and 'C'. Even here it is not possible to discern any obvious ratio between these figures and the 1370 in the middle section 'B'). As in the work of J.C. O'Neill,⁶² no attempt is made to explain the 1 John/Fourth Gospel relationship or the 1 John/2 John/3 John interconnections. Are such links still to be demonstrated, or do they not exist for this writer?

The judgment of John Painter that "the pattern tends to be imposed rather than discovered" is entirely apt so far as all the above theories are concerned.⁶³

(2) A CONSTRUCTION BASED ON "LAYERS" OR (perhaps better) "STRIPES" OF MATERIAL DERIVING FROM DIFFERENT TIMES AND DIFFERENT AUTHORS

Near the start of the present century von Dobschütz found four antithetical and parallel pairs of statements in 1 John 2:29-3:10 whose content is similar, but "which have been filled out by other matter, less Semitic and more rhetorical in form, less ethical

in content and more concerned with the nature of existence".⁶⁴

In 1927 Rudolf Bultmann wrote an article entitled 'Analyse des ersten Johannesbriefes' in 'Festgabe für Adolf Jülicher'.⁶⁵ A prior written source (Vorlage) was postulated behind the present text of 1 John.⁶⁶ The underlying document consisted of 26 antithetical couplets or triplets of an aphoristic character "in the first person plural throughout - sententious, apodictic."⁶⁷ Each section of the prototype is introduced by a definite article plus present participle or $\pi\alpha\varsigma$ plus present participle, or by $\xi\alpha\nu$ plus a subjunctive construction. The source Bultman believed to be from a pre-Christian pagan Gnostic milieu.⁶⁸ The editor of 1 John enlarged the source by adding the proem and by interspersing hortatory material, the purpose of which was to correct extreme Gnosticism.

Bultmann's system was complicated in 1951,⁶⁹ when he attempted "to demonstrate that the text of 1 John was reworked to bring it into conformity with ecclesiastical tradition."⁷⁰ The longest passage belonging to the final redaction is the section 5:14-21.⁷¹ Other "redactional glosses" are the three 'traditional' eschatological statements - 2:28, 3:2, and 4:17 - and the $\alpha\iota\omega\mu\alpha$ and $\epsilon\lambda\alpha\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$ passages (1:7, 2:2, and 4:10).

A third stage in Bultmann's thinking appears in his commentary on the Epistles, and is occasioned because "none of the attempts to demonstrate unity and a sequence of thought is satisfactory".⁷² Accordingly, Bultmann suggested that "the Epistle could have been concluded with 2:27.... 1:5 to 2:27⁷³ originally.... an independent writing, or... a rough draft."⁷²

Bultmann's end product is extremely complex, not to say confusing, because he held the view expressed in the commentary in addition to his earlier schemes.⁷⁴

One criticism is, of course, the subjectivity of Bultmann's work: Schnackenburg says that Bultmann himself often found it difficult to judge the extent of the didactic-polemical and the homiletic-paranetic passages in 1 John.⁷⁵ The same commentator raises further

queries:

First, the doubtful nature of alleged connections between the 1 John 'Vorlage' and the 'Revelation words' of the Fourth Gospel.⁷⁶

Secondly, other constructions (or at least another construction) can be put on the duality of elements in 1 John.⁷⁷

Thirdly, the resolution of theological tensions, e.g. with respect to Christ and sin, on the ground of separate sources is "questionable".

Finally, "Above all the 'Proposal' would be a very original structure: a tiring succession of antitheses, stereotyped $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ sentences, or substantivated participles." Moreover, it would be without parallel in either late Jewish literature or Gnostic texts .

In his little book, *The Puzzle of 1 John*,⁷⁸ J.C. O'Neill approved von Dobschütz' theory that two styles - a pithy teaching style and an admonitory style - can be discerned in 1 John. O'Neill assigned the teaching style to the source, and the other to the editor. According to O'Neill "the author of 1 John belonged to a Jewish sectarian movement, the bulk of whose members had become Christians by confessing that Jesus was the Messiah."⁷⁹ This is linked with the belief that the Epistle is directed, not against Gnostics but Jews.^{80,81} The Jews addressed are the unconverted members of the compact community concerned. O'Neill says: "The Epistle he wrote consists of twelve poetic admonitions⁸² belonging to the traditional writings of the Jewish movement; each of these he has enlarged in order to bring out the fact that it has reached its true fulfilment in the coming of Jesus."⁸³

The 'pre-Christian admonitions' within the sections "fall naturally into poetic lines, and display a marked symmetry of structure." Each section of the completed Epistle has one theme, and is complete in itself;⁸⁴ "the themes are all related to one another and express a consistent Christian theology." Almost every theme can be paralleled in late Jewish sources, especially those from Qumran and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.

O'Neill's scheme is lucidly and persuasively expressed, but it is open to serious objections:

- (a) All the 'Jewish' documents are hypothetical, there being no direct evidence that even one of them ever existed as an independent unit.⁸⁵
- (b) The vital matter of the relationship between 1 John and the Fourth Gospel and 2 and 3 John is left unanswered.⁸⁶
- (c) There are a number of ideas in O'Neill's 'sources' which fit naturally enough into the environment of Christian teaching, but which seem to be injected arbitrarily into a Jewish context by him.^{87,88}
- (d) The patterns O'Neill describes have a certain impressiveness, but the stanzas are sometimes arbitrary.⁸⁹
- (e) It may readily be conceded that, if the specifically Christian teaching of 1 John be excised, what is left has a significant Jewish flavour, as this writer claims. What is so surprising about that? It would be hard to name a New Testament book⁹⁰ where such an observation would be untrue.
- (f) "The pre-Christian source includes the corrections as well as the false claims (e.g. the antitheses of 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4,9). What is the point of the corrections if they belong to the heretical source?"⁹¹

The verdict on O'Neill's work must coincide with that passed on earlier theories - not lacking in ingenuity, but finally unconvincing.

(3) A SINGLE AUTHOR'S WORK, RELATIVELY UNDIFFERENTIATED, BUT WITH MORE THAN ONE OBJECTIVE AND METHOD

As early as 1929 (only two years after the publication of Bultmann's original analysis of 1 John) F. Büschel provided contemporary Jewish evidence of an alternation between aphoristic and homiletic writing⁹² in the same work to support his contention that 1 John is not to be subdivided at all on a source-plus-editing basis.

In his commentary in the Moffatt series C.H. Dodd adopted the word "spiral" to describe the pattern of 1 John. That word had earlier been used by Robert Law in his elaborate scheme, but it is at once apparent that Dodd's conception of the First Epistle differed vastly from that of Law: "The movement of thought has not inaptly been described as 'spiral', for the development of a

theme often brings us back almost to the starting-point; almost, but not quite, for there is a slight shift which provides a transition to a fresh theme.... striking aphorisms.... come in flashes, and their connection with the general line of thought is sometimes only hinted at. Any attempt to divide the work into orderly paragraphs and sections must be largely arbitrary."⁹³

The German writer Wolfgang Nauck believes that 1 John is "an official circular to a circle of readers",⁹⁴ which was completed in two steps, both by the same writer.⁹⁵ The author had placed the "antithetical prototype" before the congregation at an early and particularly critical time when the heretics were promoting their errors unchecked.⁹⁶ The prototype was not a letter: the work became one only at the second stage,⁹⁷ when the author, seeing a continuing danger to his flock, took up his pen again and reframed his earlier writing.⁹⁸

The strengths of Nauck's position are

- (i) that he distinguishes clearly between the Christians and the non-Christians whom the writer had in view, or, as Schnackenburg would say, he clearly appreciates "the double concern of the writing",⁹⁹ and
- (ii) he holds to one author.

Nevertheless, the potent criticism which Schnackenburg levelled at Bultmann's analysis - that it suggests an extraordinary original document¹⁰⁰ - cannot be evaded. Nor, of course, is there any textual evidence for two literary stages.¹⁰¹

W.G. Kümmel¹⁰² likewise affirms that "The Epistle has no clearly recognisable plan, but presents frequent variations on two themes: right faith in Christ and the necessary connection between faith and proper conduct". Kümmel maintains his point of view by (after the Prologue) employing the peculiar terminology "the First (or 'Second' or 'Third) course of thought."¹⁰³

Rudolf Schnackenburg¹⁰⁴ quoted appreciatively from Hauck, who compared 1 John with "the play of the waves of the sea". Schnackenburg says that "The author does not want to offer a systematic presentation, such as Paul in Romans or Galatians." The message is précised at the start of 1 John, being in effect "communion with God on the ground of union with Jesus Christ," then (Schnackenburg continues)

the author is stimulated through opposing the heretics and concern for the inner strengthening of the Christian Church, so that "time and again he adds instructions and admonitions". In this process longer sections emerge which contain internally connected material. Schnackenburg writes: "Clear breaks are before 2:18 and 4:1, each time occasioned by consciously directing attention to the 'antichrists' or 'false prophets'. The plan is not strictly logical or predetermined, but nor is it "an unplanned sailing thither."¹⁰⁵ The progression follows the individual bent of the writer, which is essentially advance by association of ideas.¹⁰⁶

Although a scheme for the work is not consciously planned,¹⁰⁷ however, a fairly clearly-defined pattern emerges in the course of the author's writing, and this is discernible in retrospect.

It is worth setting out an English translation of the scheme (see Schnackenburg(Commentary), pp.vii, viii for the German):

<u>The Proem</u>	1:1-4
<u>First Main Section: Communion with God as walking in the light and its realisation in the world</u>	1:5 - 2:17
I Communion with God, and sin	1:6 - 2:2
II Knowledge of God and keeping the commandments	2:3-11
III Application to the readers	2:12-17
<u>Second Main Section: The present situation of the Christian churches: their resistance - struggle against the 'antichrists', their expectation of salvation, and their religio-moral duty.</u>	2:18 - 3:24
I The 'last hour'. The false teachers as anti-christs, their separation and their repulsion by the Church of the believers in Christ	2:18-27
II The expectation of the salvation of the Christians	2:28 - 3:3
III The religio-moral duty of the present	3:4-24
<u>Third Main Section. The separation of those who belong to God from the 'world' in the true faith in Christ and in love.</u>	4:1-5,12
I Discernment of spirits through the orthodox confession of Christ and separation from the 'world'	4:1-6
II Love as the distinctive mark of those born of God; its nature and fulfilment in brotherly love	4:7 - 5:4
III The true faith of Christ as the 'world'-overcoming power	5:5-12
<u>The Conclusion of the letter.</u>	5:13-21

Schnackenburg, then, does not deny strands of a sort in 1 John, but he avers that "The clearly noticeable style change in 1 John is positively explained by the double concern of the writing: by the instructional-polemical in regard to the false teachers, and by the homiletical-paranetical¹⁰⁸ in regard to the church." By demonstrating that in certain passages¹⁰⁹ the 'source' and 'editing' are really inseparable, Schnackenburg strongly reinforces his case.¹¹⁰

Another fact which is near-fatal to Bultmann's conceptions and which very powerfully supports Schnackenburg's, is that the anti-thetic parallelism of 1 John, far from belonging to a non-Johannine source, is "typically Johannine". (A.E. Brooke sufficiently demonstrated this when he compiled his extensive list of Fourth Gospel/1 John parallels).

By these means, together with his 'two-purposes' idea, and against the background of the manifest inadequacies of the artistic constructions, Schnackenburg has presented a most attractive scheme. Nor has he given only a guide to analysis: as an extremely important corollary, his judgment that "after all one will hold on to the unity of the writing" must be treated with the utmost seriousness.

John Painter's book, 'John: Witness and Theologian',¹¹¹ has introduced a new concept of the structure of 1 John. He writes: "The affirmations of the heretics are indicated by a stylistic device and they, with the denials and antitheses, provide the author with the basic structure of the letter". There are seven such affirmations in all: a threefold use of "if we say"¹¹², a threefold use of "he who says"¹¹³, and one use of "if anyone says"¹¹⁴. Painter continues: "The position of the heretics is also to be seen in the conflicts and antitheses of another three groups of sayings where the author sets out his position in opposition to the heretics -", viz. statements which begin with "he who -" plus a participle¹¹⁵, statements introduced by "everyone who -" followed by a participle¹¹⁶ and statements commencing in various ways which have to do with the apostolic confession that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh."¹¹⁷

Both the confession of faith in the incarnate Christ and the necessity of active love for the brother were rejected by the heretics; all their affirmations and the writer's responses and assertions are related to one or other aspect of this dual error.

Painter emphasises that his approach is not a source theory. "The author was responsible for the whole composition." His view then seems to be an amalgam of Håring's and Schnackenburg's views, in that it has something of the two-theme aspect of the former¹¹⁸ and it embodies the 'two-purpose' element in Schnackenburg's understanding of 1 John.¹¹⁹

The unity of 1 John (advocated by Nauck, Schnackenburg, Houlden and Painter)¹²⁰ is adopted in this hypothesis, though it is hard to decide between the two best argued schemes which champion it, viz. those of Schnackenburg and Painter. It is doubtful whether one is in any real sense opposed to the other, anyway. Painter's scheme seems to be a development and refinement of Schnackenburg's, for whose commentary on the Epistles Painter expresses admiration.¹²¹

The second important conclusion of this chapter is, therefore, that 1 John is a single composition. One author was responsible for the whole book.

(D) LITERARY TYPE OF 1 JOHN

1 John is not only enigmatic from the point of view of its internal structure. It is also hard to fit it neatly into a literary category when it is considered in toto.

Whatever its origin and literary history, what is it now? Is it a letter, an epistle, a sermon, a homily, a diatribe, a manifesto, or a treatise or tract(ate)? These questions are crucial to the present study. It was suggested at the outset¹²² that "1 John was written to a local church,¹²³ and was intended to be read publicly before its members", and conjectured that the anonymity of the book is to be explained by its inclusion in a common "parcel" with 2 and 3 John, the latter books (especially 3 John) containing the necessary introductions and conclusion. If such a view of the First Epistle is to be sustained, it is to be expected that, negatively, the writing cannot be assigned to any recognised literary genre, and positively, that it can be so assigned if the personal elements are (so to speak) "added on" to our 1 John. To put it in other words: the uniqueness of 1 John is to be attributed to its special circumstances. It would be a rare occurrence for a communication to a church to be introduced and explained by means of highly confidential private letters like 2 John and (particularly) 3 John.

(1) IS 1 JOHN A LETTER?

Originally ἐπιστολή and epistula denoted a letter of any kind, whether personal or official. However, even in the time of Isocrates and Plato¹²⁴ the letter form was being used to reach a wider audience than those immediately addressed.¹²⁵ Subsequently the epistolary form became commonly used for philosophical, scientific, and literary productions.

Adolf Deissmann distinguished sharply between letters and epistles.¹²⁶ A letter is non-literary, direct, confidential, and personal. It was "not unfairly" described as "the half of a conversation" in antiquity by Artemon, the editor of Aristotle's letters. Negatively, "neither contents, form, nor formula can be decisive in determining the characteristic nature of a letter" (as opposed to an epistle).

Now, as regards form, letters in the New Testament period followed a stereotyped pattern:

- I Address (usually the formula "A to B, greeting")
- II Greeting (in secular writings Χαίρειν but in the New Testament¹²⁷ usually Χαίροις plus εἰρήνη).
- III Thanksgiving and/or Prayer for Good Health
- IV Main Body of the Writing
- V Conclusion (salutation plus ἔρωσο or some Christian formula)
- VI Address (on the verso).¹²⁸

The First Epistle of John plainly lacks all these parts except IV and V.^{129, 130}

Schnackenburg pointed out that the omission of an opening or (regular) closing is very striking, especially as the common tendency was just the opposite - the illegitimate inclusion of an authoritative name (pseudonymity).

Roller suggested that the "pre-Asiatic" form of letter differed from the Hellenistic and still exists in Hebrews¹³¹ and 1 John. This is speculative because there is no proof that the ancient eastern verbal message was ever crystallised in a form like that of 1 John. Moreover, Roller's viewpoint completely fails to do justice to the existence of the regular letter-form on the companion letters 2 and 3 John.

Yet even such obvious omissions fail to dispel the conviction of many that 1 John is a letter. The reason given is that the tone and contents positively affirm it. The writer calls himself "I", his readers "you", and employs the word "we" frequently.

The 'direct' and 'personal' criteria which Deissmann maintained belonged pre-eminently to letters¹³² are eloquently summarised by Law: "Under special stress of emotion his paternal love, sympathy, and solicitude break out in the affectionate address 'little children' (ΤΕΚΝΙΑ , ΠΑΙΔΙΑ), or, yet more endearingly, 'my little children' (ΤΕΚΝΙΑ ἑμοῦ). Or, again, the prefatory 'Beloved' (ἀγαπητοί) gives proof how deeply he is stirred by the sublimity of his theme and by the sense of its supreme importance to his readers".¹³³

Law lists five respects in which the author knows his readers;¹³⁴ he is well aware of their religious environment,¹³⁵ dangers,¹³⁶ attainments,¹³⁷ achievements¹³⁸ and needs.¹³⁹ Alexander sums up the position of Law succinctly when he says "It is a true letter, name or no names".^{140, 141}

Perhaps the best way to answer the question "Is 1 John a letter?" is to say "not as it stands, but it is like a letter... if it started and finished 'properly' it would be a letter."¹⁴²

(2) IS 1 JOHN AN EPISTLE?

Deissmann wrote that an epistle "is an artistic literary form, a species of literature, just like the dialogue, the oration, or the drama".¹⁴³ It resembles the letter in form only; the externalities which make it look like a letter are "mere external adornment." Epistles are deliberately addressed to the public, and remain intelligible even if the author and supposed addressee/s is/are not known to a later reader. The mind and intention of the epistolographer is much more plainly apparent than that of the letter-writer: in short, "The letter is a piece of life, the epistle a product of literary art." A further element is added to Deissmann's definition by the Shorter Oxford Dictionary's monograph on 'Epistle'. The latter is the title "chiefly applied to those letters written in ancient times which rank as literature. . . a letter from an apostle - ".¹⁴⁴

The New Testament Apocrypha¹⁴⁵ similarly labels an epistle "literature which has made choice of the letter form in the interest of a definite purpose -", i.e. it is to be publicly disseminated as propoganda of some sort. From these definitions it may be briefly said that an epistle resembles a letter in one main respect - form - and differs from it in two respects: it is an artistic literary product and it is addressed to the public. Most of what has been said about the deficiencies of 1 John

considered as a letter applies equally to it when it is studied in relation to the epistolary genre. There is one area, though, in which the book has perhaps a greater claim to epistolary status. No living human being is named,¹⁴⁶ this being contrary to all expectation in a letter. 1 John does, however, as might easily be anticipated in an epistle, use various vocatives to address the recipients. Six times the readers are referred to as ἀγαπητοί,¹⁴⁷ seven times as τέκνιά,¹⁴⁸ twice as πατέρα,¹⁴⁹ and once as ἀδελφός.^{150,151}

If an epistle is to address Christian readers directly at all and yet avoid the familiarity (or multiplicity?) of names, some such device is obviously unavoidable. The query about 1 John's being a formal literary product raises again all that has been said earlier about style and structure.

Logically, writers like Haring and Brooke, von Soden and Law, should have concluded that the First Epistle is an epistle, though Law in fact called it a letter. The lack of a closely articulated pattern,¹⁵² the view accepted above - makes "epistle" less appropriate than "letter" with respect to literary characteristics.

The other element that makes an epistle what it is - a general rather than a private destination - is of course a very elusive criterion. It is, on the one hand, clear enough that a writing such as the 'Letter to the Laodiceans' is "no letter but an epistle".¹⁵³ The writer of this (hopefully) wanted his effort disseminated as widely as possible. On the other hand, it is not at all easy to decide how far Paul's extant works were intended to be 'epistles' (in Deissmann's sense). Deissmann himself was quite adamant: "The letters of Paul are not literary; they are real letters, not epistles; they were written by Paul not for the public and posterity, but for the persons to whom they were addressed."¹⁵⁴ This affirmation requires some qualification

(i) In one of his writings Paul specifically instructs his original readers to pass on their missive and to read that addressed to their neighbours.¹⁵⁵ It is hard to discern much difference between this and a circular letter.

(ii) Deissman called the Petrine writings, James and Jude "epistles" because (inter alia) "A glance at the 'addressees' shows that they are not real letters."¹⁵⁶ Impossible demands are made of the 'bearer' if we are to imagine one."¹⁵⁷ The difference between the instruction in Colossians and the address at the top of 1 Peter (particularly)

is only one of degree. It is little wonder that C.H. Dodd described 1 John as "a circular letter, like 1 Peter and (probably) Ephesians" even though he claimed that 1 John was to "a particular circle."¹⁵⁹

It is best to conclude that most New Testament "epistles" were neither strictly private nor strictly public; they were public property so far as the Church was concerned even when addressed to part of the Church in a given locality or set of circumstances.

Two final comments may be made at this stage. First, Bultmann supposed that 1:1-4 and 5:13 "imitate" epistolary address and conclusion respectively,¹⁶⁰ a theory which Kümmel correctly pronounced "not at all convincing."¹⁶¹ Secondly, in the fourth century the title "To the Parthians" appeared in a few unimportant manuscripts. Dodd referred to the title as "a curiosity of criticism."¹⁶²

Mainly because of the comparative lack of artistry¹⁶³ and the limited circle of primary recipients, 1 John can less plausibly be classed as an 'epistle'¹⁶⁴ than as a 'letter'.

(3) IS 1 JOHN A SERMON?¹⁶⁵

A sermon is, as its derivation reveals, basically a talk. In the religious sense it means "a discourse, usually delivered from a pulpit, and based upon a text of scripture, for the purpose of religious instruction or exhortation."¹⁶⁶

Though a sermon may in certain circumstances relate to a written or published work, this is not usual. Leaving aside the modern nuances of the above definition, it can be asserted that the normal essential elements appear to be that it is (i) a discourse

(ii) narrowly based¹⁶⁷

(iii) didactic or horatory.

1 John is not a discourse; Schnackenburg says that the frequent 'Apostrophen'¹⁶⁸ "may arise from the custom of the preacher", but that 1 John is not itself a sermon. The thirteen uses of $\gamma\rho\acute{\alpha}\phi\epsilon\iota\nu$ make it very difficult to believe that 1 John was originally a spoken address.¹⁶⁹

Secondly, 1 John is not narrowly based - it is not an exposition of a single text nor of an extended passage, unless it be the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. Such a suggestion, however, is unconvincing; as Schnackenburg

says in a somewhat different connection, if 1 John were based on the Fourth Gospel "it must disclose this more clearly."

Finally, 1 John is in part didactic, and in part horatory,¹⁷⁰ but it is also a proclamation of the Faith¹⁷¹ and a defence of the Faith.¹⁷² It is too many-sided, too obviously written with several purposes in mind, to be a sermon in the proper sense of the word.

(4) IS 1 JOHN A HOMILY?

The term 'homily' comes from ὁμιλία, converse or discourse addressed to a group of people (= ὁμιλος). It is "a religious discourse addressed to a congregation; especially a practical discourse with a view to edification."¹⁷³ The homily is like a sermon in that both are verbal, sometimes more restricted in scope because of its greater concentration on the practical, and generally less formal than a sermon. Since 1 John overflows the definition of a 'sermon' it will be broader still than a homily. The positive value of the homily idea in the present context is that the 'Epistle' is addressed to a relatively small group¹⁷⁴ and that it contains, inter alia, practical material. But it is not a homily.

(5) IS 1 JOHN A DIATRIBE?

Adolf Deissmann considered that Hebrews could perhaps be called a diatribe; he said of 1 John "The little work ... is best described as a religious diatribe."¹⁷⁵ The word 'diatribe', which is derived from διατριβή 'a wearing away', originally meant a discourse or disquisition,¹⁷⁶ but later came to mean a dissertation directed against some person or work, a bitter and violent criticism. The older sense is no more applicable to 1 John than 'sermon' or 'homily', while the positive elements in the book fatally undermine the application of the name to 1 John in the later sense.

(6) IS 1 JOHN A MANIFESTO?

No, it is not, although the description has been favoured by a number of scholars.¹⁷⁷ The Shorter Oxford Dictionary

gives as a definition of 'manifesto' "A public declaration by a sovereign prince or state, or by an individual or body of individuals whose proceedings are of public importance, making known past actions and explaining the motives for actions announced as forthcoming." Once the political aspect has been ignored as irrelevant, the definition actually seems to fit 2 John - and even more particularly, 3 John - better than 1 John. The only element which is more appropriate for 1 John is the stress on the 'public' nature of the declaration and actions concerned.

(7) IS 1 JOHN A TREATISE OR TRACT(ATE)?

There is little or no difference between a treatise and a tractate. Both terms indicate "a book or writing which treats of some particular subject.... a methodical discussion or exposition of the principles of the subject."¹⁷⁸ An imperfect biblical example is the Epistle to the Romans, with its concentration on the righteousness of God. A better example is the Epistle to the Hebrews, which systematically discusses the superiority of Christ as compared with precursors and types; Hebrews is more like a treatise than Romans because it is not nearly so directly addressed to its readers.¹⁷⁹ There are three objections to the use of the category 'treatise' in describing 1 John:

(i) It does not deal systematically with a single topic.¹⁸⁰

(ii) It is too personal.^{181, 182}

(iii) A particular concrete situation is addressed.

In the light of these criticisms, it is not possible to concur with the judgment of Houlden that 1 John "is - not a letter, it is a theological tract."^{183, 184}

The third important conclusion of this chapter must now be stated. In answer to the question, 'What is 1 John?' the most satisfactory answer seems to be that it is a genuine letter¹⁸⁵ or informal written message to a congregation,¹⁸⁶ but a writing which lacks the regular letter address, greeting, thanksgiving and/or prayer for good health and conclusion.¹⁸⁷ It is neither a written nor spoken composition which fits into any other recognised literary category.

(E) THE NATURE OF 2 JOHN

The structure of 2 John is perfectly obvious. It is a letter¹⁸⁸ which more or less follows the conventions of private correspondence of the day.^{189,190}

There are three main sections:

Verses 1 - 3 Introduction and Salutation

Verses 4 - 11 Counsel and Warning

Verses 12 & 13 Conclusion¹⁹¹

2 John differs from regular first century letters in three primary ways: first, its (relative) anonymity; secondly, its rather prolix opening; thirdly, its substitution of χάρις, 'grace', for χαίρειν, 'greeting'.¹⁹² (The full greeting in 2 John is three-fold - ἔσται μεθ' ἡμῶν χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη παρὰ Θεοῦ πατρὸς κ.τ.λ.¹⁹³

After the address (verses 1 and 2) and the greeting (verse 3), the writer begins his message proper on a note of rejoicing - viz.

Ἐχάρην λίαν κ.τ.λ. Significantly, the only other New Testament book using the expression is 3 John,¹⁹⁴ though secular works contain it.¹⁹⁵

Another feature binding 2 John to other contemporary letters is the petition. Terence Mullins said that "the characteristic form of the petition is: background; petition, introduced by one of four characteristic verbs; address in the vocative; courtesy phrase; desired action." (There is considerable variation - sometimes an element is omitted). One of the four petition verbs is ἐρωτᾶν. "II John 5 is thus a petition: ἐρωτῶ σε / κυρία / ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, i.e. it exhibits the petition verb, the address, and the desired action."¹⁹⁶

2 John, then, differs from both other 'Johannine' letters (3 John and the 7 letters of Revelation 2 and 3) and contemporary secular letters in only one really significant respect: the fourth important conclusion of this chapter is that 2 John is atypical in that it is inadequately addressed, and in fact names no one.

(F) THE NATURE OF 3 JOHN

The structure of 3 John at first glance presents no problems, either. It can be regarded as revolving around the three key personalities Gaius (VV.1 to 8), Diotrephes (VV.9, 10), and Demetrius (VV.11,12),¹⁹⁷ or it can be analysed from the point of view of the three or four subjects covered. Funk, however, describes seven parts¹⁹⁸ in 3 John, of which two are the introduction (VV.1,2) and the conclusion VV.13 ff). After observing that 3 John is more complex than 2 John, he continues: "Breaks are marked by the vocative, ἀγαπητέ, at Vss.2, 5, 11. An expanded (in comparison with II John 4) ἐχάροην λίαν period occupies Vss. 3-4, following the conventional health wish (2). Other breaks in thought occur at Vs. 9 and Vs. 12. There are thus five parts to the body of the letter, excluding the health wish."

Funk's scheme, then, comprises

(Introduction)

Parts 1 and 2 - the author's basic request and its relevant background (3 - 8).

Part 3 - the recalcitrance of Diotrephes and the Presbyter's proposed action (9-10).

Part 4 - a brief parenetical summary (11).

Part 5 - a recommendation for Demetrius (12)

(Conclusion)

A little later Robert Funk advances what he calls the "structural outline" of "the interior" of 3 John, which is a restatement of the above except that Part 1 is now separated and seen to be "thanksgiving, which forms the general background for the request (3-4)" and Part 2 consists of "body proper, with its request (5-8)".¹⁹⁹ Funk's analysis is more detailed than others but it is uncontroversial. It is universally agreed that 3 John follows contemporary letter-writing conventions more closely than does 2 John.^{200,201}

²⁰²Barclay gives as a pattern a letter from a ship's captain named Irenaeus. This and 3 John both (he says) contain four main parts: the greeting, the prayer for good health, the central section with its news, and the final greetings by name. Twice in his comments on verse 2 Brooke used the word "conventional" to describe the opening of the Third Epistle. Brooke also

illustrated the epistolary use of εὐοδοῦσθαι, "to prosper", and of ὑγιαίνειν, "to be of sound health" (or "doctrine") from both the New Testament and other early sources.²⁰³

Funk has drawn attention to the fact that the ἐχέρην λίαν formulation of 3 John 3 is not followed by an ἐρωτᾶν petition, but by a vocative (ἄγαπητέ) and πιστὸν ποιεῖς (V.5), which is apparently a Christian counterpart of the common idiom καλῶς ποιήσεις.²⁰⁴

Another common feature is the recommendation of third parties -
"In III John 12 there is just such a recommendation for Demetrius".²⁰⁵

The usual ending of letters - ἔρρωσω ('farewell') or ἐρρωσθαί σε εὐχομαι (literally: "I pray you to enjoy good health") - is replaced by the Christianised Jewish greeting εἰρήνη σοι.^{206,207} 3 John is less formal in its final words than 2 John. The mystery surrounding the personalities of 2 John is entirely absent, "friends" being referred to unambiguously and "individually": ἀσπάξου τοὺς φίλους²⁰⁸ κατ' ὄνομα.²⁰⁹

The appropriate stage has now been reached for the statement of the fifth important conclusion of the present chapter : 3 John is a typical letter of its period save that it exhibits formulae which have been modified in a Christian direction.^{210,211}

(G) A SYNTHESIS

The five major conclusions reached in the chapter may be summarised:

- (1) 1 John is complete - as the writer intended it - as it stands.²¹²
- (2) 1 John is the work of but one author.²¹³
- (3) 1 John is a genuine letter though it has no conventional beginning or conclusion.²¹⁴
- (4) 2 John is a genuine letter though no person is named in it.²¹⁵
- (5) 3 John is a typical letter of its period (but one containing Christianised elements).²¹⁶

How are these facts to be reconciled with each other and with the fact of common authorship?

First of all, it may be asked why did 1 John never have all the usual features of letters? Schnackenburg can only say of the

writer, "Perhaps he deliberately wanted to give his writing, which has a kerugmatic character, a form other than simply that of a letter. In the last analysis, this type (of letter) remains a riddle to us."²¹⁷

M. Meinertz regarded the First Epistle as a covering letter for the Gospel, and believed that "the absence of a literary beginning and conclusion can be explained only on the assumption that the readers knew the author to be an outstanding apostolic personality".²¹⁸ The covering letter idea is not satisfactory.²¹⁹

It appears, therefore, that Schnackenburg is left with a riddle, and Meinertz (and Roller)²²⁰ with a totally inadequate theory. What possibility is left? Only, it would seem, the view expressed in this hypothesis, viz. that 1 John is not exactly a letter, but (in the words of 3 John) "something to the church".²²¹

Each facet of 1 John - its structure, its nature - supports the hypothesis that 1 John is not a letter so much as a writing sent to a congregation with a letter, or with letters.²²² The personal details so puzzlingly absent from the First Epistle are supplied by the others.²²³ When 3 and 2 John had been perused by their respective recipients (Gaius and his wife), the larger writing was to be presented to the assembled congregation. 1 John was calculated to win people to the truth and to keep them in it without antagonising - to explain what it is to be a Christian, and to show why heretics must be opposed this 'anonymous' letter,²²⁴ naming neither friend nor foe, but working on the principle "if the cap fits, wear it" was the best way to deal with the situation.²²⁵

(H) ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE BASED ON THE NATURE OF THE EPISTLES WHICH SUPPORTS THE HYPOTHESIS:

(a) Mandatory statements and prohibitions.

Much of 1 John consists of horatory material, but in the great majority of verses which contain it the writer urges his readers by indirect rather than direct imperatives. In the whole of 1 John there are only eleven instances of a verb in the imperative mood.²²⁶ Contrariwise, there are just over fifty places where an indirect statement which is virtually equivalent to an

imperative or horatory statement is present.²²⁷ These include

- (i) the conditional $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ constructions. When the writer says, e.g. $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu \dots \pi\epsilon\rho\iota\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\nu$ (1:7) or $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu \acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\nu$ (1:9), he is enjoining 'walking' or confession; when he says $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \epsilon\acute{\nu}\tau\omicron\lambda\alpha\varsigma \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon \tau\eta\rho\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\nu$ he is urging the keeping of the commandments, etc. Similarly, when he uses the expression $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}\pi\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ (1:6,8,10), he is, inter alia, surely issuing a prohibition on his readers with respect to the error he is repudiating.
- (ii) the articular participle serves a similar purpose both positively and negatively: in Chapter 2 there are seven instances in verses 9 to 29 inclusive. When the writer says $\acute{\omicron} \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{\omega}\nu \tau\omicron\nu \acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\acute{\omicron}\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon \dots$ he means "love your brother"; in the following verse $\acute{\omicron} \delta\epsilon \mu\iota\sigma\acute{\omega}\nu \tau\omicron\nu \acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\acute{\omicron}\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ of course has an identificatory purpose (assisting recognition of the unorthodox) but it is also an implicit injunction, viz. "Do not hate your brother".
- (iii) the $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \acute{\omicron}$ and participle construction which is very similar.²²⁸
- (iv) $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha$ expressions, which are often obvious exhortations; e.g. 3:11 ... $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\nu \acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\eta\lambda\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ and 3:23: ... $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\omega\mu\epsilon\nu \tau\acute{\omega} \acute{\omicron}\nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\alpha\tau\iota$.
- (v) lastly, the use of the verb $\acute{\omicron}\phi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\lambda\omega$ plus an infinitive (as in 2:6, 3:16, and 4:11).

The characteristic of 1 John then is that its exhortations are extremely frequent (on average more than one in every two verses), but that they are couched in more or less indirect language in five cases out of every six.

Now, with 2 and 3 John the picture is different.

Typically indirect '1 John-type' statements still appear, but they no longer dominate. The Second Epistle contains four direct instructions (in verses 5, 8, and 10 (bis)), and four indirect ones (verses 5, 6, and 9 (bis)). 3 John has two direct and three indirect exhortations (all in verses 8 and 11).

It is apparent, then, that the injunctions of the shorter epistles are about as common (i.e. very roughly one in two verses) as in 1 John, but a much higher proportion are direct imperatives. It would seem that the writer was being more circumspect, more sermonic, in the longer

writing. Is it not plausible to conclude that in 1 John he was addressing a "mixed multitude" whose reaction would be varied, and that in 2 and 3 John he was writing to individuals, to members of a family with whom he had established a real rapport?

(b) Tone

The conclusion reached on the basis of the frequency of different methods of exhorting the reader/s is unquestionably confirmed when the contents of the exhortations are considered. There is an undeniably general tone and emphasis in 1 John: ²²⁹ for instance, the writer says: "Do not love the world or the things in the world;" "Abide in Him"; ²³¹ and "Test the spirits". ²³² The writer is more frank, more explicit, in 2 and 3 John. An example can be seen in a comparison between 1 John 1:6 ff with its repeated $\epsilon\lambda\upsilon\ \epsilon\iota\pi\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ and 3 John 9 and 10. The writer shuns conditional constructions in the latter verses, saying categorically, specifically, and with utter frankness that Diotrephes repudiates his (the writer's) authority, "prates" ²³³ against him "with evil words", "refuses to welcome the brethren", stops others doing so, and casts some out of the church. It is to be expected that 3 John, which is so obviously a personal letter, ²³⁴ would use such forthright language, but the tone of 2 John (often said to be a writing intended not for an individual but a congregation) ²³⁵ is scarcely less forthright. The urgent words of verse 8, $\beta\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, have no close parallel in 1 John, while the whole of verses 10 and 11 have a pointed directness which is actually foreign to any part of 1 John: "If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work". In short, 1 John says what to do - "love!" "believe!" etc.; 2 and 3 John say how this is to work out in practice within the confines of a single household. The difference is that between a writing with a congregational destination, ²³⁶ and those with a truly personal destination.

²³⁷

The inclusion of personal material at the beginning and ending of 2 and 3 John and its exclusion from 1 John greatly enhances the above conclusion, which itself has to do only with the body of the respective epistles.

FOOTNOTES:

- ¹ See p. 3 above
- ² But see pp. 144 ff above, regarding the 'homiletic' view of Fourth Gospel and 1 John structure.
- ³ Cf. Guthrie, who still adheres to a similar analysis except that, in his case, 1:19 to 2:12 is entitled "Introductory events". New Testament Introduction, Gospels and Acts, pp.300,301.
- ⁴ " - I regard the Fourth Gospel as being in its essential character a theological work rather than a history". The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, C.U.P., 1953, p.444.
- ⁵ Das Evangelium des Johannes, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968, pp.5 ff.
- ⁶ A view opposed by Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, who says "The Fourth Gospel is, as it stands, a literary unity." The Fourth Gospel, Hoskyns/Davey, Faber & Faber, 1947, pp.68,9. In a memorable sentence C.H. Dodd criticises the 'German' method of analysis: "I conceive it to be the duty of an interpreter at least to see what can be done with the document as it has come down to us before attempting to improve upon it." The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p.290.
- ⁷ New Testament Studies, Vol. 15, pp.107 ff.
- ⁸ In the case of 1 John that of J.C. O'Neill (see below pp. 152 ff)
- ⁹ Deeks' scheme is not particularly convincing, though perhaps it is illustrative of Barrett's succinct observation that the structure of the Fourth Gospel is "simple in outline, complicated in detail". See Barrett, Commentary, p.11.
- ¹⁰ Commentary, pp.51 ff. Lindars names Barrett, Braun, Brown, Schnackenburg and Sanders as scholars sympathetic to his type of scheme.
- ¹¹ e.g. on p.45 he says: "the distribution of linguistic traits covers the whole Gospel. This weakens the theory of multiple written sources, some of which might have been in Aramaic, and rather suggests that the writing, editing, and reshaping are all the work of one man". In 1972 Lindars produced convincing arguments for his rejection of Bultmann's theory of a "Signs source" and a "Revelation discourse". He claimed that (1) it is impossible to imagine John incorporating these sources almost intact into a Gospel, and (2) the 'sources' are not credible as separate units. Behind the Fourth Gospel, pages 31 ff. Not only are theories of multiple written sources behind the Fourth Gospel generally rejected by English-speaking scholars, but the more complicated theories of dislocation and/or "layers" after the "German" pattern are repudiated by influential writers. Dodd was generally opposed to such ideas (see above ; note 6). C.F. Evans wrote regarding Bultmann's theory of dislocations: "the end result of his analysis must be pronounced unconvincing". (Review in Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 26, 1973, p.347). See also C.F. Evans' remarks in the

- Hibbert Journal, Vol. 56 (1957-8), p.398. With respect to "layers" in the Fourth Gospel, the careful scholar Kümmel said that "The more far-reaching hypotheses ... according to which John arose through extensive expansion of a 'Grundschrift' can only be designated as arbitrary and undemonstrable". Introduction to the New Testament, p.150.
- ¹² but not identical with
- ¹³ Ibid, p.47
- ¹⁴ Ibid, p.46
- ¹⁵ Ibid, p.51
- ¹⁶ or part of it. Ibid, p.51
- ¹⁷ On the basis of the Gospel According to John by R.E. Brown as well as Lindars' two books, The Gospel of John, Oliphants, London, 1972, and Behind the Fourth Gospel, S.P.C.K., London, 1971.
- ¹⁸ J.L. Houlden, A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles, pp.24,25.
- ¹⁹ "In this commentary we have preferred to see a man caught in an unresolved dichotomy of thought and purpose rather than the use of two sources." Ibid, p.29; cf. pp.55,6.
- ²⁰ Though exception may still be taken to a number of points in Lindars' theory. Moreover, though in one sense Houlden's view of separate acts of writing may be valid, in another that would appear not to be the case. 1 John may be the product of years of reflection (and perhaps incorporate earlier written reflections and addresses) but at the same time it gives every indication of having been written in toto in the month X in the year Y to meet situation Z. Cf. p. 135 note 318.
- ²¹ See above, p. 106
- ²² but not by him
- ²³ The New Testament, An Introduction, pp.221,2.
- ²⁴ Ibid, p.221. From the days of Robert Law the larger Johannine books have been compared with musical compositions on account of the sensitive artistry alleged to be evident within them. See above, pp. 148 ff.
- ²⁵ The subject of these being the future parousia hope and the sacraments. It is, then, the unconvincing theological points and not those other more convincing theological and structural ones which guide Perrin in determining the degree of Fourth Gospel/1 John overlap in authorship. This is strange: the result is the tentative denial of common authorship (except for brief passages) instead of the assertion of it.
- ²⁶ pp.223, 224; cf. p.247
- ²⁷ Article 'The Structure of First John. Comparison with the Fourth Gospel. The Pattern of Christian Life', in Biblical Theology Bulletin, Vol.III, June 1973, No. 2, pp.194-216.

²⁸ p. 171 note 10 , and above, pp. 153 ff.

²⁹ and, indeed, between either of these and Revelation 1:1-3.

³⁰ J.A.T. Robinson, for instance, says "the opening of the first epistle - shows a number of obvious similarities with it (the Fourth Gospel Prologue) and reads indeed as if it could be a first draft for it." Redating the New Testament, p.283. In partial contrast, R. Schnackenburg says that "The opening of 1 John - renders freely the thought of the Prologue (of John), and may be read as the oldest commentary on it." The Gospel According to St. John, Burns and Oates, London, 1968, p.233.

³¹ Literally, "lean it closely to -".

³² Die Johannesbriefe, p.51. The Fourth Gospel/1 John comparative table of Greek phrases on the same page is valuable.

³³ Cf. Barrett, The Gospel of John and Judaism, p.35.

³⁴ It is interesting that Dobschütz dated the Kerygma Petrou between 80 and 140, and that Fragment 1 of that work refers to the Lord as "Law and Word (Logos)". New Testament Apocrypha II, p.99. It is therefore just possible that Christian use of the term Λόγος was general, predating the specifically Johannine use of it.

³⁵ The Epistles of John, MacMillan, London, 1883, p.3.

³⁶ The Expository Times, September 1975, pp.372-375.

³⁷ Bernard, Bultmann, de Aulsebrook, Gaechter, Green, Haenchen, Käsemann, Schnackenburg, Brown, Lindars, Jeremias, Burney, Weiss, & O'Neill.

³⁸ Dodd, Hoskyns and Davey, Lightfoot, Marsh, Morris, and Sanders and Mastin. Ibid, pp.372,373.

³⁹ C.K. Barrett has recently re-examined the question of Aramaic sources behind the Fourth Gospel, and concluded "There is no syntactical support for the view that the evangelist drew upon Aramaic sources in the Prologue." John and Judaism, pp.22-28.

⁴⁰ Schnackenburg says of the Fourth Gospel Prologue : "In its present form, it is indissolubly linked with the Gospel itself". The Gospel According to St. John, Burns & Oates, London, 1968, p.221. See also Robert Grant, A Historical Introduction to the New Testament (Fontana edition 1971), p.159. A rough guide is to be found in the reference column in the R.S.V.; approximately ten Fourth Gospel Prologue statements are restated or elaborated elsewhere in the book. Two key instances are the affirmation of ontological unity between the Father and the Son (1:1; cf.10:30 etc) and the identification of the Son with life and light (1:4,5,9 - cf. 6:35 ff, 14:6 ff, 8:12 ff). Another great emphasis (this time in both Prologues) is the powerful statement of the reality of the Incarnation (1 John 1:1-3 cf. John 1: 14 etc). As far as 1 John is concerned, the theme is renewed in 1 John 4:9,10,14 (the Father 'sending' the Son) and in 4:2, 5:6, and 5:20 (the

Son 'coming' in the flesh). Cf. Schnackenburg, p.57. A vital 1 John theme is that of *κοινωνία* : " - the Proem of 1 John strikes a fundamental chord, which sounds again and again in this writing..... communion with God through faith in the One who appeared in history and the true Son of God, Jesus Christ - ". Ibid, pp.64,65. Numerous other verses in the First Epistle re-iterate those statements found in its prologue.

⁴¹ Contrast 2 and 3 John

⁴² for which there is no textual evidence anyway.

⁴³ The title "ad Parthos", which was common in the West from Augustine's time, is obviously not original. See Brooke, Commentary, pp.xxx/xxxi.

⁴⁴ but all make the attempt!

⁴⁵ Pierson Parker, in his article 'Two Editions of John' (J.B.L., Vol. 75, 1956, p.303) goes a good deal further. He says "Indeed 1 John makes almost as good sense when read backwards, sentence by sentence!".

⁴⁶ The Johannine Epistles, p.xxi. See above, p. 153

⁴⁷ The Johannine Epistles, p.xxxii.

⁴⁸ Plummer, The Epistles of St. John, C.U.P., 1886, p.liii.

⁴⁹ Cf. Wilder/Hoon in the Interpreter's Bible, p.210: its course is like that of "the river Meander, which flowed through the province of Asia."

⁵⁰ Von Campenhausen has (more recently) favoured this term: Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power, London, 1969, p.186.

⁵¹ A musical term signifying the adding of melodies to a given melody according to fixed rules.

⁵² Ibid, p.5. It is very interesting to see that C.H. Dodd has (unconsciously?) used language very like that with which Law describes 1 John to summarise what he calls the 'Book of Signs' (i.e. John 2-12). Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p.383. Dodd here says concerning (part of) the Fourth Gospel what Law said of the First Epistle even though he did not agree with Law's precise analysis of the Epistle. (See Dodd, Commentary, pp.xxi, xxii). Even if the 'precise' view were adopted in each case, however, there would still be one significant difference: in the Book of Signs "The themes have all been brought into a unified presentation... a single dominant theme." Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, pp.383,4.

⁵³ 1 John 3:9, 4:7, 5:4, 5:18: Cf.2:29

⁵⁴ The first two cycles work out neatly, dealing with the same tests in the same order, but the third cycle breaks the pattern. In the first place it has two sections, not one. Secondly, the first section of the Third Cycle has three paragraphs (like cycles 1 and 2), but these are all based on one test - love. Finally,

the second section of the Third Cycle has only two paragraphs; these are both concerned with the belief test.

⁵⁵ See Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, (3rd Impression 1964), pp. 44 ff. In discussing the range of meaning of $\rho\tau\varsigma$ and $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta$ Dodd says: "the fact that $\rho\tau\varsigma$ is always related to God and His law, rather than to social customs and institutions as such, or to abstract principles, gives a different colour to its use; and in general it would probably be true to say that for the Hebrew righteousness tends to be more inward, more humane, and more inclusive than for the Greek." On page 45 Dodd quotes Skinner, who says that for the prophets at least "the idea (of $\rho\tau\varsigma$) is far broader than what we usually mean by right or justice; it includes a large-hearted construction of the claims of humanity; it is, as has been said, the humanitarian virtue par excellence." It can hardly be denied that in 1 John 19, for example, the forensic idea of righteousness is not wholly adequate to convey the force of $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\sigma$. In his commentary on the Epistles Dodd again says in effect that in those books obedience and love are identical. (p.123). Schnackenburg says, "Faith and Love sum up for John all the demands imposed on the disciple of Christ." *The Gospel According to St. John*, p.559.

⁵⁶ Commentary, p.xxxiv

⁵⁷ Brooke omits to mention that the Introduction is also Christological.

⁵⁸ e.g. John Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, S.P.C.K., London, pp.117ff. See above, pp. 156 ff.

⁵⁹ Commentary, p.10

⁶⁰ Stott and Alexander have followed the general scheme devised by Law in their commentaries.

Cf. A.M. Hunter, *Introducing the New Testament*, S.C.M., London, 1957, pp.176,7, and Edward Malatesta, *The Epistles of St. John*, Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, 1973. Variations on Law's scheme, both involving alleged displacements of material within 1 John, were proposed by C. Clare Oke ('The Plan of the First Epistle of John,' *Expository Times*, 51, 1939/40, pp.347-350) and Kozue Tomoi ('The Plan of the First Epistle of John, *Expository Times*, 52, 1940/41, pp.117-119). ⁶¹ In his article, *A Study in 1 John*, in the 'Studies in John' supplement to *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. XXIV, pp.194 ff.

⁶² See above, pp. 152 ff.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p.110. In context, the remark is directed at the analyses of Häring, Brooke, and Bultmann. It could also have reference to Bengel, who claimed for 1 John "an elaborate contextual plan on a basis mainly Trinitarian." See S.D.F. Salmond, 'Epistles of John' in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, 1902-4, Vol.II, page 733.

⁶⁴ See Houlden, p.26. Dobschütz' work appeared in *Z.N.W.VIII* (1907), pp.1-8.

⁶⁵ Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), pp.138-158.

⁶⁶ The same "collection of sayings" as the "revelation sayings" source behind the Fourth Gospel. Ibid, p.138. Dwight Moody Smith Jr. has discerned one notable difference in Bultmann's Fourth Gospel and 1 John sources: "Apart from 2:23, 5:10,12 (2 John 9), where Father and Son are mentioned, there is little suggestion of revealer or redeemer myth in the source of 1 John". The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel, Yale University Press, 1965, p.17, note.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.141

⁶⁹ Bultmann, like Hans Jonas (and the religionsgeschichtliche school generally) discerned 'Gnosticism' in many places - in Philo, in the Odes of Solomon, the Hermetica, and in the New Testament. 'Gnosticism' for him, of course, is to be understood in what may be described as a 'broad' or 'German' sense, the sense for which R. McL. Wilson prefers to employ the word 'Gnosis' as distinct from the narrower term 'Gnosticism' which Wilson (in keeping with proposals at the congress in Messina in 1966) reserved for the developed, mainly anti-Christian heresies of the 2nd century. Wilson, Gnosis and the New Testament, Blackwell, Oxford, 1968, pp.4, 5, 12. See also Wilson's earlier book, The Gnostic Problem, Mowbray, London, 1958, pp.65 ff, and Edwin Yamauchi, Pre-Christian Gnosticism, Tyndale, London, 1973, pp.17,18. In 'John and Judaism', C.K. Barrett differentiates between the definitions of Gnosticism of C.H. Dodd and Rudolf Bultmann. Pp.3, 7. See also John Painter, John: Witness and Theologian, p.15.

⁶⁹ In his essay Die Kirchliche Redaktion des ersten Johannesbriefes in the volume 'In Memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer', edited by Werner Schmauch, Stuttgart, pp.189-201.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.189. A summary occurs in Bultmann's Commentary on the Epistles, page 2.

⁷¹ The reasons for regarding 5:13 as the end of the book were

- (1) that 5:13 is a clear letter conclusion;
- (2) that 5:14-21 breaks the christological/exhortatory pattern of the earlier part of the book;
- (3) that sins are differentiated into those $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\nu}\nu\kappa\tau\omicron\nu$ and others in 5:14-21, but this distinction does not appear (it is in fact incompatible with teaching) in 1 John up to 5:13;
- (4) that 5:18-20 merely summarises the main thoughts of the book proper.

⁷² Page 2

⁷³ Attempts to find a train of thought in 2:28-5:12 are futile. The whole section 2:28-5:12 is obviously not a coherent organic composition, but rather a compendium of various fragments collected as a supplement to 1:5-2:27". Commentary, pp.43,44.

⁷⁴ Summarily, then:

1st stage - 1:1-2:27 (the result of the author working with his source)

the very distinctive statement ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν (1 John 4:8,16); the statement has "no known (Jewish) parallels." Ibid, p.53. Nor is there any very close parallel to the idea of love casting out fear: 1 John 4:18; cf. John 13:34,35), and the assertions that God's children are ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται (2:29) and shall be ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ (3:2; neither of these concepts has any distinct Jewish parallel). Some parallels are noted to the notion of God's παρουσία (pp.31-33), but it is much more natural to understand the word as referring to Christ. Finally, with respect to 2:18-27 (the fifth of the "twelve admonitions"), O'Neill calls the χρισμὰ "the most pervasive" theme, yet has to admit that "no later Jewish document ... gives any clear indication that the community as a whole was regarded as anointed", (page 23; see 1 John 2:20,27).

- 88 M. de Jonge says categorically "There is no indication that the controversy within the 'Johannine' Christian communities was influenced by Christian-Jewish controversies concerning the messiahship of Jesus". Moreover, the word χριστός in the Johannine Epistles "is used as a Christian term, which has lived out its own life in the Christian church - ". 'Antichrist' is not a Jewish term either. Article, 'The Use of the Word χριστός in the Johannine Epistles' in the volume Studies in John, a supplement to Novum Testamentum, Vol. XXIV, pp.66 ff. Schnackenburg argues similarly on pp.156,7 with regard to the easy transition by the writer from χριστός in 2:22a to τον υἱόν in 2:22b and 2:23.
- 89 For instance, 2:18-27 is described as three poems of four lines each plus Christian additions of irregular length, yet a case could be made out for calling vv. 22 and 23 another verse of 4 lines; after all, "the Christian additions are also capable of division into lines." (p.28).
- 90 Philemon, perhaps.
- 91 This point, which is so damaging to the theories of both Bultmann and O'Neill, is quoted from John Painter, John: Witness and Theologian, S.P.C.K., London, 1975, page 112.
- 92 Instances are quoted in Houlden's Commentary - see pp.28,29.
- 93 Commentary, pp.xxi/xxii.
- 94 Der Tradition und der Charakter des ersten Johannesbriefes, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1957, p.126.
- 95 "Behind the prototype and behind the letter stands the same author." (p.74; cf. pp.73, 123, 126, and 141). The closing verses of 1 John "partly explain" earlier statements, and so belong to the writer of the rest of the book. (p.141). Even the passage 5:16 ff fits into the same picture "without being forced" (p.142). Plainly Nauck diverges sharply from Rudolf Bultmann on this issue. See above, pp. 151 ff.
- 96 p.125
- 97 and even then was "not a letter in the true sense." p.126.

- ⁹⁸ In the process the original "antithesis rows" remained almost unchanged. p.66.
- ⁹⁹ Commentary, p.12
- ¹⁰⁰ See p. 152 above. Nauck emphatically disagrees with Bultmann over the position of the (original) author: he was "not an oddity" whose letter had to be straightened out by an ecclesiastical redactor, but was acquainted with both late Jewish and early Christian tradition. p.133.
- ¹⁰¹ Nauck is tempted to view the triple $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\rho\alpha\psi\alpha$ of 1 John 2:14 as relating to "the antitheses rows sent to the church" but this is not satisfactory, since his basic theory seems invalid. Ibid, p.125, note 2; cf. below p. 183 note 168.
- ¹⁰² Introduction to the New Testament, (E.T.) S.C.M., 1966, pp.306,307.
- ¹⁰³ The portions of the book assigned to the 'courses of thought' are 1:5-2:27, 2:28-4:6, and 4:7 to 5:13; the three are followed by "concluding thoughts" (5:14-21).
- ¹⁰⁴ Commentary, pp.10 ff.
- ¹⁰⁵ Though in one place Schnackenburg argues that "certain fixed formulations" must have been prepared in advance (Commentary, p.167).
- ¹⁰⁶ In 1:5 to 2:17, for example, there is an "obviously chain-like sequence of smaller thought units" (with breaks at the end of 2:2 and 2:12). Commentary, p.73. Later, on p.273, Schnackenburg remarks on "the peculiar thought-production of the author, who lets himself be led from one thought associatively to the other". The remark is made apropos 5:13-21, whose basis is the verb $\omicron\iota\delta\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu$, and which is divided into seven parts.
- ¹⁰⁷ Cf. N. Alexander's judgment that 1 John is some kind of production "thought out pen in hand". Commentary, p.30.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.12
- ¹⁰⁹ e.g. in 2:29-3:4, 3:6-9, and 3:19 ff.
- ¹¹⁰ Houlden agrees; he says "there is a considerable degree of overlap. And this very fact confirms the belief that we are dealing with a single work". Ibid, p.29.
- ¹¹¹ S.P.C.K., London, 1975, pp.117-119.
- ¹¹² 1:6,8,10
- ¹¹³ 2:4,6,9
- ¹¹⁴ 4:20
- ¹¹⁵ 3:7,8,10,14 ff; 4:8
- ¹¹⁶ 2:29, 3:4,6,9,10. This and the previous group stress the fulfilment of righteousness in the context of brotherly love.
- ¹¹⁷ 5:6,10,12,19

- ¹¹⁸ Without its closely articulated structure!
- ¹¹⁹ Cf. p. 156 above
- ¹²⁰ Kümmel is forced to the same conclusion: Ibid, p.309.
- ¹²¹ p.112; cf. p.145
- ¹²² p.1
- ¹²³ And not a community of churches - see above, pp 31 ff.
Painter, who follows Schnackenburg in a number of respects, appears to diverge from him here: he speaks of "the congregation to which this letter (1 John) was addressed." John: Witness and Theologian, p.115.
- ¹²⁴ The two were contemporaries.
- ¹²⁵ See, e.g. Plato's Seventh Letter of c.345 B.C., which is a refutation of popular misconceptions about his thought and conduct.
- ¹²⁶ Light from the Ancient East, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1910, pp.218-221.
- ¹²⁷ Except for Acts 15:23; 23:26; James 1:1.
- ¹²⁸ Three typical letters, spanning more than three centuries, but remarkably similar to each other in form, are printed on pages 27 to 29 of C.K. Barrett's 'The New Testament Background: Selected Documents', S.P.C.K., London, 1961. See also Wilder/Hoon, Interpreter's Bible, page 308.
- ¹²⁹ The second person plural imperative "little children, keep yourselves from idols" is a conclusion of a sort: Bultmann calls 5:13 an imitation of "the usual epistolary conclusion." The same writer says that "The Proemium of 1 John imitates the usual prescript of a letter and thus suggests that 1 John really is a letter". Commentary, p.2. Cf. Wilder/Hoon, Interpreter's Bible, p.216. Earlier, the point had been argued more fully in Die Kirchliche Redaktion des ersten Johannesbriefes, pages 189, 190: "Now as the writer of (a) letter names himself in the prescript of the letter and directs himself to the addressees, so in 1 John 1:1-4 the writer and those addressed are distinguished - only that everything concrete/individual is done away with; the anonymous author does not speak as an individual person but in the 'we' of ear and eye witnesses, and likewise the addressees appear only as the 'you', i.e. as the Christian church, the receiver of the tradition mediated by the 'we'. The conclusion of the proemium imitates the good wish of the prescript of the letter, in that the customary formulation - *χαρις και ειρηνη* is recast into the specifically Johannine terminology (*και ταυτα γραφομεν υμιν*) *ινα η χαρη ημων η πεπληρωμενη*-" Cf. Bernard Weiss, A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1896, p.174.
- ¹³⁰ And so Schnackenburg states at the very start of his commentary that it is "no formal letter after the Greek kind." Such is the generally accepted judgment, but it was challenged by Fred O. Francis in 1970 (article 'The Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and 1 John', Zeitschrift für die

neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche, 61, 1970, pp.110-126. Francis examined contemporary Hellenistic letters and found a "convention of double opening statements", which he claimed was also in evidence in the prologue of 1 John, i.e. 1 John 1:1,2 was reckoned to be the first half of the double form, and 1:3 the second. So much for the beginning of 1 John; so far as the end is concerned, "Many Hellenistic letters of all types have no closing formulas whatever; they just stop". (Examples are found in Josephus' Antiquities 8:50-54 and 1 Macc. 10:25 ff). Francis concludes: "Scholarship must reassess the literary character of the Epistles of James and 1 John in the light of what appear to be carefully styled opening thematic statements, a recognisable epistolary close, and the rather substantial literary-thematic coherence of the epistles as a whole. James and 1 John may be understood as epistles from start to finish". Two points must be made:

- (a) Francis' contention that 1 John has a true epistolary beginning and ending has not been supported in more recent studies and commentaries.
- (b) He said that the characteristics described belong to "secondary letters", by which he meant letters which lack situational immediacy". That assessment of 1 John - directly opposed in the present thesis - is a dubious one.

¹³¹ Hebrews does close with greetings and a benediction.

¹³² See p. 158 above

¹³³ Law, The Tests of Life, p.41.

¹³⁴ And thereby anticipates Kümmel's objection that 1 John is "a tractate intended for all of Christendom". Introduction to the New Testament, p.307.

¹³⁵ 1 John 2:19, 4:1

¹³⁶ 2:26, 3:7, 5:21

¹³⁷ 2:12-14,21

¹³⁸ 4:4

¹³⁹ 3:19, 5:13

¹⁴⁰ Commentary, p.23

¹⁴¹ Guthrie is less careful than usual when he says: "it is only occasionally (my italics) that words occur that remind us that this is not an address but a letter." Introduction to New Testament, Hebrews to Revelation, p.195. $\Gamma\rho\alpha\phi\epsilon\iota\nu$ occurs thirteen times in this book of only 105 verses.

¹⁴² It is denied in the Oxford Annotated Bible (p.1482) that 1 John is a letter: " - in form and content it resembles a theological treatise or sermon, written with obvious affection and concern for the spiritual welfare of those to whom it is addressed." The first part of this statement is not satisfactory - see above pp. 163 , 161.

- ¹⁴³ Light from the Ancient East, p.220.
- ¹⁴⁴ This must not be interpreted as "any letter from an apostle", however.
- ¹⁴⁵ Vol. II, pp.88 ff. The passage concerned is the work of W. Schneemelcher.
- ¹⁴⁶ Cain, of course, is alluded to in 3:12.
- ¹⁴⁷ 2:7, 3:2,21, 4:1,7,11. 3 John uses ἀγαπητέ in verses 2, 5, and 11, but that is in addition to proper names.
- ¹⁴⁸ 2:1,12,28, 3:17,18, 4:4, 5:21
- ¹⁴⁹ 2:14,18
- ¹⁵⁰ 3:13
- ¹⁵¹ Τέκνον occurs five times in 1 John, three times in 2 John, and once in 3 John, but never as a vocative.
- ¹⁵² See above, pp. 154 ff
- ¹⁵³ New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. II, pages 131,2.
- ¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p.88
- ¹⁵⁵ Light from the Ancient East, p.225
- ¹⁵⁶ Col. 4:15,16
- ¹⁵⁷ Perrin, speaking of the same group of books plus the Pastorals, says that 1 Peter is a letter, James a homily, and the others are all manifestos. The New Testament, An Introduction, p.271.
- ¹⁵⁸ Light from the Ancient East, p.235
- ¹⁵⁹ Commentary, p.21
- ¹⁶⁰ See above, p.158
- ¹⁶¹ Introduction to the New Testament, p.307, referring to Bultmann's commentary, p.2.
- ¹⁶² Commentary, p.XV
- ¹⁶³ It is, for instance, instructive to compare 1 John with Hebrews on this score.
- ¹⁶⁴ In 'The Literary Study of the Bible' (Heath, Boston, 1899, pp.512, 328 and 329) Richard G. Mouton called 1 John 'A Wisdom Epistle' similar in type to James: 1 John includes "a series of independent sayings", and James, like Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus, has the form of "a miscellany - a series of independent essays."
- ¹⁶⁵ See William Barclay, The Letters of John and Jude, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1960: "a loving and anxious sermon" (p.3; but see p.15)

- ¹⁶⁶ 'Sermon' in the Shorter Oxford Dictionary.
- ¹⁶⁷ Cf. the use of Psalm 110:4 in Hebrews. F.F. Bruce (The Epistle to the Hebrews, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London, 1964) calls the verse "our author's Old Testament text." For Deissmann Hebrews was an epistle or an oration, or a diatribe.
- ¹⁶⁸ i.e. appellations; vocatives; titles. Commentary, p.2.
- ¹⁶⁹ Some passages where γράφειν occurs (especially 2:12 ff) are very puzzling. C.F.D. Moule suggests four possible interpretations which can be put upon the threefold γράφω followed by the threefold ἔγραψα, but concludes: "No really convincing explanation is known to me." An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek, C.U.P., 1953, p.12. Rudolf Bultmann regards every instance of γράφω or ἔγραψα in 1 and 2 John as not referring to "what was said before but precisely to what is now being said". Analyse des ersten Johannesbriefes, p.144 (and note on that page).
- ¹⁷⁰ 2:15-17, 3:11-24, 4:7-12, 4:19-5:3
- ¹⁷¹ 1:1-3
- ¹⁷² 4:4-6, 5:11,12
- ¹⁷³ Shorter Oxford Dictionary. In England the name was applied in particular to the individual works in the 'Book of Homilies' produced for use in parish churches in 1547 and 1563.
- ¹⁷⁴ See pp. 31 ff. above
- ¹⁷⁵ Light from the Ancient East, p.237.
- ¹⁷⁶ Gilbert Murray, Five Stages of Greek Religion, Clarendon, Oxford, 1925, page 116, says that Antisthenes began the δεικτοβή literary genre, but does not distinguish it from the homily or sermon.
- ¹⁷⁷ Kümmel specifically lists Knopf, Windisch, Jülicher-Fascher, Riddle-Hutson, Klijn, Lohmeyer, Bultmann, and Boismard (Introduction p.307); Cf. Perrin, The New Testament; An Introduction, p.271. Early in the twentieth century James Moffatt described 1 John as an "encyclical or pastoral manifesto". Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1912, p.583.
- ¹⁷⁸ Shorter Oxford Dictionary. James Moffatt gives the title "A Johannine Tract" to the section dealing with 1 John in his book 'Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament', T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1912, p.582.
- ¹⁷⁹ ἀγκυπητοί does occur once - in 6:9.
- ¹⁸⁰ Schnackenburg (Commentary, p.1) compares it unfavourably here with Hebrews, Barnabas and 1 Clement "in their main section". Cf. J. Painter, p.113.
- ¹⁸¹ More so than Hebrews, though both books do appear to be local and temporal in address.

- ¹⁸² A number of writers debate the possibility of the Epistle being 'a complete fiction' in the sense that, whatever its literary form, all personal touches have been added for effect (cf. theories that the "cloak" and "parchments" and other personal references of 2 Timothy 4:9 ff were added to give credibility to Pauline authorship of that book: See Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, The Pauline Epistles, p.204. Schnackenburg is convinced that 1 John is "not... an artificial literary product in the form of a letter in which one unknown person maintained communication with unknown readers". Commentary, p.1. Bultmann does not hint in any way that 1 John is to be included with 2 John when he labels that work "secondary". Commentary, p.1.
- ¹⁸³ Commentary, p.31. On page 54 Houlden calls 1 John "a hortatory treatise". Dodd: "a somewhat informal tract or homily" - Commentary, p.xxi.
- ¹⁸⁴ 'Tract' is apparently an abbreviation of 'tractate', which itself comes from the Latin tractatus, a written work treating of some particular topic.
- ¹⁸⁵ Cf. Painter, p.112. See also the article by C.F. Evans, 'The New Testament in the Making' in the Cambridge History of the Bible, C.U.P., 1970, Vol.1, pp.277,278.
- ¹⁸⁶ See above, pp. 31 ff
- ¹⁸⁷ Cf. Haenchen: 1 John "often approaches the form of a letter, without actually being such." Theologische Rundschau, 26, 1960, pages 1 - 43 and 267 - 291.
- ¹⁸⁸ H.J. Gibbins wrote that "the truest description of 2 John is to call it a 'prophetic epistle' like that of Jeremiah 29." 'The Second Epistle of John', Expositor, 6th series, 6, 1902, pages 228-236. Cf. page 294 below, note 78.
- ¹⁸⁹ Dodd (amongst others) would say that it purports to be a private letter, but "This form - seems to be a thin disguise for a pastoral epistle addressed to a Christian congregation." Commentary, p.lvii. See chapter 6 below, pp. 278 ff.
- ¹⁹⁰ Norman Perrin asserts that "The letters have no formal structure" (i.e. 2 and 3 John). The New Testament, An Introduction, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1974, p.248. Perrin is less perceptive than Robert Funk. See above, pp. 164 ff.
- ¹⁹¹ So A.E. Brooke in his commentary. Some other commentators subdivide VV.4-11; e.g. Edward Malatesta, who entitles 4 - 6 'The Commandment of Charity', and 7-11 'Contrast between Antichrist and Believers'. The Epistles of St. John, Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, 1973, page 49.
- ¹⁹² This "Christianised" formula occurs in most New Testament epistles (cf. p. note). Hebrews and 1 John have no greeting; Jude omits $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$ and $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$ but has the three words $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, $\epsilon\iota\rho\eta\nu\eta$ and $\alpha\gamma\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta$. The usual Pauline formula includes $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$ and $\epsilon\iota\rho\eta\nu\eta$.

¹⁹³ 2 John 3

¹⁹⁴ In verse 3. ¹⁹⁵ ἔχαρον was common in replies during the Hellenistic-Roman period; the formula ἔχαρον λίαν is paralleled by P. Geiss 21 (second century): λίαν ἔχαρον ἀκούσασα ὅτι ἔρωσας καὶ ἡ ἀδελφὴ σου Σοῆρις ("I rejoiced exceedingly when I heard that your sister, Soeris, was also well"). Polycarp's letter to the Philippians begins rather similarly - Συνεχάρην ὑμῖν μεγάλως (not λίαν), κ.τ.λ. ("I rejoice greatly with you - ") and in the same letter 4:10 says ἔχαρον δε ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως ὅτι ("I rejoice in the Lord greatly that - "). Robert Funk, *The Form and Structure of 2 and 3 John*, J.B.L., Vol. 86, 1967, p.425. Funk says that ἔχαρον λίαν is a conventional "opening gambit". p.427.

¹⁹⁶ Funk, *The Form and Structure of 2 and 3 John*, p.426.

¹⁹⁷ Dodd, for instance, does this. So does Stott, and, more recently, Edward Malatesta. *Ibid*, p.55.

¹⁹⁸ and F.F. Bruce eight. His subdivisions are identical with those of Funk save that the conclusion is divided into 'personal notes' (13,14), and "final greeting" (15). *The Epistles of John*, Revell, New Jersey, 1970, p.146.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p.429

²⁰⁰ Except that 3 John lacks "the usual greeting (or wish)" while 2 John does not. See 2 John 3 and Bultmann's commentary, pp.95 and 107. Funk observes that "The benedictory greeting of II John 2, customary in the Pauline and other Christian letter, is replaced in III John 3 with a conventional health wish." *Ibid*, pp.424,5. On page 430 he says: "The conventional health wish in III John 2 marks this letter as the most secularized in the New Testament". Cf.p.425.

²⁰¹ Donald Guthrie believes that 3 John is nearer "the form of a genuine private letter" than 2 John. *New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation*, page 217; cf. F.F. Bruce, p.146. The merest glance at the three letters on pages 27 to 29 in C.K. Barrett's book, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*, confirms the truth of this. (C.H. Dodd quotes 2 other regular letters of the time: *Commentary* on pages 58,9). The extreme brevity of the prescript approaches more nearly to Graeco-Roman letters than any other Christian letter (so Schnackenburg, p.319). Moreover, there is no "Christian enlargement" to the final greeting of V.15 (Schnackenburg, p.332). Interestingly, Schnackenburg observes that "the peace greeting (of 3 John 15) no doubt betrays the born Semite) cf. 2 John 3)".

²⁰² W. Barclay, *The Letters of John*, p.169

²⁰³ *Commentary*, p.182

²⁰⁴ "The idiom κκλῶς πολήσεις is - very commonly used in the papyri in polite forms of petition, and is to be translated there as 'please' or 'I beg you'". (cf. Phil. 4:14, James 2:1,19, Acts 10:33). Funk, p.427

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.428

206 The slightly earlier statement in 3 John, " - I would rather not write with pen and ink - ", and the corresponding passage in 2 John (" - I would rather not use paper and ink -") find an echo in one of the letters purporting to be written by Paul to Seneca: "I may not express myself with pen and ink". A. Kurfess, the editor of this spurious correspondence, debates whether it originated in the third century or fourth century. New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.II, pp.133 ff, especially 133 and 137.

207 Cf. *Εἰρήνη ὑμῶν* in John 20:19 and 26. Nigel Turner, in his article 'Jewish and Christian Influence on New Testament Vocabulary' (Novum Testamentum, Vol.16, 1974, pp.149 ff) says: "In the New Testament *εἰρήνη* ...is no longer the absence of strife (secular language), but has the full meaning of *shālôm*, a state of security and well-being, through its use in the LXX". The use of the singular *σοι* in 3 John 15 itself seems to demonstrate the correctness of Turner's judgment with respect to the Third Epistle (and so, presumably, the other Johannine books where it occurs, viz. the Fourth Gospel, 2 John, and Revelation).

208 Alan Richardson conjectures that this word perhaps became a technical term for Christians on the strength of John 11:11, 15:14, and 3 John 14; cf. James 2:23. An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, S.C.M., 1958, p.306.

209 V.15. Cf the sentence "Many salutations to your wife and to Serenus and to all who love you, *κατ' ὄνομα* ". in B.G.U.27 (C.K. Barrett, New Testament Background, p.29. The same expression occurs in the third century letter Rev. Eg. 1919, quoted on p.38 of the same book: "I send my salutations to all our folk, each by name".) C.H. Dodd contends that in 3 John (as in other early letters) the writer is not really assigning a name to each recipient, but that his intention "is simply to individualize for the recipients a courtesy which in writing must needs be general". Commentary, p.168; cf. C.H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, C.U.P., 1965, p.384, note 4.

210 Less modified than any other New Testament letter - see above p.185 note 201.

211 One further matter must be noted here - viz, the bearing of the structure of 2 and 3 John considered from the point of view of contents on the question of their common authorship (cf. pp 93 to 95 above). Alfred Plummer's subdivision of the books on the basis of subject matter (The Epistles of St. John, C.U.P., 1886) was as follows:

3 JOHN

- 1. Address
- 2-12 Main Body of the Epistle
 - (1) Personal good wishes and sentiments (2-4)
 - (2) Gaius commended for his hospitality (5-8)
 - (3) Diotrephes condemned for his hostility (9,10)
 - (4) The Moral (11,12)
- 13,14 Conclusion

2 JOHN

- 1-3 Address and Greeting
- 4-11 Main Body of the Epistle
 - (1) Occasion of the letter
 - (2) Exhortation to love and obedience (5,6)
 - (3) Warnings against false doctrine (7-9)
 - (4) Warnings against false charity (10,11)
- 12,13 Conclusion

Such a common pattern deserves attention not because of the primary analysis. After all, that is not very different from many other analyses. What is important here is the close parallel even in the main body of the two writings. The resemblance is even closer than Plummer's titles indicate. Both subsections '(1)' speak of the great rejoicing of the writer because of "children following the truth". Both subsections '(2)' are based on love: in 2 John the section may be relabelled "love issuing in obedience" and in 3 John "love issuing in hospitality". The third subsections could be entitled "warnings against heresy" (2 John) and "warnings against hostility" (3 John). The fourth subsection in 3 John could appropriately be "encouragement to true goodness". Thus, by combining the analyses offered by Plummer with the alterations suggested, the result is:

3 JOHN

1. Address
- 2-12 Main Body of Epistle
 - (1) Personal good wishes and sentiments (2-4)
 - (2) Love issuing in hospitality (5-8)
 - (3) Warnings against hostility (9,10)
 - (4) Encouragements to true goodness (11,12)
- 13,14 Conclusion

2 JOHN

- 1-3 Address and Greeting
- 4-11 Main body of the Epistle
 - (1) "Qualified" (in the sense that only "some" enjoy the writer's approval) good wishes and sentiments (4)
 - (2) Love issuing in obedience (5,6)
 - (3) Warnings against heresy (7-9)
 - (4) Warnings against false charity (10,11)
- 12,13 Conclusion

The extraordinarily similar analysis and the complementary nature of the successive subjects is a powerful argument for common authorship. (Malatesta's generally similar schematic treatment of all three Epistles witnesses - in somewhat the same kind of way - to his belief in common authorship).

²¹² p. 147

²¹³ p. 157

²¹⁴ p. 163

²¹⁵ p. 164

²¹⁶ p. 166

²¹⁷ Commentary, p.2

²¹⁸ Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation, p.196, note 1.

²¹⁹ See Schnackenburg, Commentary, p.3. For one thing, 1 John lacks what is most necessary, i.e. details of time, place, and exact circumstances of writing. For another, no direct reference is made to the Fourth Gospel. Thirdly, the Fourth Gospel needs no introduction outside itself.

²²⁰ See above, p. 158

- 221 3 John 9. Büchsel suggests that in 3 John 9 an earlier communication is referred to because Gaius was elsewhere when it arrived. Schnackenburg (p.326) rejects this, as well as the view that Diotrephes suppressed it, in favour of the theory that the writer speaks of it in order to bring Diotrephes' wilful opposition more into the open. A fourth view is that expressed in the text (above), that the writing concerned is 1 John, and that it is here introduced in order to allude to its purpose. Its probable reception (still future) is implied in 3 John 9. J.H.A. Ebrard said that the wording ἔγραψά τι does not indicate that the writing was an insignificant one, a view which fits 1 John more readily than 2 John. The Epistles of John (translated by W.B. Pope), T. & T. Clark, London, 1860, page 403.
- 222 It is often said (e.g. by Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation, p.206) that 2 and 3 John would each occupy roughly the space available on a single sheet of papyrus. 1 John is approximately 8½ times as long as either short epistle. Thus the idea of their serving - inter alia - as covering letters for the longer work appears perfectly reasonable.
- 223 Pre-eminently by 3 John, of course.
- 224 In commenting on 3 John 11, Schnackenburg says that the Elder uses the neuter τὸ κακὸν ---- τὸ ἀγαθόν because of reluctance "to describe Diotrephes directly as a bad person". (p.330). This reluctance is much more pronounced in 1 John, where the opponents are not named at all.
- 225 Paul employed a similar method in 1 and 2 Corinthians: he did not name the foe in a public letter, lest the enemy be permanently branded and/or ostracised long after the crisis had passed. 3 John, just because it was intended as a strictly private letter, could be far more specific.
- 226 The eleven instances are 2:15, 2:24, 2:27, 2:28, 3:7, 3:13, 3:18, 4:1(bis), 4:7, and 5:21. Since repetition occurs, only seven different verbs - ἀγαπάω (ter), δοκιμάζω, θαυμάζω, μένω (ter), πιστεύω, πλανᾶω and φυλάσσω - are employed.
- 227 1:6, 1:7, 1:8, 1:9, 1:10, 2:3, 2:5, 2:6, 2:9, 2:10, 2:11, 2:15, 2:17, 2:22, 2:23, 2:24, 2:29, 3:3, 3:4, 3:6(bis), 3:7, 3:8, 3:9, 3:10(bis), 3:11, 3:12, 3:14, 3:15, 3:16, 3:17, 3:23, 3:24, 4:7, 4:8, 4:11, 4:12, 4:15, 4:16, 4:18, 4:20, 4:21, 5:1(bis), 5:3; 5:5, 5:10(bis), 5:12(bis), 5:14, 5:15.
- 228 See, e.g., the two instances in 5:1
- 229 See the eleven imperatives of note 226 above.
- 230 1 John 2:15
- 231 2:27,28
- 232 4:1
- 233 φλυαρῶν.
- 234 " - this document is a genuine letter, which one particular person addressed to another". Rudolf Bultmann, Commentary, pp.1,2.

²³⁵ See Chapter 6 below, pp. 278 ff

²³⁶ Cf. B.W. Bacon, *The Making of the New Testament*, Williams and Norgate, London, p.219: "The epistle was certainly intended to be read before entire congregations."

²³⁷ When 2 John is called a "personal" letter, it will be objected by some that this takes no account of the "predominance of the second person plural" (Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, Hebrews to Revelation, p.214) in verses 8, 10, and 12 particularly. The usage need occasion no surprise if a lady, her husband, and her children are addressed. Verses 8 ff then apply to a household as a whole, warning the faithful members not to follow the example of those who had not been true (see 2 John 4). In fact, another link which binds the Johannine Epistles together is just this, the emphasis upon children. The language of course - on the face of it - often embraces children (i.e. παῖδία, τέκνα etc), but much could be said for the view that actual children figured prominently among the Elder's readers. In the first place, there is the enigmatic distinction of 2:12 ff, which has two categories for the young and only one for the older readers. Secondly, the simple Greek of the books, possibly supports the idea: accordingly, perhaps, in 1 John 1:1-4 the writer was "finding the level" of his readers: subsequently he was more successful (see Houlden's remarks about the complex opening of 1 John - *Commentary*, pp.45 ff). Thirdly, there is practically no reference to specifically adult sins - e.g. sexual sins or monetary sins. Sins connected with property are scarcely mentioned (but see 3:17). Possibly both the simplicity and the repetition appear because the letters encompass a large number of young people (3 John - to Gaius - is slightly more complex in its vocabulary). To these even basic Christian standards of life have to be explained (3:7, 3:18, etc.), and the reason for the hostile attitude of the world spelled out (3:13 ff). Might it not be not the "senility" of the writer (see Dodd, *Commentary*, p.lv), but the capacity of the readers which is determinative when assessing the nature of the Johannine letters? (An instructive contrast may be made with the closely reasoned argument of Hebrews or Romans).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ERRORS CONFRONTED IN THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES

The fourth area of investigation is that of the heresy combatted by the writer of the Epistles. Can it be demonstrated "That there are already two 'fronts' (in the sense of elements in the heresy) against which the writer directs 1 John, one of these being the issue in 2 John (the doctrinal controversy) and the other the issue in 3 John (the ethical controversy)"?^{1,2}

Plainly, no answer to the question could have been attempted earlier, since the subject can be dealt with effectively only after the matters of common authorship and the integrity of the Epistles (especially 1 John) have been settled. There are, of course, two different kinds of material in 1 John,³ the best explanation of whose presence and relationship to each other is that of Rudolf Schnackenburg. His contention is that the one author directed his attention alternately at opposing the heretics and at consolidating the church fellowship/s to which he wrote.⁴

Now, however, the conclusion that one writer is working towards these two objectives requires amplification. One objective - that of buttressing the church - is important and manysided in its treatment, yet it is in-controversial. No reader of 1 John (or 2 John or 3 John) is likely to doubt that the writer is concerned to do his utmost to assist the readers to develop to spiritual maturity as he sees it.⁵

The second objective is more enigmatic. In the first place, in 1 John there arises the question, what is the error confronted? Secondly, has the error more than one aspect? If so, thirdly, what is the relation between them?

Of the three questions the second is far the easiest to answer, and may be disposed of at once. There are, quite obviously, two primary aspects to the error. One is essentially doctrinal, while the other can be described as practical or ethical or relational. Thus C.H. Dodd says: "The author's purpose, then, is to promote - fellowship in the face of disruptive tendencies. False teaching and bitter antagonisms threaten a dissolution of a partnership in the common faith and a breach of the

common bond of charity."⁶

The importance of this answer and those subsequently given to the other questions can hardly be exaggerated because of their bearing on the whole situation reflected in the Epistles. It is often said, for instance, that the error contested in 2 John is essentially doctrinal, while that in 3 John consists of rejecting authority.⁷ Now, if that be the whole story, the 2 and 3 John milieux apparently have little point of contact. If, on the other hand, the distinctive doctrinal error mirrored in 2 John is found to be essentially that of 1 John, and the disciplinary problems of 3 John are found to be reflected in other parts of 1 John, the probability is that one complex situation is being faced, that this is elaborated most fully in 1 John, and that the two shorter epistles are concentrating (mainly) on the same problem seen from different perspectives.

In the present chapter the evidence is to be sifted to see whether this is the case - whether in fact 1 and 2 John share the same 'christological thesis' and 1 and 3 John the same 'ethical thesis'.⁸ Accordingly, the questions to be answered are:

- (A) What is the doctrinal error opposed in 1 John?
- (B) Does the doctrinal error implied in 2 John differ from that opposed in 1 John?
- (C) Are the practical problems of 3 John to be identified with the behavioural concerns of 1 John?

An attempt is made in the succeeding pages to work from first principles, from the text itself, rather than simply adopting the conclusion of others. After that a synthesis of the writer's doctrine (in various key areas) together with the heretical aberration of it is to be outlined.

(A) WHAT IS THE DOCTRINAL ERROR OPPOSED IN 1 JOHN?

Three criteria present themselves apropos the pinpointing of the theological errors which concern the writer. First, there are statements which are phrased in a peculiarly emphatic manner; secondly, there are oft-repeated statements; thirdly, there are what can be called "sign-posted" statements, where the writer says, e.g. "If we say - ", then follows such an opening with a denial of its legitimacy.

(1) EMPHATIC STATEMENTS⁹

- (a) The inclusion of personal pronouns not needed for the sense.

There are twenty-five instances where nominative personal pronouns are used in 1 John. A number of the occurrences may merely indicate contrast; ¹⁰ others both contrast and a degree of emphasis." Sometimes there is not a contrast expressed in so many words but it plainly exists in the writer's mind for all that.¹² The theologically significant verses whose main thrust (from the point of view of personal pronouns) is to emphasise the writer's statements are:

<u>REFERENCE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>IMPLICATION</u>
1:7	God (αὐτός) "in the light- "	opponents lived impure lives ¹³
2:2	Christ (αὐτός) ἰλασμός for sins	opponents denied that Christ is this (or needs to be)
2:20,27	the readers (ὑμεῖς) have a χρίσμα	the opponents' χρίσμα was false, and therefore their 'knowledge' was, too
2:24	the historical testimony which "you (ὑμεῖς) have heard"; a continuing acceptance of this a condition of continuing to abide in Son and Father	the testimony disputed by the opponents
2:25	Christ (or God? - αὐτός) the giver of eternal life	Christ a disputed authority?
3:14	the status of the true - "we (ἡμεῖς) know" not death but ζωή	lovelessness (a sure sign of still being in death) a mark of the heretics ¹⁴
3:24	Christ (αὐτός) in the believer who keeps the commandments	a denial that Christ's indwelling and obedience to Him are correlatives
4:4,6	the writer, etc (ἡμεῖς/ ὑμεῖς) "of God" since they are Christologically 'orthodox'	the heretics' denial that holding 'orthodox' Christology and belonging to God are interdependent
4:10,19	God (αὐτός) loved and gave His Son	the heretics denied that God loved first, gave, and that the Son is a ἰλασμός.
4:13	abiding a know fact because God (αὐτός) has given the Spirit	the heretics had no 'assurance', since they were without the indwelling Spirit
4:14	the writer etc (ἡμεῖς) witnesses of the Incarnation	the heretics lacked an objective basis for their tenets

4:15,16 Christological confession (*αὐτός / ἡμεῖς*), knowledge and love interrelated none of these properly belonged to the heretics

- (b) The inclusion of *ἔστί* where it is not strictly required.

The verb "to be" is used in the indicative form nearly 90 times in 1 John: this - especially in the case of the third person singular, *ἔστί* - greatly exceeds the normal New Testament frequency. Nothing 'theological' can be deduced from such usage except perhaps that the writer is always writing emphatically: certainly many occurrences are not really 'necessary'.

- (c) The reduplication of the article with adjectives¹⁵ or possessive pronouns.

This device indicates stress (according to Abbott¹⁶). There are five uses in 1 John:

1:2 (and 2:25) *τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον*¹⁷
 1:3 *ἡ κοινωνία δε ἡ ἡμετέρᾳ*
 2:7 *ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ παλαιά*
 2:8 *τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν*

All of these phrases except that in 1:3 are so typically Johannine that they almost certainly fall into the category of the writer's verbal habits. The reference to *κοινωνία*, on the other hand, has no Fourth Gospel verbal parallel. It might indicate in a small way the preoccupation of the writer as he witnesses the difference between true and false Christian fellowship.¹⁸

- (d) The placing of adverbs or adverbial phrases at the beginning of a statement.

This practice is a peculiarly Johannine method of emphasis.¹⁹ The formulae concerned are *ἀληθῶς ἐν τούτῳ* (2:5), *ἐν τούτῳ* (2:5, 3:19, 4:2, 4:17, 5:2), *πάλιν* (2:8), *ὅθεν* (2:18), *καὶ νῦν* (2:18,28, 4:3), *καὶ καθὼς* (2:18,27), *διὰ τοῦτο* (3:1, 4:5), *καὶ οὕτως* (3:2), *καθὼς* (3:7,23, 4:17), *εἰς τοῦτο* (3:8), *οὐ καθὼς* (3:12), and *ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ* (3:19).

The construction is used in varied contexts (including both 'theological' and hortatory passages). It seems true to say that the overuse of the device vitiates its usefulness in determining the cruciality of particular passages for the writer's argument.²⁰

(e) The precedent possessive pronoun.

Abbott says: "Where there is no antithesis we are generally safe in taking the precedent possessive as unemphatic but antithesis and chiasmus²¹ probably give it emphasis - " (in certain instances).²² However, the emphasis in 1 John 2:4 and 5 is on the nouns, the commandments and the word of Christ: "He who says but disobeys His commandments (τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν) is a liar.... but whoever keeps His word (ὅς δ' ἂν τηρῇ αὐτοῦ τὸν λόγον) in him truly love for God is perfected."²³ The theological implication is surely that Christ is not simply to be contemplated as a person,²⁴ but that He is to be obeyed. His ἐντολὰς and λόγον are weighty.

(f) The possessive genitive between article and noun.

Where the genitive possessive pronoun does not precede the article and noun (see previous point), but intervenes between them, the emphasis is thrown on to the pronoun. This is very important with respect to 2:27 : τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων - It is the χρίσμα of God (probably God the Son)²⁵ and no one else that achieves the desired objective.

(g) The demonstrative pronoun followed by the verb "to be".

The thirteen places in 1 John where οὗτος, αὕτη or τοῦτο together with ἐστίν²⁶ add weight to an assertion may be grouped in two categories:

(i) Emphasising a person already mentioned - 1 John 4:3, 5:6.

(ii) Referring to what follows, and employing ὅτι 1:5, 5:9,11,14; or ἵνα 3:11, 3:23, 5:3; or a noun; 2:22, 2:25, 5:4, 5:20.

Eleven references are of direct theological moment,²⁷ no fewer than six coming under the head "christology",²⁸ three under "soteriology",²⁹ and the remaining two having some relation to the Fatherhood of God.³⁰ Interestingly, the two most

emphatic of the statements, "Emphasising a person already mentioned 'this (very) one'"³¹ are both christological: καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἕκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου-(4:3), and Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ; οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος-(5:5,6).

Obviously, then, confession of Jesus and asseveration of the reality of the Incarnation are subjects which the author strongly endorses. They are being contested.

- (h) The use of ἐκεῖνος as if it were "almost a proper name"³² for Christ.

The term is so used ten times in the Fourth Gospel, six times in 1 John,³³ twice in the Apocalypse, and only five times in all the rest of the New Testament.

(2) REPETITION

Three concepts merit special attention because of their unexpected frequency.

(a) The Love of God

God's love is a constant theme in the thinking of the writer.³⁴ The quality is first of all³⁵ conceived of as being quite independent of men. Barth summarised the New Testament position generally and the Johannine teaching in particular as follows: "God is love, before He loves us and without His loving us. He is Love as He is everything that He is, as the triune God in Himself. Even without us and the world and its reconciliation He would suffer in Himself no lack of love."³⁶

However, when that has been said, it is obviously basic to the thought of the 1 John writer that love in God becomes soteriological in relation to man. Long ago J. Orr wrote:

" - love, in other words, becomes substitutionary, and in the case of Christ propitiatory."³⁷ C.H. Dodd would, of course, disagree with the use of the word 'propitiatory' in the context of 1 John 2:2 and 4:10,³⁸ but would readily affirm that God's love is revealed to man in the person of Christ, and most particularly in the context of soteriology.³⁹ What bearing has this on the heretics? It can be deduced that they are not only showed a lack of love for others,⁴⁰ but implicitly denied that God is love⁴¹ since they held to a false idea of love.⁴² Faulty theology destroyed their humaneness, or their inhumanity their theology.

(b) The Fatherhood of God.

The Fatherhood of God, that is, the relation of the Father to the Son, is asserted with varying degrees of clarity in a total of 14 places in 1 John.⁴³ The 1 John passages are entirely in keeping with the Fourth Gospel: in John 20:17 Jesus is recorded as distinguishing sharply between His and His disciples' relationship to God, and in John 5:17,18 the personal pronouns reveal the same kind of distinction. The faithful enjoy a true sonship with God⁴⁴ but this is mediated through the Son.⁴⁵

A comparison of 5:1, 4:2 ff, and 2:18 demonstrates that a major failure of the heretics lay in a defective Christology; the 1 John writer exhibits not the slightest doubt that if that be erroneous there is no true mediation between God and man and consequently no hope of man's belonging to the family of God.

(c) The concept of "Abiding".

It cannot be an accident that *μένω* occurs 23 times in 1 John, that it is used in a number of closely linked but subtly varied verbal combinations, and that it has a dozen different 'angles' to its use. The latter are:

- (i) The believer in Christ⁴⁶
- (ii) The believer in the Father⁴⁷
- (iii) The one who loves his brother abiding in Light⁴⁸
- (iv) The believer abiding in love⁴⁹
- (v) Christ abiding in the believer⁵⁰

- (vi) The Father in the believer⁵¹
- (vii) God's σπέρμα in the believer⁵²
- (viii) The χρίσμα in the believer⁵³
- (ix) The λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ⁵⁴ or message of Christ⁵⁵ in the believer

Negatively,

- (x) He who does not love abides in death⁵⁶
- (xi) God's love does not abide in the hardhearted⁵⁷
- (xii) "no murderer has eternal life abiding in him"^{58,59}

Rudolf Schnackenburg has an excellent excursus on communion with God in 1 John⁶⁰ in which he collects the various relevant Johannine expressions ('having fellowship with the Father', 'being in God', 'being in God and He in us', 'having God', 'knowing God', and 'the child relationship with God'), and contrasts them with the concepts of other extra-New Testament presentations. Schnackenburg's survey of Johannine "immanence formulae" embraces the following:

- (a) communion with God is a very intimate relationship
- (b) it is a mutual indwelling⁶¹ and so is more than a moral relationship
- (c) the personality of God and man remain untouched (i.e. uncompromised)
- (d) the way to communion with the Father is only through the Son
- (e) the communion with God is not a matter of a moment,⁶² but a permanent possession
- (f) conditions (Ἐάν) and criteria (ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν) are important.^{63,64}

From all that is said about "abiding" the reader can only conclude that the Elder regarded an arid intellectualism, a merely theoretical theology, as the particular bane of his opponents. They were right neither in their standing (i.e. they did not "abide" in the Father nor the Son), nor in their practical living (i.e. they did not "abide in love" or love the household of God).⁶⁵

(d) Other instances of repetition.

Longer passages where verbal repetition is almost exact are⁶⁶

2:2 ἔλασμος ἔστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν
and 4:10 ἔλασμον περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ;
2:13 γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς
and 2:14 ἔγραψα κ.τ.λ. ;
2:13 γράφω ὑμῖν, νεκνίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρὸν
and
2:14 ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεκνίσκοι.... καὶ νενικήκατε κ.τ.λ.
3:9 πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ
and 5:18 πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει⁶⁷

The first of the above couplets has to do with the restoration of a right relationship with God by virtue of His dealing with human sin through His Son,⁶⁸ the second and third pairs of clauses are enigmatic, the reasons for the naming of the three categories of readers⁶⁹ and the almost perfect duplication being elusive,⁷⁰ and the fourth pair shows once more the preoccupation of the Elder with palingenesis and its practical experiential consequences. The very fact of repetition in at least the first and last instances provides an important clue as to the way in which the author viewed the current theological situation - i.e. the heretics denied the need for a 'ἔλασμος', as well as the orthodox claim that Jesus fulfils the rôle. Significantly, too, 3:9 and 5:18 also mention sinning, though this time in the context of spiritual rebirth. These last two verses are indicative of a light view of sin on the part of the heretics.

(3) 'SIGN-POSTED' STATEMENTS

A considerable number of assertions appear under this heading, all of them in some way depicting or implying⁷² an undesirable theological or behavioural stance. Often the writer states a position only to refute it : it is then apparent that he is using set formulae to depict the actual errors he is confronting.⁷³ His favourite openings are Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν (in chapter 1)⁷⁴ ὁ plus a present participle, and πᾶς ὁ with a participle:

1:6 Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν⁷⁵ ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν, ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν.⁷⁶

- 1:8 ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν,
ἐαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν...
- 1:10 ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν,
ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτόν...
- 2:4 ὁ λέγων ὅτι ἔγνωκα αὐτόν, καὶ τὰς
ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν, ψεύστης ἐστίν...
- 2:6 ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν ὀφείλει καθὼς
ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν καὶ αὐτὸς περιπατεῖν.
- 2:9 ὁ λέγων ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν
ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ
ἐστὶν ἕως ἄρτι.
- 2:15 ἐὰν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν
ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.
- 2:22 τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος
ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός; οὗτος
ἐστὶν ὁ ἀντίχριστος...
- 2:23 πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν
πατέρα ἔχει· ὁ ὁμολογῶν...
- 2:29 ἐὰν εἰδῆτε ὅτι δίκαιός ἐστιν, γινώσκετε
ὅτι καὶ πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην
ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται.
- 3:4 πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν
ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ
ἀνομία.⁷⁷
- 3:6 πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει·
πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτόν
οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.
- 3:7 ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστιν...
- 3:8 ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ
δικαβόλου ἐστίν...

- 3:9 πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ
ἄμκρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ...
- 3:10 πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ
ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ...
- 3:14 ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν⁷⁸ μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ.⁷⁹
- 3:15 πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ
ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἔστιν...
- 3:17 ὅς δ' ἂν ἔχη τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου καὶ
θεωρῇ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν
ἔχοντά καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ
ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ μένει
ἐν αὐτῷ;
- 4:3 καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ⁸⁰ τὸν
Ἰησοῦν⁸¹ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν.
- 4:6 ὅς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἀκούει
ἡμῶν.
- 4:8 ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν θεόν, ὅτι
ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἔστιν.
- 4:20 ἐάν τις εἴπῃ ὅτι Ἀγαπῶ τὸν θεόν,
καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῇ, ψεύστης
ἔστιν...
- 5:6 Οὗτος ἔστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ
αἵματος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός...
- 5:10 ὁ μὴ πιστεύων τῷ θεῷ ψεύστην
πεποίηκεν αὐτόν, ὅτι οὐ πεπίστευκεν
εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν μεμαρτύρηκεν
ὁ θεὸς περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.
- 5:12 ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἶόν ἔχει τὴν ζωὴν· ὁ μὴ
ἔχων τὸν υἶόν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ζωὴν οὐκ
ἔχει.⁸²

The above list comprises 26 verses. Since the present concern is with theology, it would be tempting to try to separate the theological from the ethical and/or practical passages. When

the attempt is made, however, a startling fact emerges: not even one quotation is, so to speak, exclusively 'ethical';⁸³ 1:8, 2:22, 2:23, 4:3, 4:6, 5:6, 5:10, and 5:12 are all purely theological, having to do with theological truth and its apprehension and appropriation or denial. The key words are "confess", "deny", "know", "hear", and "have".⁸⁴ The remaining eighteen quotations are all both theological and ethical/practical.⁸⁵ They are all by implication (if not explicitly) conditional sentences of the general form "If we say⁸⁶ that (theological assertion) ... but do (practise sin) ... then our claim is false".

Rather than take up the verses in the list one by one, it seems preferable at this stage to recap right across the field - to gather together the substance of the direct statements⁸⁷ and insinuations of the writer in order to show the theological scope of the heresy as he saw it.⁸⁸ It is difficult to give a comprehensive picture

because, as Nauck says (i) we see the heretics "only in the mirror of the struggle by the author of 1 John", and

- (ii) the author "understands the heretics as exponents of the satanic power of darkness and their teachings as expressions of the anti-God behaviour of the spirit of deception, and therewith draws them into (= 'expresses their views in?') traditional eschatological concept forms."⁸⁹

Moreover, the Elder's affirmations, hints and nuances are many and subtly varied. Nonetheless, the attempt must be made to reconstruct the heretical system. Perhaps the author's conception of his opponents' views can be fairly summarised in the propositions which follow.

(4) TRUE AND FALSE DOCTRINE

(a) The heretics had a false view of God's character.

The author asserts God's eternity and strongly implies His aseity.⁹⁰ He is δ ἀληθινός θεός (the "real" God).⁹¹ God is personal,⁹² omniscient,⁹³ invisible,⁹⁴ He is "light" (i.e. pure, majestic),⁹⁵ He is love,⁹⁶ He is Father with respect to the Son⁹⁷ and to the faithful among mankind,⁹⁸ with whom He ever deals justly.⁹⁹

The heretics did not appreciate that God is uniquely "real",¹⁰⁰

"the one eternal Reality of whom the mystics talk".¹⁰¹ Nor did they perceive that God is "light". A further failing was that of not realising that God is both ontologically and practically the fons et origo of love. Thus the view of God was both diluted and distorted in relation to the Judaeo-Christian tradition. It was sub-biblical.

(b) The heretics had a false view of Christ.

As far as the Elder was concerned, the eternal Word became incarnate as Jesus Christ.^{102,103} Jesus is the Christ,¹⁰⁴ the Son of God,¹⁰⁵ and is to be honoured as the Father is.¹⁰⁶ Jesus Christ came to be sin-bearer,^{107,108} voluntarily laying down His life ὕπερ ἡμῶν.¹⁰⁹ He is "saviour of the world".¹¹⁰ He is Himself sinless.¹¹¹ Jesus Christ is the παράκλητος whom the erring believer has πρὸς τὸν πατέρα¹¹² and his example.¹¹³

John Painter says that two distinct Christological positions appear to have been adopted by the heretics:¹¹⁴ First, a direct relationship with God was claimed without any reference to Christ. Such is the implication in 1:6, 1:8, 1:10, (possibly) 2:9, and 4:20.¹¹⁵ The same argument is advanced by Herbert Braun - perhaps more clearly - on the basis of 1 John 2:22,23, 4:2, 3:15, and 5:1.¹¹⁶ Secondly, the heavenly Christ was allowed some significance, but the heretics refused "to acknowledge the authority of the apostolic witness to the historical Jesus".¹¹⁷ Painter continues: " - it is not the Jesus of history who is on view.¹¹⁸ It is the heavenly Christ, the Christ of experience. Hence they disregarded the historical revelation in which a commandment is laid on those who would know Jesus (3:23)".¹¹⁹

Von Herbert Braun takes the two sections 2:18-27 and 4:1-6 for his assessment of the heretical Christology; he regards the two passages as being directed against the same heretics "in consequence of the same terminology in both sections: ἀντιχρίστος..... ἀλήθεια..... ψεῦδος/ ψευδοπροφήτης..... πλανάω/πλάνη".¹²⁰ Braun says that the heretics deny that Jesus came in the flesh (4:2): "Thereby they do away with Jesus - ".¹²¹ A little later he modifies this position to a degree: " - they have much rather denied the man Jesus the Christ dignity and the Sonship of God".¹²² Braun therefore has much in common with Painter,¹²³

except that the former needlessly harmonises the evidence to fit his view that one group of heretics was in view and the latter does not. Braun believes that the heretics made Jesus and the heavenly Christ very distinct, though the Christ did descend on Jesus.¹²⁴

The theory of a two-fold Christological error is entirely reasonable. If this conclusion be accepted there is no need to suggest confusion on the part of the heretics,¹²⁵ since different groups could well have been involved. After all, "many false prophets have gone out into the world".¹²⁶ The standpoint is obviously compatible with the present hypothesis. Some heretics were within¹²⁷ and some without.

- (c) The heretics were entirely ignorant of the Spirit of God¹²⁸ and His operations.

An examination of the pneumatological passages in 1 John reveals that most of the references to the Spirit are functional rather than defining, though 5:6 (in the U.B.S. text; 5:7 in the R.S.V.) does say τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια. God has given the Spirit to the faithful (4:13). 1 John also says that the Spirit has been bestowed by Christ (3:24).¹²⁹ The Spirit bears witness to Jesus Christ (5:7), being one of three persons or entities that does so (5:8). The legitimacy of His witness is discernible in the content of His testimony, viz. "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (4:2). The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (4:6).¹³⁰ Now the heretics actually confessed a spirit as coming from God when this was not the case.¹³¹ The "spirit of error" is apparently a false χρῖσμα¹³² whose fruit is lack of spiritual understanding.¹³⁴ Moreover, since God's Spirit¹³⁵ given to the faithful is the Agent responsible for Christian certitude regarding mutual God/man indwelling,¹³⁶ the heretics' confidence was baseless.¹³⁷

- (d) The heretics had false soteriological conceptions.

1 John exhibits a surprising range of soteriological expressions:

- (1) The Son, who is "Saviour of the world", has been sent by the Father¹³⁸ and has come to "destroy the works of the devil".¹³⁹
- (2) Jesus Christ is described as ἱλασμός¹⁴⁰....
περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.¹⁴¹
- (3) He was manifested that He might "take away" sins.¹⁴²
- (4) Christ laid down His life "for us" - once¹⁴³ - and His blood continues to cleanse (καθαρίζει) from all sin.¹⁴⁴
- (5) Being born¹⁴⁵ of God is closely related to belief that Jesus is the Christ,¹⁴⁶ is contingent upon the implantation of the σπέρμα of God,¹⁴⁷ and is a precondition of not going on sinning,¹⁴⁸ of doing righteousness,¹⁴⁹ and of the faithful loving one another.¹⁵⁰
- (6) Those who "love the brethren" are characterised as "having passed out of death into life".¹⁵¹
- (7) Even the youngest converts (?) know forgiveness,¹⁵² which is based on confession of sin.¹⁵³
- (8) The faithful have χρίσμα ... ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου which guarantees correct spiritual apprehension of the truth.¹⁵⁴ The χρίσμα indwells and teaches members of the Church, particularly with respect to dwelling continually in Christ.¹⁵⁵
- (9) The motif of "abiding in" (μένω + ἐν in some combination) is rich and varied.¹⁵⁶

It appears that the heretics denied - or some of them did - that they had sinned;¹⁵⁷ as Christians they claimed already to be sinless beings.¹⁵⁸ Consequently they apparently denied that they had need of a Saviour and that Jesus is a Saviour, a ἱλασμός for human sin,¹⁶⁰ the giver of eternal life.¹⁶¹ They also denied that Jesus Christ need be obeyed, at least in respect of loving one another.¹⁶² Being "born of God"¹⁶³ was considered spiritually necessary, but the results of such alleged rebirth showed it to be counterfeit¹⁶⁴ (says the author). They claimed to 'walk in light'¹⁶⁵ and to have seen and known God,¹⁶⁶ but their sin,¹⁶⁷ their walking in darkness,¹⁶⁸ demonstrated the falsity of the claim. They held that they could "have"¹⁶⁹ the Father while denying the Son. Thus the opponents of the writer misunderstood the nature of Christian salvation, and laid claim to experience which they did not possess. Their whole theology, and particularly their soteriology, was "egocentric", a judgment whose soundness can be substantiated from the evidence of 1 John 2:4 ff: "The heretics' claim to abide in Christ is ... understood in terms of mystical

abiding, ignoring the historical events of Jesus' life".¹⁷⁰

- (e) The heretics did not realise their real relationship to evil powers.
-

Four specific designations for evil beings occur in 1 John:

- (i) The "devil" (δικάβολος). He sins ¹⁷¹ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς the sinner (and the heretic!) is ἐκ τοῦ δικάβολου.¹⁷¹ The writer asserts that not continuing in sin¹⁷² constitutes tangible evidence that a particular person is a child of God, while those who do sin are τὰ τέκνα τοῦ δικάβολου.¹⁷³ Their sin is shown in that they do not love their brother.¹⁷³
- (ii) The "evil one".¹⁷⁴ In 5:19 the world (including, by implication, the heretics)¹⁷⁵ is seen to lie in his power, but the νεανίσκοι have been successful in overcoming him.¹⁷⁶
- (iii) The "spirit of error" is contrasted with the "spirit of truth" in 4:6.^{177, 178} Experimentally, this spirit is evidenced by the unwillingness of some people¹⁷⁹ to listen to the writer and his faithful colleagues and readers.
- (iv) The antichrist/s.¹⁸⁰ The ἀντίχριστος does not confess Jesus¹⁸¹ but rather denies that He is the Christ. The Father is also denied.¹⁸² The antichrist comes (ἔρχεται) at the "last hour".¹⁸³ In its plural¹⁸⁴ form at least the title apparently applies to human purveyors of error.¹⁸³ The implication of 1 John is that both ὁ ἀντίχριστος and οἱ ἀντίχριστοι will be judged and condemned (cf 2:18 and 4:17).
- (f) The heretics did not perceive the eschatological consequences of their faulty Christology.
-

Nauck writes that the 1 John author saw the teaching of his opponents from within a 'traditional eschatological' environment.¹⁸⁵ Four formulae are used in this area in 1 John:

- (i) The "last hour" (ἔσχατη ὥρα)¹⁸⁶ is referred to twice in one verse, and is there intimately connected with both the antichrist and antichrists in general.¹⁸⁷
- (ii) "Eternal Life" (τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον)¹⁸⁸ and similar formulae) has been promised by the Son¹⁸⁹ and is being announced by the writer.¹⁹⁰ It has already been given (ἔδωκεν) by God, and is described as being ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ!¹⁹¹ "Having"¹⁹² the Son is the condition of presently having ζωή.¹⁹³

such possession is equivalent to, or at least closely co-ordinated with, belief in the name of the Son of God,¹⁹⁴ and abiding in both Father and Son.¹⁹⁵ The believer was formerly in the realm of "death" but has since passed over to life.¹⁹⁶ Negatively, the one who does not "have" the Son does not have life;¹⁹⁷ one type of person in this category is the murderer.¹⁹⁷

(iii) The Parousia: the actual word παρουσία occurs but once in 1 John¹⁹⁸ (and nowhere else in the Johannine books), but the idea inherent in it is supplemented by one¹⁹⁹ of the nine occasions when the word φανερῶς is employed - i.e, in 3:2, where it has a future significance. Having παρρησίαν at Christ's παρουσία rests upon a conscious abiding in Him now.¹⁹⁸ At his coming the Christian, and, of course, only the Christian, will closely resemble the Son, a result which is connected intimately with a clear vision of Him.²⁰⁰

(iv) The Day of Judgment is referred to in 4:17, as elsewhere (only in different words) in the Fourth Gospel and Revelation.²⁰¹ Only the one καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἐστίν.... ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ (4:17)²⁰² and who "abides in love" and so in God (4:16) will have παρρησίαν.... ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως.

(B) DOES THE DOCTRINAL ERROR IMPLIED IN 2 JOHN DIFFER FROM THAT OPPOSED IN 1 JOHN

Again - as was the case with 1 John - the best approach to the question would appear to be to enumerate those points in 2 John which the author highlights by his use of language,²⁰³ then to summarise the picture presented of the author's own theology and that of his opponents. Lastly, the theological pattern which emerges is to be compared with that of 1 John. (The Third Epistle says nothing about theological error as such, and does not say much about theology itself, either. Where a significant point is added to the 2 John presentation, this is normally indicated in foot-notes in what follows).

(1) EMPHATIC STATEMENTS

(a) The inclusion of personal pronouns not needed for the sense. Verse 1 contains the statement οὓς ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ. Probably here emphasis and not contrast is intended,²⁰⁴ though Bultmann supposes that no personal tie need have been present.²⁰⁵ Schnackenburg sees ἀληθείᾳ (in this instance)

as meaning "uprightness and honesty" - i.e. the term is used in an Old Testament sense. If this be so, no theological point at all is being made. If, on the other hand, the opinion of most exegetes is followed,²⁰⁶ the writer already in the first sentence of his letter is referring to the divine revelation brought to the world by Jesus, τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου.²⁰⁷ (3 John 1 is a virtual repetition of 2 John 1; οὕ in verse 3 probably carries some emphasis also as well as an implicit contrast between the spheres in which Gaius and the heretics live).

- (b) The reduplication of the article with an adjective. The one example in 2 John (in verse 11) - κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τὰς πονηροῖς - is not directly 'theological'.²⁰⁸
- (c) The placing of an adverbial phrase at the beginning of a statement is to be found once, again in a practical context.²⁰⁹
- (d) The demonstrative pronoun followed by the verb "to be".
The three instances in 2 John are:
αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη ἵνα.....
αὕτη ἡ ἐντολή ἐστὶν..... ἵνα.....
(both from verse 6), and
οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ πλάνος καὶ ὁ ἀντιχρίστος (v.7.)

Once again, as was the case with 1 John,²¹⁰ the last kind of statement, the strongest, stressing a link between a previously indicated person or persons and the present subject, is Christological.

(2) REPETITION

The only noteworthy terms are ἀλήθεια and μένω. The latter is present in three places in 2 John, which is proportionately much the same as the 23 in 1 John.²¹¹ Ἀλήθεια was not mentioned under "Repetition" in 1 John,²¹² because it is used relatively less than in 2 and 3 John, though still considerably more than in any non-Johannine New Testament book. Thus the three Epistles are closely tied together from a doctrinal angle.²¹³

(provided Bergmeier's arguments be rejected).²¹⁴

The "truth" of the Epistles seems to indicate much more than mere factual correctness - rather the sphere in which something takes place,²¹⁵ or an objective entity.²¹⁶ It can "abide" in Christians,²¹⁷ be with them,²¹⁸ and is eternal (v.2). "Truth" is a personal possession of the faithful believer,²¹⁹ which should shine out of him.²²⁰ Ἀλήθεια may indicate "the divine life-bringing revelation" and "the moral holiness stemming from God's nature".²²¹ It denotes "divine reality something objective, coming from God, and works in people like 'an inner principle, which forms the inner life of people'".²²² Schnackenburg distinguishes "truth" in various literary traditions:²²³

- (1) In Greek thought the basic idea is that of harmony or logicality.
- (2) In Old Testament thought, to say that God is truth suggests "constancy, faithfulness".²²⁴
- (3) In the Qumranic works "'truth' is a central and comprehensive concept which can characterise the whole faith-and-salvation-possession of the 'sons of truth' ... the 'truth' designates that which belongs to God, in difference from 'deceit' of men - ".²²⁵
- (4) In Johannine thought truth is divine being, which is self-revealing and communicating.²²⁶ He who is the "truth" and "life" is the "way" to the Father.²²⁷
- (5) In Gnostic thought "truth" is hypostasised (Schnackenburg quotes one of the Odes of Solomon and the Mandaic Ginza here : Valentinus and various other second century sources could readily be added).

The Johannine concept is further from the Gnostic than at first appears,²²⁸ and is actually fairly close to the Old Testament-Jewish idea.²²⁹

(3) 'SIGN-POSTED' STATEMENTS

The major types of construction found in 1 John are present in the shorter Epistle as well:

V.7 οὗτος ἐστίν ὁ πλάνος καὶ ὁ ἀντίχριστος.
V.9a πᾶς ὁ προάγων καὶ μὴ μένων ἐν τῇ
διδασκαλίᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔχει

V.9b ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ διδασχῇ²³⁰, οὗτος καὶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει.

V.11 ὁ λέγων γὰρ αὐτῷ χαίρειν κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς.

The verse 9 clauses are both Christological (and so is that of v.7) whether ἡ διδασχὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ be a subjective or objective genitive. Thus once more the theological teaching which the writer most wants to emphasize is in the realm of Christology, important as many other things are to him.

(4) TRUE AND FALSE DOCTRINE

(a) God the Father is love,²³¹ He is good,²³² He (together with the Son) is author of χάρις, ἔλεος and εἰρήνη.²³³ He it is who 'elects';²³⁴ He has the right to issue commands to His subjects,²³⁵ and it is implied that He is a God of order, delegating authority as He will.²³⁶

(b) Christology

Jesus Christ is τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς²³⁷ possessing the same characteristics and bestowing the same gifts as the Father does.²³⁸ He too commands.²³⁹ It is in His teaching that believers are to abide:²⁴⁰ doing so is the condition of "having" (ἔχω) Father and Son.²⁴¹ (Significantly, perhaps, all of this Christological teaching is derived from 2 John, not 3 John.²⁴² The latter has its own distinctive raison d'être, its own facet of a wider problem. It is not a repetition or imitation of 2 John).

(c) Evil Powers

Only two terms occur - πλάνος in the plural then the singular, and ἀντίχριστος.²⁴³ Almost certainly the plural, πλάνοι, is a description of the heretics.²⁴⁴ The singular forms are something of a puzzle, but they may be the predicate of which οὗτος is the subject. If this be so, the definite articles indicate "one or two known figures of the time of the end".²⁴⁵

(d) Status and description of Christians.

The faithful are elected by God:²⁴⁶ they are those in whom the truth abides and with whom it will be present ^{εἰς} τὸν αἰῶνα.²⁴⁷ They are those who "walk in truth",²⁴⁸ and do not "go ahead"²⁴⁹ in matters of doctrine, especially Christology.²⁵⁰ Vigilance and hard work characterise them.²⁵¹ They possess Father and Son.²⁵² They keep themselves aloof from purveyors of evil doctrines.²⁵³ (3 John adds little to the picture except for a reference to prayer,²⁵⁴ which is plainly a regular Christian activity).

(e) Synthesis

In the light of the foregoing it is apparent that, broadly speaking, not only the author's theology, but the way of expressing it in 2 John is extremely close to that of 1 John.²⁵⁵ It would be entirely unreasonable to expect a book of 13 verses - almost half of them epistolary introduction and conclusion - to touch on all the subjects of a book of 105 verses. For all that, 2 John comes fairly close to doing so. The most important theological omissions in the shorter book are

- (i) certain statements about the Father: e.g. that He is invisible as far as human sight is concerned²⁵⁶ and that He is light.²⁵⁷ All other 1 John assertions are at least implicit in 2 John 1-3.
- (ii) the affirmations that Jesus is sinbearer who gave His life for men,²⁵⁸ and that He is the believer's ^{παράκλητος} with the Father.²⁶⁰
- (iii) the Holy Spirit: no more important subject in the First Epistle is left aside in the Second.
- (iv) certain designations for evil persons or powers, viz. ^{διάβολος, ὁ πονηρός} and ^{τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης}.
- (v) various soteriological expressions, e.g. the cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood and the dwelling of God's ^{σπέρμα} within the Christian.²⁶¹
- (vi) direct eschatological references, though 2 John 8 implies a strongly developed eschatological awareness and (in a vaguer way) 2 John 7 does as well because of its apparent connection with 1 John 2:18,19.

As a corollary of these observations regarding the theological emphases and contents of 2 John and 1 John, it may be confidently asserted that the implied heresy is the same.

It is nevertheless true that several ideas can be discerned in 2 John which are either terminologically different from their 1 John counterparts, or which are altogether absent from 1 John.

Ideas expressed differently in 2 John and 1 John

- (1) Two uses of μένω occur in 2 John but (in spite of the great variety there)²⁶² not in 1 John:
τὴν ἀλήθειαν τὴν μένουσαν ἐν ἡμῖν
(v.2) and (μὴ) μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
(v9).

Most commentators (Bultmann excepted) prefer a subjective genitive interpretation of τοῦ Χριστοῦ in verse 9 because such is more in keeping with the general usage of the New Testament.²⁶³ Bultmann favours the objective genitive because "the author hangs everything upon his Christology, i.e., on the doctrine about Christ."²⁶⁴ Whether or not Bultmann is correct, the idea expressed in 2 John 9 is to be distinguished from the majority of places in which the μένω concept occurs in 1 John. Four times in 1 John the believer is characterised as abiding in Christ,²⁶⁵ but never (in so many words) as abiding in the teaching He gave or in the teaching about Him. (Occasionally the reverse is said - that the λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ²⁶⁶ or message of Christ²⁶⁷ dwells in the believer). In general μένω comes in what may be existential contexts in 1 John and in an intellectual context in 2 John. The real difference is minimal.

- (2) In writing about the Incarnation, 2 John 7 says that the content of genuine confession should be Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐρχόμενον ἐν σαρκί while 1 John 4:2 says Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα. Why the difference in tense? Windisch suggested that a "doctrinal formulation"²⁶⁸ could have been responsible. Schnackenburg says

"The present participle is perhaps also influenced in part by the expressions in the Gospel of John, which describe Jesus as an $\epsilon\rho\chi\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ in many connections".²⁶⁸ Schnackenburg thus sees no theological difference in the use of different tenses. He particularly rules out any reference to a future coming of Christ here: "By no means can the Parousia-Chris be meant; for He comes according to early Christian manner of speech not $\epsilon\nu\ \sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\acute{\iota}$, but $\epsilon\nu\ \delta\acute{o}\xi\eta$ ". Dodd observes that the present participle "in any good Greek writer" should have a future connotation, but also concludes that in 2 John 7 only the historical past Incarnation will suffice in context.²⁶⁹ Brooke had some regard for the view that the future $\pi\alpha\rho\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\acute{\alpha}$ is the subject of verse 7 on the ground of Barnabas 6:9²⁷⁰ and (presumably) the Resurrection and Ascension passages in the Gospels and Acts.²⁷¹ Gore says that only the future coming of Christ can be intended. After the Resurrection, now, and when He returns from heaven, Christ's body "is still the same body".²⁷² Bultmann sees the present participle as expressive of "a timeless characteristic of Jesus" as the One sent by God into the world. For Stott the two participles are complementary: "The two natures, manhood and Godhead, were united already at His birth, never to be divided. The use of perfect and present tenses emphasises this permanent union of natures in the One Person."²⁷³

Of the various explanations, Schnackenburg's is most generally satisfying, though Gore's has some New Testament support.²⁷⁴

It is of some importance to decide whether 2 John implies one or two viewpoints regarding Christological heresy.²⁷⁵ In fact 2 John 9 perhaps exhibits the "no need of Christ at all" faction,²⁷⁶ and 2 John 7 the "no incarnate Christ" element. Unfortunately there is no means of checking the possibilities here: if there were, the case for an identical destination (or separate destinations) for 1 and 2 John could be greatly strengthened. Anyway, at root the issue is

the same in 2 John as in 1 John: the 'orthodox'
believed in a true union of the Divine Word with
σάρξ and the heretics (whether they were self-
consistent or not) did not.

Ideas in 2 John but not in 1 John

- (1) Election, probably divine election (v.1)
- (2) The granting of χάρις, ἔλεος and εἰρήνη by Father and Son (v.3; cf. 3 John 15).
- (3) The concept of a reward or wage (μισθός) for the discerning and persevering, and the loss of it by the theologically wayward and the lazy. (v.8).
- (4) The claim of the errorists to "go ahead" (προάγω). In its intransitive meaning the verb signifies "going before", "leading the way", "preceding", usually in a physical sense,²⁷⁷ as in Mark 10:32: - ἦν προάγων αὐτοῦς ὁ Ἰησοῦς-. In Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians a figurative sense similar to that of 2 John 9 appears:²⁷⁸
προαγωγῆς τῆς ἀγάπης,
"love leads the way". The word was chosen by the Elder because the heretics did not "abide" in the Faith in the various senses in which the idea is expressed in 1 and 2 John,²⁷⁹ and, as a corollary, because they regarded themselves as intellectually superior, dynamic, and progressive. To the writer they were really behind the faithful; he appears to use the heretical claim ironically.²⁸⁰
No theological difference between 2 John and 1 John exists here. 2 John 9 simply shows the reverse side of orthodox "abiding".²⁸¹
- (5) The reference to hospitality (cf 3 John), which would appear to be merely a practical outworking of the love frequently enjoined in 1 John.

No point in the list suggests any conflict in the theology of 1 and 2 John, nor in the manner in which the author views the error/s, nor in his treatment of it/them.

There is thus no aspect of any consequence in which the doctrinal error implied in 2 John differs from that opposed in 1 John. The major distinguishing feature of the treatment in the two books is that 1 John has a relatively complete treatment of the heretical position. The very incompleteness of 2 John practically demands a fuller treatment - verbal or written - elsewhere. If 1 John is the "elsewhere", the omission of any reference to it is explained most readily if 1 and 2 John were presented to the same people simultaneously. If 1 John had been sent to the same people earlier the writer would have been expected to have said something like: "you remember that in my earlier letter I wrote - "²⁸² As it is, the vaguest description will suffice, and that does not appear in 2 John at all, but in the other covering note forwarded to the house of Gaius.²⁸³

(C) ARE THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF 3 JOHN TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE BEHAVIOURAL CONCERNS OF 1 JOHN?

The first and obvious observation is that the statements alluding to sin in 1 John often exhibit a strange non-specificity.²⁸⁴ The writer frequently employs such all-embracing words as the noun *ἁμαρτία* (16 times) or the verb *ἁμαρτάνω* (10 times).²⁸⁵

Secondly, very little indeed is said about some sins which are the bane of many a society: nothing is written about gluttony or drunkenness or theft, or about particular sexual sins. In fact all sexual sin is accorded a total of just four words²⁸⁶ *ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς*^{287, 288} Significantly, Schnackerburg asserts "Nowhere does 1 John touch on sexual excesses and similar gross sins, concerning which the later history of Gnostic heresies is full."²⁸⁹

Particular sins which are engaged in by or which are attractive to the heretics and their followers are:

LYING: *ψευδόμεθα* (1:6), *ψεύστης* (2:4, 2:22, 4:20),²⁹⁰
ψεῦδος (2:21, 27).

BLASPHEMY: *ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν* (1:10; 5:10 uses the same vocabulary).

DECEPTION: *πλανῶμεν* (1:8, cf. 2:26, 3:7)

I. LOVELESSNESS/HATRED: ²⁹¹ (4:8 etc; *μισέω* in 2:9,11,13,15 and 4:20)
MURDER: ²⁹² *σφάξω* (3:12(bis)), *ἀνθρωποκτόνος* (3:15(bis))
LUST: *ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς* ²⁹³ (2:16)
ENVY: *ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν* (2:16) ²⁹⁴
VANITY: *ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου* (2:16) ²⁹⁵
LOVE OF THE WORLD: ²⁹⁶ ²⁹⁷ (2:15)
UNBELIEF: *πιστεύω* (See 3:23 etc)
JEALOUSY AND SELFISHNESS: (3:17)
IDOLATRY: (5:21). ²⁹⁸

Of these 12 specific sins, most have to do with attitude or manner of speech. Only three, viz. murder, lust and idolatry, are what can be called 'physical' sins. ²⁹⁹ 1 John contains no extended 'list' of sins as do other canonical and extra-canonical works. ^{300, 301} Nor are there lengthy passages dealing with one sin or problem area. ^{302, 303}

There is the same generalising spirit in 3 John as there is in 1 John: Gaius is urged: "Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. He who does good is of God; he who does evil has not seen God". ³⁰⁴ However, an examination of the terminology used for the specific sins named or implied indicates a difference between the two books. The special vocabulary employed in 1 John (*ψεύδομαι* and cognates, *ἐπιθυμία*, *σφάξω* and *ἀνθρωποκτόνος*, and *ἀλαζονεία*) is entirely absent. ³⁰⁵ For all that, many of the 1 John sins are readily discernible in 3 John 9 to 11. If anything, the errors are more sharply drawn in the shorter book as the 1 John anonymity surrounding the offender/s is stripped aside. Diotrephes is *ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων*, he is vain, selfish, one who "prates (*φλυαρῶν*) against us with evil words". He is inhospitable - i.e. loveless, ³⁰⁶ and ungenerous. He tries to exclude true brethren. Murder, lust and idolatry are the only 1 John sins which are not apparent in the Third Epistle ^{307, 308} (and the first of these is absent from 1 John - it would seem - save for the reference to Cain).

The discussion need not be prolonged nor these matters laboured. There is no conflict at all between the ethical situation encountered when 1 John was written, and that which can be deduced from the simple robust language of 3 John 9 to 11.

The practical problems of 3 John are to be identified with the behavioural concerns of 1 John.

(D) CONCLUSION

It has been demonstrated that Neil Alexander's judgment that 1 and 2 John deal with doctrine and 3 John with discipline is no more than a half truth.³⁰⁹ It is much more accurate to say that 2 and 3 John together constitute a synopsis of 1 John, which conclusion is entirely in keeping with the hypothesis. 2 John indicates some problem areas, and 3 John others, and all are expressed (albeit more anonymously) in 1 John.³¹⁰³¹¹

Before this chapter is concluded, some attention could perhaps be directed to the possibility of identifying the error before the Elder, even though this is secondary in the present context.

(E) ATTEMPTS AT IDENTIFYING THE HERESY

Wolfgang Nauck has spoken of the difficulty of gaining an exact picture of the heretics, since we see them "only in the mirror of the struggle by the author of 1 John".³¹² Of all the heresiarchs or groups who figure in early church writings, only two appear as likely contenders for the position of opponents of the Elder.^{313, 314}

(1) CERINTHUS

It has become common to link the errors of Cerinthus with those ^{315, 316} perturbing the writer of the Johannine Epistles.³¹⁷ A few writers make a fairly positive identification,³¹⁸ others more cautiously nominate the traditional opponent of the Apostle John.^{319, 320}

³²¹ Irenaeus reports two central theological viewpoints belonging to Cerinthus:

(a) He claimed that the world was made, not by the Primary God but by "a certain Power far separated from Him". This secondary God was ignorant of the supreme being.³²²

(b) He claimed that Jesus was not born of a virgin, but of Joseph and Mary. Jesus was nevertheless rather superior to other men. After his baptism 'Christ' descended upon him from the Supreme God, and then Jesus was able both to proclaim the unknown Father and to perform miracles. Both the Crucifixion and the Resurrection were affirmed by

Cerinthus, but only the man Jesus suffered such things, the spiritual impassible Christ having already departed.³²³ Two further observations about the error of Cerinthus appear in Eusebius' History:³²⁴

- (c) An ecclesiastical writer named Caus described the heretic as "an enemy to the divine Scriptures - " (Irenaeus in the Ephesian baths story called Cerinthus "that enemy of the truth").
- (d) Both Caus and Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, had transmitted details of an alleged sensual earthly millenium described by Cerinthus.³²⁵ Dionysius wrote: "For one of the doctrines that he taught was, that Christ would have an earthly kingdom. And as he was a voluptuary, and altogether sensual, he conjectured that it would consist in those things that he craved in the gratification of appetite and lust; i.e. in eating, drinking, and marrying, or in such things whereby he supposed these sensual pleasures might be presented in more decent expressions: viz. in festivals, sacrifices and the slaying of victims".

An assessment follows:

Regarding (a), not so much as a word in 1 John or 2 John or 3 John suggests that the opponents postulated a superior God and an inferior Creator.³²⁶

It is (b) which embraces the theological core of the identification question. Schnackenburg quotes the four statements:³²⁷

Ἰησοῦς - ἔστιν ὁ χριστός (2:22,5:1)
Ἰησοῦς ἔστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (4:15, 5:5, etc)
Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα (4:2; cf 2 John 7)
οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός κ.τ.λ.(5:6)

In these verses the messiahship is clearly central, but these "opposing Christological confession rules" by themselves do not so much elucidate the heretical position as create a certain tension. Is the primary defence (1) over the fact that Jesus is the Christ? or (2) against docetic tendencies?³²⁸ If '(2)', is

the problem area the Incarnation or the Crucifixion? Furthermore, the title 'Christ' adds a new element, for it denotes "the Bringer of salvation". The last two of the four statements imply pre-existence.

Besides the above "confession rules" Schnackenburg adds other statements which combine the Christology "most strictly" with the soteriology. He goes on, "From this can be inferred that the false teachers totally rejected a salvation image in the Christian sense and that they specifically denied Jesus this significance." Schnackenburg concludes "There is no proof that they spoke of a CHRISTUS SPIRITUALIS and only connected him for a time with Jesus."

These observations, which are closely dependent on the text of 1 (and 2) John at every point, can hardly be gainsaid so long as the integrity of 1 John is admitted.³²⁹ The difference between the Elder's opposition and Cerinthianism even where the case seems strongest - i.e. in the realm of the Incarnation question - is apparent.^{330, 331}

Nothing very much can be said about (c); certainly the doctrines attributed to Cerinthus conflict with both Old and New Testament teaching, but of course he enjoyed no monopoly in that direction!

A more serious matter is the substance of (d), two assertions (independently of each other?) that Cerinthus' vaunted millenium was to be a - slightly muted - orgy of sin. He is himself condemned as "altogether sensual" by Dionysius. When it is remembered that the Johannine Epistles say nothing at all about gluttony or drunkenness and very little about sexual sin, it becomes harder than ever to accept that Cerinthianism is the target of the Elder's writings.³³²

While, then, the heresy is definitely of a docetic type,³³³ there is nothing to prove that the foe is Cerinthianism, and a good deal to indicate that it was not.^{334, 335}

(2) IGNATIUS' ASIAN OPPONENTS

The errors assailed by Ignatius comprise

(a) Docetism

Docetism is very evident, particularly at Smyrna, Ephesus and Tralles (or at least it is most specifically refuted in the letters to those centres).³³⁶ Ignatius contends on a much narrower front in Christological doctrine than the writer of the Johannine Epistles. The whole focus here is the question whether Christ is to be viewed as Spirit only or as flesh and Spirit³³⁷ - and the soteriological consequences.³³⁸ So sharply does the enemy stand out on the skyline, that Ignatius (or a predecessor) has compiled formal credal-type formulations to deal with the heresy.³³⁹ In various passages the word "truly" is used again and again in refutation.³⁴⁰

(b) Judaism

At one point it almost looks as if Judaism and docetism constituted some kind of amalgam,³⁴¹ but other chapters are obviously aimed at Judaism per se.³⁴²

The inclusion of Judaism in this way indicates a difference from the Johannine milieu, where it is not in evidence.³⁴³

(c) Sin

Named sins include false witness ('Eph'. 7 and 16 and Trall.6), blasphemy, (Smyr.5), unbelief (Trall.10), division (Philad.8 etc) and hardheartedness (Smyr.6).³⁴⁴ Most of these are also in evidence in the Johannine Epistles; the group of sins in Smyr. 6 doubtless stems from lovelessness, which is so often condemned in 1 John.

Several smaller points of contact with the Johannine writings appear in Ignatius. One is reminded of the condemnation of false missionaries in 2 John by parts of 'Ephes.' and Smyr. Some 'missionaries' are condemned for purveying false doctrines;³⁴⁵ others - those who "carry about the name"³⁴⁶ - for leading unworthy lives. Like the Elder, the Bishop does not name heretics in a public letter.³⁴⁷

R.M. Grant has analysed the position taken by Ignatius' opponents.³⁴⁸

He says, "These people are Judaizing docetists, and at least some of them are gentiles". (Based on Philad.6:1). Four characteristics follow:

- (1) They appeal to the Old Testament "but apparently they treat it in a haggadic manner and provide non-Christian exegesis of the prophets".³⁴⁹
- (2) They say that Jesus did not "bear flesh" and claim that He merely seemed to undergo crucifixion.³⁵⁰
- (3) "They seem to be concerned with 'heavenly matters' such as 'angelic locations' and 'archontic conjunctions'".³⁵¹
- (4) They repudiate the Eucharist, denying that it is the flesh of Jesus.³⁵²

These four points (which are legitimately derived from Ignatius' epistles) specifically overlap with the Johannine writer's opponents only at point (2). Admittedly the other matters are only absent from the Johannine Epistles, and in no way repudiated: nevertheless one point of correspondence³⁵³ (even a major one) is in no way sufficient for an identification of two tendencies or movements which were perhaps a quarter of a century apart. Simply equating the parties is not possible. Even on the most central issue Schnackenburg says "they (Ignatius' opponents) cannot be equated with the Christological 'liars' in 1 John".³⁵⁴

Neither Cerinthianism nor the position adopted by the anti-Ignatian docetists, then, is to be neatly identified with that of the Elder's adversaries.

An examination of other early heresies whose habit was "the depreciation of the historical person of Jesus as the only and actual saviour and the denial of the way of salvation through His flesh and blood"³⁵⁵ proves that no other unorthodox theology approaches that of the Johannine adversaries so closely as do the two above.^{356, 357}

As already stated, the attempt at identifying the heresy is not the main issue. In this chapter the primary problem was never identification. It was to demonstrate that, on the basis of theology and ethics, the error faced is essentially the same throughout the Johannine Epistles.³⁵⁸ That objective has been substantially achieved.

FOOTNOTES:

- ¹ See above, page 3
- ² See above, especially pp. 202 ff for the view that the doctrinal issue is itself of a dual nature.
- ³ the aphoristic and hortatory parts respectively.
- ⁴ See above. pp. 154 ff.
- ⁵ Even Käsemann's "inverted" theory of the 3 John picture constitutes no denial of this statement.
- ⁶ Comm., p.8
- ⁷ N. Alexander, e.g. asks the question: "Why was III John written?" and replies "In its concern III John stands quite apart from the other two. Its issue is authority, not doctrine." Commentary, p.141. Greville P. Lewis similarly says: "This Epistle (3 John) differs greatly from 1 and 2 John in subject matter ... concerned with discipline rather than with doctrine." The Johannine Epistles, Epworth, London, 1961, p.133.
- ⁸ To use the terminology of Theodor Häring.
- ⁹ A temptation to insert Fourth Gospel parallel references all through this chapter has been resisted! The references may of course be found in any Greek concordance of the New Testament.
- ¹⁰ which Edwin A. Abbott says is the main reason for the Fourth Gospel containing about as many personal pronouns as all the Synoptics together. Johannine Grammar, A & C Black, London, 1906, page 295 (section 2399). John H. Dobson's contention is that "emphatic personal pronouns in the New Testament are almost always used where there is either an explicit or implied contrast with another person or another group of people". Article 'Emphatic Personal Pronouns in the New Testament', Bible Translator, 22, 1971, pages 58-60.
- ¹¹ Examples: 3:16, 4:10, 4:11; ἡμεῖς in each instance.
- ¹² See the use of ἡμεῖς in 1:4, 4:14, and 4:16, and ὑμεῖς in 2:20, 2:24(bis), and 2:27.
- ¹³ See above, pp. 214 ff.
- ¹⁴ See above, pp. 214 ff, on the practical aspects of the heresy.
- ¹⁵ including possessive adjectives.
- ¹⁶ It is much commoner in the Fourth Gospel than in the Synoptics. See Abbott, Johannine Grammar, pp.63 ff.
- ¹⁷ Schnackenburg says that the form of this phrase "exalts the uniqueness of this personified divine life in distinction from every other 'life'-" (Commentary, p.63). In 5:11 ζωὴν αἰώνιον has no definite article, but is emphasised by its position in the sentence.

- ¹⁸ Cf. 2:19, 4:1
- ¹⁹ Abbott, Johannine Grammar, p.15, section 1902.
- ²⁰ Like the use of εἶμι : see above, p. 193.
- ²¹ Inversion in a second phrase of the order followed in the first, as "I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed."
- ²² Abbott, pp.424 and 425, sections 2568 and 2569.
- ²³ Another instance in the Johannine Epistles appears in 3 John 9,10: the writer, when he comes, will call to remembrance not the pretensions of Diotrephes, but his works (ὑπομνήσω αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα)
- ²⁴ Still less as a person considered in a theologically inadequate way (so 2:22, 5:1).
- ²⁵ Schnackenburg, p.153: "whether 'Holy One' refers to God or Christ is hard to decide. Yet the latter is more probable".
- ²⁶ In 1 John 1:5 the order is reversed: ἔστιν αὕτη.
- ²⁷ i.e. all except 3:11 and 5:14
- ²⁸ 2:22, 3:23, 4:3, 5:6, 5:9 and 5:20(?).
- ²⁹ 2:25, 5:4, 5:11
- ³⁰ 1:5 and 5:3
- ³¹ Bauer, Lexicon, p.601
- ³² Brooke, p.iv, cf.-Schnackenburg, p.75. Bultmann says that Jesus is always designated as ἕκτενος in 1 John (so far as pronouns are concerned); the αὐτός of 2:2 refers to God. Commentary, p.24, note 2. In fact αὐτός refers to Christ in 2:2 and 2:28, a truth that Bultmann sidesteps by (unnecessarily) attributing the verses to the ecclesiastical redactor.
- ³³ 1 John 2:6, 3:3,5,7,16, 4:17 " - it is so remarkable in John (and in 1 John!) in contrast to the rest of the New Testament (only Mark 14:49 (?)) that it must be considered a personal characteristic, probably due to a Semitic way of thinking." Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, p.252, note 110.
- ³⁴ 3:1,17, 4:7,8,9,10,11,19
- See also above, p. 201 ff
- ³⁵ i.e. first in the sense of theological priority, not in order of treatment in 1 John.
- ³⁶ Kirchliche Dogmatik, 1/2, E.T. 1956, p.379
- ³⁷ H.D.B. Vol.III,1900, p.155
- ³⁸ See The Bible and the Greeks, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1954, chapter 5, especially pp.94,95. Dodd argues that the LXX translators did not regard ἁγίος "as conveying the sense of propitiating the Deity", and that ἱλάσκεσθαι and its

cognates are therefore "inappropriate to the religion of Israel". He considers that the New Testament writers use the ἱλασμός terminology in the same way as the LXX translators, though he is somewhat less confident that such is the case with 1 John than with Paul or Hebrews. Evidence which runs counter to Dodd's position would seem to include parts of the Shepherd of Hermas. In one passage the author says ἔξιλάσομαι τὸν θεὸν ("I propitiate God"), and in another "God ... is propitiated." Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, MacMillan, London, 1891, pp. 298, 406, and 476. Irenaeus says of Jesus Christ: "For he did not make void, but fulfilled the law, by performing the offices of the high priest, propitiating God for men, and cleansing the lepers, healing the sick, and Himself suffering death - " (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p.471). Alan Richardson practically equates 'propitiation' and 'expiation'; he seems prepared to retain 'propitiation' in New Testament exegesis provided it is definitely understood that it is God, not man, who propitiates. (He adds that God does not need propitiating before He can forgive). An *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, S.C.M., London, 1958, pp.223-4; cf. p.78. See also A.G. James' article 'Jesus our Advocate' in the *Expository Times*, Vol. 39, 1928, pages 473-475, George Johnston's section on the Epistles of John in Peake's *Commentary on the Bible* (edited by Matthew Black, Nelson, 1962, page 1036), and F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John*, p.50. Houlden (*Commentary*, p.62) does not wholly agree with Dodd: "Hilasmus, which we have translated by the general term 'sacrificial offering' may well carry the more specific idea of 'propitiation' and its association with the term parakletos in v.1 (i.e. 2:1) confirms the presence of that idea here" (in 2:2). David Hill says that, in spite of Dodd's rejection of the traditional rendering of ἱλασμός by propitiation in 1 John 2:2 and 4:10, "there are signs that the meaning propitiation should be retained". See *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings*, C.U.P., 1967, pages 36-38.

³⁹C.H. Dodd (*Commentary*) p.27. Similarly, W.F. Howard begins with "The crowning revelation made in Jesus Christ ... that God is Love." Because God loved, He gave (ἔδωκεν; John 3:16). The Divine initiative is followed by the human response: "we love, because He first loved us". (4:19), which response is to be practical, not merely verbal (1 John 3:18). *Christianity According to St. John*, pp.62,63.

⁴⁰See especially 3:11 ff and 4:7 ff

⁴¹4:8, 4:16

⁴²4:20, cf. 4:10

⁴³1:3, 2:22,23,24, 3:8, 4:9,14,15, 5:5,10,11,12,13,20. With respect to 4:9 F.F. Bruce observes: "As in the Gospel, the adjective 'only begotten' (μονογενής) is used in a sense which combines the ideas of 'only begotten' and 'well loved'". *Commentary*, p.108.

⁴⁴See, e.g. 3:2 and 5:1 and the various references to being "born of God".

⁴⁵5:1 is very explicit and 3:1 scarcely less so.

⁴⁶2:6, 2:24, 3:6, 3:24. The expression "in Christ" is peculiarly Pauline, though it is common in the Johannine literature and found also in Acts, 1 Peter, 1 Clement, and some epistles of Ignatius. Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, S.C.M., 1958, p.250. Richardson says that the concept originated not with Paul, but with Jesus Himself.

⁴⁷2:24, 4:13, 4:16

⁴⁸2:10

⁴⁹4:16

⁵⁰3:24, 4:4(?)

⁵¹4:12,13,15,16

⁵²3:9

⁵³2:27

⁵⁴2:14

⁵⁵2:24

⁵⁶3:14

⁵⁷3:17

⁵⁸3:15

⁵⁹In discussing the significance of the word ἐν in such passages as John 14:11 (- ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί) Dodd makes the interesting comment that "the relation ... is conceived as a dynamic and not as a static relation; it consists in an activity -" The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, Oxford, 1953, pp.194,195.

⁶⁰Commentary, pp.66 ff

⁶¹But is no "pantheising, deifying mysticism." In contrast with the Thirteenth Hermetic tract, e.g. "the Johannine utterances never obliterate the boundary between man and God. He who is elevated into the divine life sphere, who is 'born of God', never becomes God himself, he only becomes really united with Him, attains a share in His life, His love, His possessions". Commentary, p.71.

⁶²like ecstatic mysticism

⁶³Commentary, pp.66,67

⁶⁴On pages 105 ff Schnackenburg groups the 'immanence formulae' under four headings, of which the first is entitled "Indwelling of divine attributes and vital energies in man". The list includes ἀλήθεια, λόγος, χρίσμα, σπέρμα and ζυγίπη τοῦ Θεοῦ; this category is the most closely paralleled elsewhere (e.g. in Philo and the Mandaic writings). The second heading is "Indwelling of God Himself in man", whose nearest extra-biblical connection is apparently with Philo. The third heading is "Abiding in God and His domain" (or the anti-God domain): phrases here are

from 1 John 3:14 (abiding in death), 2:10 (abiding in light), 2:11 (being in darkness), 2:5, 5:20 (being in God), and 2:24,27,28, 3:6 (abiding in Christ). Finally, Schnackenburg notes the "Reciprocal Formulae", which are the "most original" expressions: "it has not been possible to produce parallels to them from the non-Christian literature". The four instances are

- (1) 3:24 ὁ τηρῶν τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει
καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.
- (2) 4:13 ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν
καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν....
- (3) 4:15 ὅς ἐάν ὁμολογήσῃ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ
θεοῦ, ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ θεῷ.
- (4) 4:16 ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐν τῷ θεῷ μένει καὶ ὁ θεὸς
ἐν αὐτῷ μένει.

(There is a kind of reciprocity also between the widely separated verses 2 John 2 - the "truth" abiding in Christians - and 2 John 9 - Christians abiding in the διδασχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ). With respect to the fourth category (but surely in connection with the others as well) Schnackenburg says "The purpose of all these formulae is to express the fact of fellowship with God" (p.108). Later on (pp.281 ff; especially p.287), Schnackenburg argues that the verb μένειν permits a satisfactory marriage of the 1 John series of texts which declare categorically that a Christian does not sin (the indicatives) and the ethical commands (the imperatives) that indicate that he should not sin. The Christian is still living on earth and is still subject of sin, but he abides in God, and in this context is a foreigner to sin. Rudolf Bultmann remarks on the negative implication of μένειν : "do not yield, do not leave, stay where you are". Two stages in the development of the meaning of μένειν are noted by him: (a) in the oldest Greek usage it meant remaining at a certain place for a determined time, then (b) it came to signify "persisting in a personal affiliation", or, more simply, "faithfulness". Commentary, p.19, note 9.

⁶⁵ 4:16, 2:19

⁶⁶ There is no passage which is exactly repeated: the nearest examples are in 2:12-14.

⁶⁷ Cf. 3:6, a partial duplicate of 5:18.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the meaning of ἔλασμός see above, pages 196 and 222 ff.

⁶⁹ Augustine claimed that the three groups - τεκνία/παιδιά, πατέρες and νεανίσκοι - represented three different stages in spiritual development. Erik Peterson debated whether the νεανίσκοι implied "a youth club of the municipal type." See Bultmann (Commentary, page 32, note 12. Bent Noack allows the possibility that 1 John (or at least 1 John 2:12-14) is addressed to, inter alia, actual children. Article "On 1 John 2:12-14", New Testament Studies 6, 1959/60, pages 236-241. Cf. p. note above. Other writers regard the breakdown into groups as mere rhetoric, since as Dodd says, "All the privileges mentioned belong to all Christians." Commentary, p.38; cf. R.R. Williams, The Letters of John and James, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the N.E.B., C.U.P., 1965, page 26.

⁷⁰Law theorised that the author was interrupted at the end of v.13 and then, when he resumed writing, repeated what he had just written, changing the present tense to aorist. Gore rather tentatively took the same line. The Epistles of John, John Murray, London, 1920, p.102.

⁷¹1:8,10

⁷²e.g. the ὁ ποῶν statement of 3:7 implies its opposite (cf 2:29,3:9 and see 5:6).

⁷³One is reminded of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. Paul often writes as if an opponent were before him contending with him as he writes. The most obvious passage is Romans 2; in verses 1 and 3 he even uses a vocative, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, to address the adversary.

⁷⁴Cf. ἕάν τις εἴπη in 4:2

⁷⁵Cf. Schnackenburg, p.73

⁷⁶The reference to "doing the truth" in 1 John 1:6, and John 3:21 is unusual, but is found in Tobit 4:6: "For if thou doest the truth, thy doings shall prosperously succeed to thee, and to all them that do righteousness." (R.V.)

⁷⁷Bultmann says "the ἀνομία naturally stands for the highest wickedness, as godlessness". Analyse des ersten Johannesbriefes, p.147. J. Alex. Clapperton said that the 'sin' of 1 John 3:4 "amounts to apostasy". He based this on the definite articles - "The sin is lawlessness". Expository Times, Vol. 47, 1935/1936, pages 92,93.

⁷⁸The longer readings ἄγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφόν and ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ are to be rejected because (i) they have inferior textual support; (ii) they 'complete' an awkward expression which lacks an object; (iii) they represent an assimilation to the first part of the verse.

⁷⁹Used in what may be called a 'spatial' sense here - cf. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, pp.451, and 567.

⁸⁰The surprising inclusion of λύει in place of μὴ ὁμολογεῖ has practically no support except in a few versions and patristic citations. Metzger writes: "Although several scholars (including Zahn, Harnack, Büchsel (in Kittel), Preisker) have argued that λύει is the original reading, the Committee preferred μὴ ὁμολογεῖ because of overwhelming external support. The origin of λύει is probably to be sought in second century polemic against Gnostics who made a distinction between the earthly Jesus and the heavenly Christ." A Textual Commentary, p.714. Schnackenburg also disagrees with the U.B.S. committee; he says that ὁ λύει "is of such a special nature as against the simple negation ὁ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ that it must count as the original." Schnackenburg, p.222 (cf Von Herbert Braun, Literar-Analyse und theologische Schichtung im ersten Johannesbrief, p.262) and J.N. Birdsall, article, 'The New Testament Text', in the Cambridge History of the Bible, C.U.P. 1970, p.349. A survey of the opposing arguments would seem to establish the U.B.S. text as the earlier form.

- ⁸¹ τὸν Ἰησοῦν (supported by important Alexandrian and Western texts) is preferable to the various longer renderings which obviously duplicate important parts of the previous verse. (α alone incorporates the word *κύριον* into a longer formulation.)
- ⁸² John Painter's book, *John: Witness and Theologian*, was read after this thesis was drafted. He too regards many of the stylistically distinctive verses as providing the basis for an assessment of the nature of the heresy (as well as providing a clue to the analysis of 1 John). One fault in Painter's scheme is that he omits several verses which he should have included (see p.118).
- ⁸³ The nearest approach is 3:4, but even here the writer refers to the practice of sin (*ἁμαρτία* generally means both the action itself - [\approx *ἁμαρτησις*] - as well as the result [*ἁμαρτημα*] though in its Johannine usage it is a condition or quality opposed to *ἀλήθεια* (W. Bauer's Lexicon, page 42)), and then immediately equates it with *ἀνομία*, which in 3:4 is a theo-logical concept: lawlessness means a frame of mind or actual deed which is opposed to God.
- ⁸⁴ *ὁμολογέω, ἀρνέομαι, γινώσκω, ἀκούω, ἔχω.*
- ⁸⁵ Dodd is correct, then, when in speaking of 1 John he says, "religion and ethics interpenetrate ... real religion is ethical religion". Commentary, p.xliv.
- ⁸⁶ Very frequently couched in the third person, of course.
- ⁸⁷ Whether 'emphatic', 'oft-repeated' or 'sign-posted'.
- ⁸⁸ The point made in the last sentence of section (b) on page 193 is confirmed when it is realised that in this chapter so far 86 verses out of the 105 in 1 John have been mentioned specifically.
- ⁸⁹ *Der Tradition und der Charakter des ersten Johannesbriefes*, pp.123,124.
- ⁹⁰ See especially 2:13,14: "you know Him who is from the beginning". (Cf. 1:1, 5:20).
- ⁹¹ 5:20. The title might refer to *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* named earlier in the verse).
- ⁹² 1:3; 3:22 and 23 (particularly): " - we receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him. And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as He has commanded us".
- ⁹³ 3:20
- ⁹⁴ 4:12; cf. 4:20
- ⁹⁵ 1:5; cf. 2:8 ff. The symbolism of light is used of God absolutely and not simply in relation to man (so Schnackenburg, p.76): "the reality of God ...not in the sense of revelation, but of the divine fulness of being and moral holiness." Cf. Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian*, pp.105,6. Stott also stresses what may be called the 'subjective' sense - the truth, the purity, and

the righteousness which reside in God Himself. Stott shows that such is the general biblical significance of light (Commentary, pp.70-72), a conclusion with which Bultmann largely agrees in his sentence "In the Old Testament ... in Judaism... Hellenism... Gnosis, 'light' is used to designate God, God's nature and the sphere of the divine". Yet Bultmann (against Schnackenburg and Stott) asserts that "light" in 1 John 1:5 is used in what can be described as an 'objective' sense: 'Ο Θεός φῶς ἐστίν does not define "the nature of God as He is in Himself ... It rather expresses what God means for man ... 'light' can in general be a designation of salvation, especially of eschatological salvation." (Commentary p.16). Wilhelm Bousset says: "In Old Testament usage, so far as I can see, the designation of God as light is not common. The concept of light is frequently associated with God. He is the creator of the light, but also of the darkness (Isa. 45:7), he clothes himself in light (Ps.104:2), is a lamp to the way of the righteous (Ps.119:105); the source of life is in him, and in his light we see light (Ps.36:10). But the simple formula that God in his essence, in the absolute sense, is light is not found there." Kyrios Christos, (translated by John E. Steely), Abingdon, New York, 1970, page 232. Philo anticipated 1 John 1:5: "God is light, and not light only, but the archetype of every other light, or rather more ancient and higher than any archetype". 'On Dreams' 1:75.

⁹⁶See the earlier section on the subject - pages 195 and 196. Alan Richardson defines ἀγάπη especially in 1 John 3 and 4, as "essentially the divine love of Christ and the Father manifested in terms of Church unity". An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, S.C.M., 1958, p.287. Schnackenburg writes "That God is love according to His deepest nature the author recognises from God's doings, and indeed from the one act, that He sent His Son into this death-cosmos in order to give life to men" (p.232). Basically, with respect to "the love of God" in 1 John and other ancient works, in the first God's love is universal and historically based. It looks back to an historical salvation-event (1 John 2:2; cf. John 3:16), and forward to the consummation. In the second the love of God is limited to an elite, and confined to the present. See Schnackenburg, pp.231 ff.

⁹⁷See above, p. 196

⁹⁸2:13, 3:1,2,10; 5:1,2.

⁹⁹1:9

¹⁰⁰5:20

¹⁰¹Dodd (Commentary), p.140. The implied compromise in 5:20 might have been in the direction of "idols" (cf. 5:21), or else in that of acknowledging some sort of 'pleroma'- i.e. the error could have been a crude precursor of Valentinianism in this respect.

¹⁰²1:1-3, 4:2,3. The debate about whether the phrase περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς (1:1) means the person or the subject matter does not alter the basic thrust of the passage, since "subject matter and person are identical". See Bultmann (Commentary), p.8...and the article by J. Emmette Weir in the Expository Times of January 1975 (pp.118-120). Bultmann equates the relevant phrase with the Gospel; Weir with Christ as in the Fourth Gospel Prologue.

- 5:6 is also incarnational, this being so whether the textual reading ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος (U.B.S. and Nestle-Aland) or the various readings which add πνεύματος before or after αἵματος be preferred. The variant which has πνεύματος in place of αἵματος must be rejected, since it has little ancient support and is readily explained as an assimilation to John 3:5. See Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 1971, pages 715, 716.
- ¹⁰³ Schnackenburg rightly approves the phrase of Athanasius εἰς σάρκα παρωγέγονεν as being equivalent to Johannine (i.e. Fourth Gospel, 1 John and 2 John) formulae. The Gospel according to St. John, p.266.
- ¹⁰⁴ 1:3, 5:1. On the other hand Paul S. Minear claims that "in the flesh" in 4:2 (the decisive 'incarnational' verse in 1 John) does not mean "as a man", nor "refer to a human mode of existence". The phrase is really parallel to "he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (4:4). Minear's point is that the author in 4:1-6 is distinguishing "two competing spirits - two indwelling persons the experienced actuality of the indwelling of Christ in the believer and in the Church." Article 'The Idea of Incarnation in First John: Interpretation, 24, 1970, pages 291-302.
- ¹⁰⁵ 5:5, 5:20. In fact in 4:9 Christ is designated τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, an expression also used of Him in John 1:14,18, and 3:16,18, and nowhere else in the New Testament, though it occurs three times in Luke and once in Hebrews in a non-theological sense.
- ¹⁰⁶ 2:22,23; cf. 5:9 ff
- ¹⁰⁷ 3:5
- ¹⁰⁸ 4:14 says that the Father ἀπέσταλκεν the Son.
- ¹⁰⁹ 3:16
- ¹¹⁰ 4:14; cf. John 4:42
- ¹¹¹ 2:1, 3:5,7
- ¹¹² 2:1. In the Fourth Gospel He is also designated παράκλητος in one place, since in John 14:6 the Spirit is named as ἄλλον παράκλητον. In the Gospel the Spirit is described as Jesus' coming advocate upon the earth; in 1 John Jesus Christ is the Christian's advocate in heaven. See John 14:26, 15:26, and 16:7.
- ¹¹³ 1 John 2:6, 3:16, and 4:17
- ¹¹⁴ John: Witness and Theologian, pp.115-127.
- ¹¹⁵ Ibid, especially pages 119 to 121.
- ¹¹⁶ Literar-Analyse und theologische Schichtung im ersten Johannesbrief, p.289.

- ¹¹⁷ Painter, p.119. The evidence is forthcoming from 1:7-9, 2:1 ff, 2:4, and 2:6. Contrary to the assertion of Bultmann, Painter identifies the $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu$ of 2:4 with Christ, an identification which 2:2 and 3 "make clear" (p.120).
- ¹¹⁸ "he (the writer) fights against such as do not take seriously the Incarnation of Christ." Nauck, p.150, cf.123 ff.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.120
- ¹²⁰ Ibid, pp.288,9
- ¹²¹ p.289
- ¹²² 2:22, 5:1
- ¹²³ 4:15, 5:5
- ¹²⁴ p.289: Schnackenburg disagrees: "There is no proof that they spoke of a Christus Spiritualis and connected him only for a time with Jesus." Commentary, p.19.
- ¹²⁵ Though that is possible, of course. The 1 John Christology can thus in theory (1) be harmonised, or (2) indicate more than one group, or (3) indicate confused heretics!
- ¹²⁶ 1 John 4:2. Painter (p.125) says: "The response to the heretics was made at two levels, partly because they were divided into two groups".
- ¹²⁷ See pages 284 and 285 below.
- ¹²⁸ Nowhere in 1 John is the Spirit called the Holy Spirit. The Comma Johanneum does of course contain the words $\tau\acute{o}$ $\acute{\alpha}$ γιον Πνεῦμα, but that passage is obviously spurious. It appears only in four Greek manuscripts (all late - manuscript 61 of the sixteenth century, manuscript 88 of the twelfth century, manuscript 629 of the fourteenth or fifteenth century and manuscript 635 of the eleventh century) which are apparently re-translations from a late recension of the Latin Vulgate. Metzger says: " - these words are spurious and have no right to stand in the New Testament. 1 John 5:6 contains the rendering $\kappa\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$ καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου in manuscript 326, but that twelfth century document is of virtually no textual significance.
- ¹²⁹ How the Spirit acts within the Christian, neither 3:24 nor 4:13 discloses. Schnackenburg suggests that "inward revelations of the Spirit and not external charismatic activities" (which latter are not even hinted at in 1 John except perhaps in 3:18 and 4:1) were probably in the writer's thoughts: "with John the main function of the Holy Spirit is His revealing activity -". Commentary, pp.208-210; cf The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, p.176.
- ¹³⁰ Boice has a helpful two-fold view of the Spirit of Truth concept: "First, it identifies the Spirit and consequently the Paraclete with God and with Christ, since the essential nature of each is 'truth': second, it denotes the truth-giving function of the Paraclete; it is he who delivers the truth." J.M. Boice, Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1970, page 152.

¹³¹ 4:3

¹³² 4:6. The expressions "spirit of truth" and "spirit of error" (and indeed the whole section in which they occur) seem to be the closest point of contact between the Johannine Epistles and the writings of the Qumran community. The "two spirits" appear in the Community Rule: "- the God of knowledge ... has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness". G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Pelican Paperback), 1968, pp.75,76. Further passages from the Rule are summarised in Allegro's sentence "Both (spirits) are under the supreme rule of God who will eventually give the victory to Good, but only after a prolonged cosmic battle." John Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls, a Reappraisal*, (Pelican Paperback), Second Edition, 1964, p.139. Schnackenburg agrees that the Qumran Scrolls throw light on 1 John 4:1-6, but adds that they do not anticipate the 1 John certainty "that the Christians, those born of God, have already received the Spirit". Commentary, pp.211,212. The War Rule of Qumran sharply contrasts "the Prince of Light" and "Satan, the Angel of Melevolence". Vermes, p.141; cf Hymn 1 on page 151, and Hymn 21 on p.192: "For Thou has divided men into good and evil in accordance with the spirits of their lot". The vast majority of the Qumran Scrolls and fragments must be dated between 150 BC and AD50 according to W.F. Albright (in his article *Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John*, in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, C.U.P., 1964, pp.163,4). Yigael Yadin, working on the basis of military descriptions in the War Rule, placed the work in Roman times - "in the latter half of the first pre-Christian century". (See the *Hibbert Journal*, Volume 56, 1957-8, pp.194,195, where Paul Winter reviewed Yadin's book "The Message of the Scrolls"). Edwin Yamauchi notes the views of scholars who seek to relate the 'two spirits' doctrine of Qumran back to Zurvanism (the more monotheistic form of Zoroastrianism): "Zurvan was the Zoroastrian god of time, and according to some sources the father of the twin spirits of Ahura-Mazda (Ormazd) and Ahriman." *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*, Tyndale, London, 1973, page 78. The doctrine appears again in the Apocryphon of John, whose 'Grundchrift' is dated c.100-150 by Henri-Charles Peuch (*New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol.1, pp.325, 326 and 330). The two terms πλάνη and ἀλήθεια are also used by the Hermetist (together with a number of other antithetical terms) to describe the two ways of life and death. C.H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, p.183. On pp.183-185 Dodd gives similar instances from the *Wisdom of Solomon* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, e.g. T. Jud. 14:1: ὁ οἶνος διαστέφει τὸν νοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ ὁδηγεῖ εἰς πλάνην τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς.

In T. Dan 2:4 a "spirit (of anger)" is associated with "error" in a way rather reminiscent of 1 John 4:6: περιβάλλεται γὰρ αὐτὸν τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θυμοῦ τὸ δίκτυον τῆς πλάνης.

In the Fifth Mandate of Hermas the Holy Spirit and an "evil spirit" are contemplated as both seeking to possess a man. The 'Holy Spirit' of Hermas is "delicate" (τρυφερόν) and apparently rather helpless. He cannot abide in a person together with an evil spirit; if both are there, he departs. (The Apostolic Fathers, edited by J.B. Lightfoot, MacMillan & Co., London, 1891, pp.426, 427). Hermas says a little further on that "There are two angels with a man, one of righteousness and one of wickedness" (Ibid, p.428), and (on pp.434-436) two kinds of prophet are described, being inspired by either the Holy Spirit or by "the earthly and empty spirit". Hermas, however, does what the Elder never does - he confuses the Holy Spirit and the Son of God: " - the Holy Spirit ... that Spirit is the Son of God." (p.460).

¹³³ τὸ χρίσμα of course means an anointing, but on the strength of 2:27b (which asserts that the χρίσμα "teaches") Schnackenburg says "no doubt the Holy Spirit is meant in a figurative form". Commentary, p.152; cf. pp.150, 161, 190, and 210, and The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, pp.194, 176, and 341 (note 29), and F.F. Bruce's article 'The Spirit in the Apocalypse' in the book 'Christ and the Spirit in the New Testament', C.U.P., 1973, page 337. Schnackenburg also equates σπέρμα αὐτοῦ in 3:9 with the Holy Spirit: both terms are metaphorical (Commentary, pp.190,191).

A.E. Brooke, speaking of Old Testament anointing, says "Those who were so consecrated were regarded as thereby endued with the Holy Spirit and with divine gifts" (p.56). Other commentators interpret similarly - a God-directed anointing is the occasion of the Spirit's entering a person: "In both Old Testament and New Testament, oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit." (A. Ross, The Epistles of John, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London, 1954, p.170. Bultmann reminds his readers that Gnostics were not without a χρίσμα : he says "That the author mentions 'anointing' rather than 'spirit' probably owes to the fact that 'anointing' played an important rôle in Gnosticism, viz. as the sacrament of anointing." Commentary, p.37. Bultmann sees an allusion to baptism in 2:20, but can find no supporting evidence before the fourth century. R. McL. Wilson believes the use of the word χρίσμα may be a turning of the opponents' vocabulary against them, since the word occurs but thrice in the New Testament (1 John 2:20 and 2:27(bis)), and is popular later in the Gospel of Truth and the Gospel of Philip. (The latter actually rates the chrism above baptism). Gnosis and the New Testament, Blackwell, Oxford, 1968, pp.40,97.

Robert Grant notes the Naassene claim that "we alone of all men are Christians, who complete the mystery at the third gate, and are anointed there with speechless chrism". A Historical Introduction to the New Testament, page 233. In Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians, chrism is associated with doctrine (Ch.17).

¹³⁴ 2:20,27

¹³⁵ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ - 4:13

¹³⁶ 5:7,8

¹³⁷ 4:13

¹³⁸4:14

¹³⁹3:8

¹⁴⁰See above, pages 196 and 222

¹⁴¹2:2; cf. 4:10. In the former He is *ἰλασμός* for "the whole world". Schnackenburg regards 2:1,2 as fitting the preceding context and not as an extraneous addition (p.74; contrast Bultmann, p.23).

¹⁴²3:5. The verb is *αἶρω* as in John 1:29.

¹⁴³3:16 - the verb is aorist indicative, *ἔθηκεν*.

¹⁴⁴1:7, 1:9

¹⁴⁵*γεννώω*

¹⁴⁶5:1 - cf. 3:23

¹⁴⁷3:9

¹⁴⁸3:9, 5:18

¹⁴⁹2:29, 3:10

¹⁵⁰4:7. The concept of being children of God (see, e.g. 3:2) is plainly connected with being born of God.

¹⁵¹3:14. Life and death are two domains: "The perfect *μεταβεβήκαμεν*" illustrates this and "expresses the finality of this step of salvation." Schnackenburg, p.197 (cf.5:11).

¹⁵²2:12

¹⁵³1:9

¹⁵⁴2:20. The origin of the variant *πάντα*, which has approximately the same textual support as *πάντες*, is probably to be traced to the wish of some early copyist to have an accusative after the verb *οἶδατε*. The textual issue is best decided according to the principle of J.A. Bengel, *proclivi scriptioni praestat ardua* ("the difficult is to be preferred to the easy reading".) Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p.112: i.e. *ΠΑΝΤΕΣ* is to be preferred.

¹⁵⁵2:27

¹⁵⁶See above, pages 196 ff

¹⁵⁷1:8. Brooke (Commentary, p.17) distinguishes the idea of a 'sin principle' from actual sinning. Schnackenburg implies that such a distinction cannot be maintained between v.8 and v.10, and Bultmann also takes 1:8a and 1:10a as synonymous.

¹⁵⁸See Dodd (Commentary) p.21. Schnackenburg suggests that the underlying meaning in 1:8,10 is connected with the characteristic Gnostic attitude to matter: " - the deeper ground of their presumptuous assertion is still indeed the gnostic view that the pneumatic is 'by nature' quite incapable of polluting himself with matter". (p.84).

¹⁵⁹ 4:14. As far as the 1 John writer is concerned, his statements are accurately reflected by Schnackenburg: "Not the metaphysical being of the Son, but His coming for the salvation of the world claims all attention. The Johannine Christology nowhere denies its direction towards soteriology; it is soteriologically orientated and thereby has a 'functional' character." (page 256). Schnackenburg goes on to say, however, that the Christology is not purely functional, but that the "metaphysical God-sonship of Christ" is the foundation of the predominantly functional emphasis in the Epistle.

¹⁶⁰ 2:2, 4:10

¹⁶¹ Hence the emphatic αὐτός in 2:25. The heretics denied that 'possession' of Son means possession of eternal life. Bultmann explains that "ἔχειν ... does not differ materially from γινώσκειν ('know'), since the latter does not denote a theoretical knowledge, but that relationship in which the one knowing is determined existentially by the one who is the object of knowledge." Commentary, p.39.

¹⁶² 3:23

¹⁶³ The idea of being "born of God" occurs 5 times in 1 John as well as in the Fourth Gospel. The technical term παλιγγενεσία does not appear in the Johannine writings, but is a fair description of Johannine teaching. Dodd discusses

- (1) "Apparent allusions to the idea in Jewish sources", which are not very close to the other occurrences (see below) in meaning, and are probably independent of them.
- (2) Philonic uses, which refer to either (a) resurrection from the dead, or (b) "the Stoic sense of the renewal of the Universe after a periodic cataclysm."
- (3) Some mystery religions (no details given).
- (4) Corpus Hermeticum XIII, e.g. 2,3: "He who is born (again) will be another person", and the assertion of the initiate that "I am now not what I was before".

Dodd says that the antecedents of the idea of regeneration lie in Hellenistic thought (such as the mystery religions and what he calls "the higher paganism" of the Hermetic literature), and that the Fourth Evangelist "adopts" the idea. The Bible and the Greeks, p.240, and The Johannine Epistles, pp.68 and 69. It must be added that the Johannine writings - the Fourth Gospel and 1 John - are not alone in the New Testament in expounding the doctrine of the new birth. James 1:18 reads: "Of His own will He brought us forth (ἔπεκύησεν) by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures", while 1 Peter 1:3, 1:22,23, and 2:1 and 2 also allude to it. Titus 3:5 actually uses the word παλιγγενεσία: " - He saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit -" (Cf. Mt.19:28, the only other place in the New Testament where παλιγγενεσία is found). W.F. Howard considers regeneration in both the New Testament and its antecedents. In contrast to Rabbinical teaching, the moral renewal of the New Testament belongs to the present (as well as to the future), and in contrast to parallels drawn from the mystery religions, the "new life in the spirit" is not "a short-lived ecstasy", but something "which endures without a repeatedly renewed regeneration". Christianity according to St. John, pp.197-201.

¹⁶⁴ 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 5:18

¹⁶⁵ 1:7

¹⁶⁶ Schnackenburg discusses the concept of "knowing God" in Christian understanding and in heretical gnosis respectively (pp.95-101).

The 1 John concept is, says Schnackenburg (p.99), "fully purged from every unchristian content."

Schnackenburg explains that (a) "By 'knowing God' he (the 1 John writer) does not seek any self-understanding of men but actual knowledge of God, which turns into fellowship with God".

(b) "This knowledge of God rests on a revelation, which differs essentially from every Gnostic revelation" in that it is "passed on by messengers of the faith neither in a secret initiation nor in an elevated trance, but by listening believingly to the message of God".

(c) "The revelation leading to the knowledge and fellowship with God is mediated by the one incarnate Son of God Jesus Christ, who thereby assumes the unalterable rôle of mediator of salvation".

(d) In Christianity, unlike Gnosticism, "He who wants to 'know' God and to attain fellowship with Him, must keep His commandments."

Christianity is a religion of deeds, not escapist speculation. The idea of 'knowing' is of course worked out in two directions in 1 John: the knowledge of God is in the perfect tense, but knowledge of commandments or religious rules is in the present tense. (Schnackenburg p.101).

¹⁶⁷ 3:6

¹⁶⁸ 1:6

¹⁶⁹ See p. 202.

¹⁷⁰ See Painter, John : Witness and Theologian, pp.119-121.

¹⁷¹ 3:8

¹⁷² ἀμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ - 3:9

¹⁷³ 3:10

¹⁷⁴ In the accusative form τὸν πονηρόν and therefore clearly masculine in 2:13 and 14. The personal force of this predisposes the reader to understand the dative τῷ πονηρῷ in 5:19 in a personal sense also (cf. John 17:15). The description ὁ πονηρός (used in this way) occurs in various New Testament books, especially Matthew (e.g. 6:13, 13:19, 13:38). The reader is never told in 1 John that Cain or any other unbeliever is "'of the evil one' in a biological sense, as though he were the fruit of the tempter's seduction of Eve sexually understood - an idea current in some Jewish circles around this time." See F.F. Bruce, The Epistles of John, pp.94 and 101, and 4 Macc. 18:8 (on which the remark is based).

¹⁷⁵ Cf. 1 John 4:1

¹⁷⁶ 2:13, cf. 2:14

¹⁷⁷ See above, p. 203

¹⁷⁸ As τὸ πνεῦμα has a personal signification in one part of the verse, so it has in the other. (But see Schnackenburg, p.226).

¹⁷⁹ Under the influence of the ψευδοπροφῆται who think of themselves as the true "mouthpieces of God." 1 John 4:1,3,6; see Schnackenburg, p.213.

¹⁸⁰ With respect to the term ἀντίχριστος, Houlden says "Usage in the case of comparable words (antitheos, 'anti-god'; anti-strategos, 'anti-general') suggests that they are seen less as opponents than as usurpers and deceivers." Commentary, p.77. According to W. Bauer the term ἀντίχριστος means "an adversary of Christ" rather than "a false Christ" (Lexicon, p.75). So also G.T. Purves, Westminster Dictionary of the Bible (article 'Antichrist'), and J. Edgar Bruns' article 'A Note on John 16:33 and 1 John 2:13-14' Journal of Biblical Literature, 86, 1967, pages 451-453, and Rudolf Pesch (Article, 'Antichrist' in Encyclopedia of Theology, edited by Karl Rahner, Burns and Oates, London, 1975).

Westcott (in his note on 2:18 in his commentary) combined the two ideas: "one who assuming the guise of Christ opposes Christ". Whatever the intention of the heretics, the consequence of their view was, in the eyes of the author, a round denial of Christ's true nature. Bacon contended that 2 John and 1 John employ the idea in a new and surprising way relative to Revelation, 2 Thess. 2, and Mark 13: viz, for the first time a foe within was indicated and not "the persecuting power of Rome." Bacon said, "To declare that the heretical teachers were themselves antichrists was to call the attention of the church back from outward opposition to inward disloyalty as the greater peril". The Making of the New Testament, Williams and Norgate, London, pp.217,8. So also F.F. Bruce, The Epistles of John, p.68, and E. Kauder, article 'Antichrist' in The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol.1, pages 124-126. Cf. D.H. Dodd (Commentary), p.48.

Irenaeus later described the Gnostic Marcus, who was a sleight-of-hand expert, as demon-possessed: "it appears as if he really were the precursor of Antichrist." Ante-Nicene Fathers (American Reprint), Buffalo, 1885, Vol. 1, p.334

¹⁸¹ 4:3

¹⁸² 2:22

¹⁸³ 2:18

¹⁸⁴ Schnackenburg explains the presence of the singular word ἀντίχριστος by saying that the writer intends it to stand in sharp contrast with χριστός, though there are "a number of deniers." Commentary, p.157. When considering 4:3, Schnackenburg expresses doubt whether the 1 John author himself envisaged a single concrete personality as the antichrist even if his 'parishioners' did. Ibid, p.223. Bacon explained the singular thus: "In 2nd John 7 it is the heresy itself as a phenomenon which constitutes the antichrist." The Making of the New Testament, p.218.

¹⁸⁵ See above, p. 201

¹⁸⁶ Schnackenburg describes the "hour" as "the soteriological time before the 'end'"; it is synonymous with time itself. He sees no conflict between the eschatological hour and the future hour of consummation as far as John is concerned. Commentary, pp.142,3.

¹⁸⁷ 2:18

¹⁸⁸ 1:2 etc.

¹⁸⁹ Or perhaps the Father - see 2:24,25.

¹⁹⁰ Present tense - ἀπαγγέλλομεν - in 1:2.

¹⁹¹ 5:11

¹⁹² ἔχειν

¹⁹³ 5:12. Obviously the ζωὴ of verse 12 is coterminous with the ζωὴ αἰώνιος of verse 11.

¹⁹⁴ 5:13

¹⁹⁵ 5:20

¹⁹⁶ μεταβεβήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν - 3:14

¹⁹⁷ 3:15

¹⁹⁸ 2:28. O'Neill relates the Parousia of this verse to God, not the Son, but Schnackenburg categorically states the reverse. O'Neill, pp. 31,32; Schnackenburg, p.62.

¹⁹⁹ F.C. Syngé - by a change in punctuation - makes both occurrences of φανερώω in 3:2 refer to Christ. This has the merit of giving the verb a personal sense throughout this verse as it has in ten other verses in John and 1 John. Article '1 John 3:2', Journal of Theological Studies, N.S. 3, 1952, page 79.

²⁰⁰ 3:2; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18. Interestingly, no details at all are given about the resurrection body. See Schnackenburg, p.170.

²⁰¹ John 3:16-21, 5:22-28, Revelation 20:12 ff.

²⁰² The famous crux interpretum καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἐστὶν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ quite possibly (even probably) has an incarnational and anti-docetic significance. The meaning appears to be that Christians have a nature like that of Christ, who, though in heaven, preserve "the traits of the earthly". Schnackenburg, p.247, cf. Luke 24:36-43.

²⁰³ In a writing as short as 2 John the mention of a theological point at all shows that it is important. This is particularly apparent if so short a letter is a preliminary to a personal visit and tête-à-tête (see v.12). Anything of a secondary nature would in those circumstances simply be put aside until it could be raised verbally. Nonetheless, literary points which denote stress and emphasis may be distinguished with some profit since they are

a pointer to the writer's theological preoccupations.

²⁰⁴See Abbott, page 295

²⁰⁵Commentary, p.108

²⁰⁶And it seems that it should be - see the comments of Stott (e.g. p.202), which are more persuasive than those of Schnackenburg.

²⁰⁷John 8:12

²⁰⁸The same clause indicates emphasis by the position of αὐτοῦ. See page 194 point (f).

²⁰⁹καὶ νῦν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους (2 John 5)

²¹⁰See page 194 point (g)

²¹¹See pages 196 ff.

²¹²Its use was, however, noted in chapter 1, pages 95 and 96.

²¹³So Houlden says: "Whether the conflict is confined to one dependent church or not, it is impossible to be sure. But the dispute over 'the truth' is the heart of the matter." Commentary, p.151.

²¹⁴See above, pp.95 and 96.

²¹⁵Whether loving (v.1), working (3 John 8), or 'walking' (v.4): the latter is in response to a command of the Father. ἀγάπη is used in a parallel way in verse 3. The opening verse of 3 John has the same anarthrous expression as that of 2 John 1: ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ; in these opening verses (but not subsequently) ἐν ἀληθείᾳ apparently almost equals ἀληθῶς. See Schnackenburg, pp.307,320.

²¹⁶It was defined as "The revealed reality lying at the basis of, and agreeing with, an appearance" by E.W. Bullinger, A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament, Bagster, London (9th Edition 1969), page 823. Similarly, Bultmann says that "truth" and "doing the truth" are even more basic than conduct; they refer rather to "mode of life", "the authentic reality." Conversely, "lie" (ψεῦδος) is the inauthentic, the unreal, nothingness, basically even death." Commentary, p.19. Accordingly, the Gospel of Truth 17:9 ff says: "The works of Error ... are as nothing, whereas the truth is unalterable, unshakeable, and of a beauty which cannot be improved upon". New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. I. pp.523, 524. C.H. Dodd distinguishes between ἀλήθεια - "fundamentally an intellectual category" - and πῦρ - "a moral category". Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, Oxford, 1953, p.173, W.F. Howard expressed the same view in different words on p.183 of 'Christianity according to St. John', Duckworth, London, 1943.

²¹⁷ἐν ἡμῖν

²¹⁸μεθ' ἡμῶν

²¹⁹3 John 3

²²⁰ 3 John 12. See Stott,, p.229

²²¹ Schnackenburg, p.81

²²² Ibid, p.84; also Brooke, page 19.

²²³ Commentary, pp.84, 85

²²⁴ A useful treatment of $\pi\tau\omicron\varsigma$ and $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ occurs on pp.93 ff of "On Paul and John", T.W. Manson, S.C.M. 1963.

²²⁵ p.85

²²⁶ Thus John 1:14 says " - the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\varsigma$ ".

²²⁷ John 14:6. Schnackenburg sums up admirably: " - 'truth', which covers everything that belongs to God, is totally opposed to the 'lie', the falsehood and wickedness which comes from the devil". The Gospel according to St. John, p.407; cf. pp.253,254.

²²⁸ So Schnackenburg, presumably on the basis of the degree of hypostasization in each case, though he says $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ is "almost personified" in 3 John 8. (Commentary, p.307, cf. p.311 - re 3 John 12).

²²⁹ Kysar approves the making out of a case "for the solidly Old Testament - early Jewish character of the Johannine concept of .. the truth", which is "the positive pole of the Johannine dualism." pp.221 and 220.

²³⁰ The ancient authorities which include $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ or $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ after $\delta\iota\delta\alpha\chi\eta$ betray scribal assimilation to the beginning of the verse.

²³¹ If God is the subject of $\tau\omicron\upsilon \alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\omega$ in 3 John 1 (no direct 2 John reference). If the Elder were subject the next words would be tautological, though it is possible that other acquaintances of Gaius could be meant.

²³² 3 John 11

²³³ 2 John 3, 3 John 15

²³⁴ 2 John 1, 13. The concept of election here is surely basically theological, though it may have other significations. It is unlikely to be a name: see Schnackenburg, p.306, and chapter 6 below.

²³⁵ 2 John 4

²³⁶ 3 John 9

²³⁷ whereas Christians are described in the Fourth Gospel and 1 John as $\tau\alpha \tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\nu\alpha \tau\omicron\upsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$. J.A.T. Robinson, article 'The Use of the Fourth Gospel for Christology Today' in 'Christ and Spirit in the New Testament', C.U.P., 1973, p.74. The same point is made in Robinson's book, The Human Face of God, S.C.M., London, 1972, p.174. Robinson there adds: "Paul uses 'sons' of Christians, but makes it clear that their sonship is by 'adoption' into that of Christ".

238 2 John 3

239 Obviously implied in 2 John 5, which refers back to the words of Jesus in John 13:34,35.

240 2 John 7

241 2 John 9

242 Alone among New Testament books, 3 John does not contain the name 'Christ' at all (but see 3 John 7).

243 Irenaeus apparently had no definite articles in his copy of 2 John. The Ante-Nicene Fathers text reads: "This is a deceiver and an antichrist". (American Reprint, Buffalo, 1885, pp.443; the chapter concerned shows that Irenaeus regarded the Fourth Gospel, 1 John and 2 John as all by the Apostle John). In III 23:7 Irenaeus calls Antichrist "the lion", and in III 6:5 and elsewhere he equates Antichrist and "the man of lawlessness" of 2 Thess.2:3,4. Cf. Schnackenburg, pp.145, and 186: he equates the "Abomination of desolation" (Dan.8:12 and other texts) with the "man of lawlessness" of 2 Thess 2 and with the Antichrist. Schnackenburg thinks the main antichrist ideas so far as the church is concerned do not stem from Jewish mythology, but (1) from Mark 13, and (2) possibly from purely oral accounts of Jesus' teaching. (Commentary, p.148).

244 2 John 7; cf. 1 John 2:18

245 See Schnackenburg, p.313. There can be little doubt that only one person is meant: the initial description of the Antichrist as πλάγνος was suggested to the writer by the antecedent πολλοὶ πλάγνοι. Schnackenburg says "No ground exists for thinking of two eschatological figures." (But see p. 236 note 184 above).

246 See above, p. 239 note 234

247 2 John 2. 1 John nowhere says anything quite like this; contrast 2 John 2 and 1 John 2:17.

248 2 John 4

249 v.9: προάγω; cf. the use of προσκόπτειν in 2 Tim. 2:16, 3:9, and 3:13

250 v.7

251 v.8

252 v.9

253 vv.10,11. Warnings of a like nature occur in Mt. 10:14, Luke 10:10 ff, and Ignatius' letters to Ephesus (7:1; cf 8:1, 9:1) and Smyrna (4:1, 7:2; cf.5:1); cf. 1 Cor. 3:17 and Jude 4. See Schnackenburg, p.316.

254 3 John 2

255 So reinforcing the argument for common authorship; cf. Chapter 1, pp. 88 ff

256 1 John 4:12.

257 1 John 1:5

258 3:5; cf. John 1:29

259 3:16

260 2:1

261 1 John 1:7

262 See above, pages 196 ff

263 e.g. John 7:16, 18:19

264 Commentary, p.113

265 2:6, 2:24, 3:6, 3:24

266 2:14

267 3:24

268 See Schnackenburg, p.313

269 Commentary, p.149

270 Commentary, p.175 (note)

271 See especially Luke 24:42 and Acts 1:11

272 Commentary, p.228

273 Commentary, pp.209,210

274 When Schnackenburg contrasts ἐν σαρκί and ἐν δόξῃ he is referring to New Testament habits of speech. The corresponding reality may well - in the understanding of the New Testament writers - include both.

275 See pages 202 and 203 above.

276 Provided τῇ διδασχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ is understood objectively - see p. 211 above.

277 Of the 20 occurrences of προάγω in the New Testament, that in 2 John 9 is the only metaphorical one.

278 3:3

279 Summed up in abiding "in the doctrine of Christ".

²⁸⁰ "They had indeed 'gone ahead'. They had advanced so far that they had left God behind them." Stott, p.211

²⁸¹ The slight adjustment in thought may indicate that 2 John was written (just) after 1 John.

²⁸² Cf. 1 Cor. 5:9 ff and 2 Thess.2:5

²⁸³ Ἐργα ψά τι - 3 John 9 (All the alternative variants are still more indefinite).

²⁸⁴ See chapter 3, especially pages 169 ff

²⁸⁵ The positive side of morality is also stated generally - at least on the surface. It also seems extremely simple. Schnackenburg expresses it thus: "After reading Paul, who in his letters decides moral problems of the most varied kinds, the Johannine message seems simple and uniform: faith and love, and that is all. But we have seen that the reduction of all requirements to these two fundamental attitudes is deliberate and has its ground in the Christological focus. Belief in Jesus the Messiah and Son of God is the only means and the only possible way to attain life; love, however, especially active, fraternal love, is the necessary consequence of adherence to Jesus in faith. St. John does once, in fact, summarize the 'commandment of God' in the words 'that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another' (1 John 3:23)". The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, Burns and Oates, London (E.T. 1965), pp.316, 317. Put otherwise, this belief and love may be expressed as "walking in the light" (1:7, cf. 2:8); 'walking', or conducting oneself, "in the same way in which He walked" (2:6). The opposing attitude is allegiance to the world and love of it (1 John 2:15), 'world' being used in the sense of "men and things that have not been brought by Christ into the divine domain". Ibid, p.284.

²⁸⁶ But see Schnackenburg, pp.129,130. Unlike most commentators he links the second sin of 1 John 2:16 (as well as the first) with, inter alia, sexual sin.

²⁸⁷ 2:16

²⁸⁸ Robert Grant, in A Historical Introduction to the New Testament (Fontana Library edition 1971), p.150, notes what he calls "sociological words" which do not occur in the Fourth Gospel, though they are fairly common in the Synoptics. The list includes "adultery", and "divorce". "Marry" is not found in John either.

²⁸⁹ Schnackenburg, p.83. See above, pp. 216 ff, on the possibility of identifying the Elder's heretical opponents with known individuals or movements.

²⁹⁰ "John ... is thinking of one fundamental lie ... to John the lie par excellence is that which refuses to see the Godhead shine in the human life and death of Jesus, that which drives a wedge between 'the Christ' and the man Jesus ... In the teaching of Zoroaster 'The Lie' (Aveston druj) denotes the whole system of evil". F.F. Bruce, The Epistles of John, pp.73,83.

291

"It does not appear that charity plays any considerable part in the ethical ideas of Gnosticism, pagan or Christian. That type of piety went along with an individualism which usually had little sense of social obligations." Dodd (Commentary) p.xx. Much the same thing is said by Dodd concerning the religion of the Hermetic literature in the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, Oxford, 1953, p.13, and by R. Schnackenburg, The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, p.326. The lovelessness of the heretics is demonstrated in two ways - (1) "their arrogance and contempt for the 'unenlightened'", and (2) their neglect of their duty to support the needy. See Dodd, Commentary, p.36. Conversely, brotherly love, "a genuine, selfless, ready-for-action love", does three things: (1) "it alone unites perfectly and permanently with God" (4:12,16), (2) it "gives hope in the final salvation in the judgment" (4:17), and (3) it drives away fear - 4:18. Schnackenburg, p.227. Schnackenburg explains the constant recurrence of the theme of brotherly love in 1 John as being attributable to the monotony of the style of the age, but also to the supremely important issue of repulsing the heretics outside and admonishing the people inside the church (Commentary, pp.114,115). Diotrefes would seem to be a bridge (in an undesirable sense) between the two.

292 Included for the sake of completeness : there is no hint that any heretic murdered his opponents! Rather 'murder' is the frame of mind engendered by hatred, as in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt.5:21,22). So Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, p.395: "the hatred that is equivalent to murder". (So also F.F. Bruce, The Epistles of John, p.96). Wilder/Hoon (in the Interpreter's Bible, Abingdon, New York, 1957, p.261) say: " - morally, if not literally, 'any one who hates his brother is a murderer'. Hatred issuing in actual murder differs from incipient hatred, felt but restrained, only as a mild attack differs from a virulent attack of the same malady."

293

ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν may also have a sexual connotation (cf. 2 Peter 2:14), but such need not be the case here. F.F. Bruce, The Epistles of John, pp.61,81.

294 The spirit of envy and greed belonging to the writer's opponents contrasts sharply with the spirit of the true missionaries of 3 John 7 who "set out for His sake (ὕπερ..... τοῦ ὀνόματος) and have accepted nothing from the heathen".

295 Dodd expresses the sins of 1 John 2:16 as "sensuality, superficiality and pretentiousness". George Eldon Ladd paraphrases "the lust of the flesh" as "the pursuit of the satisfaction of gross sensual pleasures", "the lust of the eyes" as "a materialistic view of life and values", and "the pride of life" as "self glorification". A Theology of the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1974. Ἀλαζονεία could well be rendered "ostentation".

296 The heretics were not loveless, but "Their love was morally perverted and misdirected." Painter, p.122.

297 The "world" is aptly described by Schnackenburg as "the powerhouse of evil strivings". p.217, see also pp.133-136.

- 298 However this is to be interpreted. Dodd has a succinct paraphrase of 5:21: "have nothing to do with unreal substitutes for God". Commentary p.xxvi; see also p.141: "avoid any contact with paganism". Bultmann says that 5:21 seems to be a maxim, and suggests that εἰδωλα means the heresy or (possibly) the κόσμος. Die Kirchliche Redaktion des ersten Johannesbriefes, p.196. Braun sees 5:21 as referring back to the heresy, since it is improbable that here alone in 1 John "a community of the second and third generation should have been warned against a relapse into heathendom". Braun is undecided whether "idols" means participating in meals associated with sacrifice to idols, or whether "they represent a stereotyped reproduction of specifically Old Testament heresy". Literar-Analyse und Theologische Schichtung im ersten Johannesbrief, page 288. Schnackenburg quotes W. Nauck with approval; the latter brings the concepts of 'idols' and 'sin' as a satanic power very closely together: "The closing admonition says nothing else but this: 'Keep yourselves from sin'". Schnackenburg, p.292, cf p.28.
- 299 And, in context, the first is theoretical and the last is ambiguous.
- 300 See Mt. 5:19, Rom. 1:29 ff, 1 Cor. 5:10,11, 6:9,10, 2 Cor. 12:20,21, Ga. 5:19-21, Col. 3:5-8, 1 Tim 1:9 ff, 2 Tim.3:2-5, 1 Clement 35:5 says "casting off ... all unrighteousness and iniquity, covetousness, strifes, malignities and deceits, whisperings and backbitings, hatred of God, pride and arrogance, vainglory and inhospitality". (Lightfoot's translation).
- 301 1 John 2:16 is the nearest the writer comes to this.
- 302 Cf. e.g. Jesus' discussion regarding divorce, or Paul's treatment of marriage, idolatry and its ramifications, etc.
- 303 The great sin which seems to epitomise all sin is unbelief (even though ἀπιστία occurs nowhere in the Johannine writings). Thus Schnackenburg says "Unbelief in regard to Jesus Christ is and remains a dark, terrible enigma, a mystery of iniquity, in which the essence of sin is manifest." The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, 1965, page 315.
- 304 3 John 11
- 305 πλάνος does occur in 2 John. It is of course quite as much a theological as an ethical evil.
- 306 But see page 243 note 296
- 307 All three are named only briefly in 1 John itself.
- 308 3 John does not throw any light on the enigmatic passage on prayer and its relationship to venial and mortal sins, either (1 John 5:16,17).
- 309 See page 221, note 7. Hoskyns (The Fourth Gospel, page 486) had no doubts, apparently, about the Gnosticism of Diotrephes. He connected "private and secret revelations and inspirations" with "pride and hatred and immorality", and then gave references from all three Epistles (including III 9 to 11) to illustrate the point. Cf. A.N. Wilder/P.W. Hoon, 'The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John' in The Interpreter's Bible, pp.209, 210, and 311.

- ³¹⁰ The unwillingness of the writer to name any opponent is particularly apparent in 1 John 5:16. His field of view seems to change in mid-sentence from one person to a number (τὸν ἄδελοῦν τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν), but in spite of the resultant awkwardness of expression he does not take the easy way out, i.e. naming the wrongdoer/s.
- ³¹¹ For example, 1 John 4:4 and 5:5 deal with the struggle primarily from the side of theology and faith; in 2:13 ff the moral angle is uppermost. The connection between the two aspects of the error is obvious enough: " - it is evident how the moral heresy is in intimate association with the Christological (3:23). Because the heretics regard themselves as free from sin or attribute no significance to 'sin' (in the Christian sense) for their higher (pneumatic) existence, therefore they do not need Jesus and His redemption in His blood (5:6) at all". Schnackenburg, p.83. Later Schnackenburg says : "Heresy and immorality are only different manifestations of the same ungodly nature - " (p.151). Again (on p.253) Schnackenburg says that for the 1 John writer "there is only one struggle against everything that is hostile to God; immorality and unbelief are for him 'cosmos', and behind both stands for him simply the enemy of God, the 'evil one'". (Commentary on 1 John 5:4). See also Floyd V. Filson, A New Testament History, S.C.M., London, 1965, p.312. The major weapons against the two aspects of the error are (1) The instruction of the Holy Spirit - against false doctrine (2:20 ff, 24, 27). (2) God and the things of His salvation - against the moral element (3:1-3). Schnackenburg, p.167. Moral action is based on the child-relationship to God, according to the early verses of 1 John 3. Moreover, "The relationship is not just a legal one (adoption) or a moral one (love between father and child) but one of being (καὶ ἑσμέν - 3:1)". Schnackenburg, p.175.
- ³¹² See page 201 above
- ³¹³ Cf. Schnackenburg, pp.19 ff.
- ³¹⁴ Robert Grant has proposed Menander of Antioch, who claimed that he was himself saviour, and that "his own special rite of baptism resulted in immediate and permanent immortality." A Historical Introduction to the New Testament, p.233. Unfortunately Grant's proposal rests on little but one possible interpretation of 1 John 5:6. 1 John says nothing about an unknown primary Power, nothing about creating angels who were themselves produced by Ennoea, and nothing about magic (see Adv. Haer, I 23:5; cf J.A.T. Robinson, Twelve New Testament Studies, S.C.M., 1962, page 133). Thus - providing Irenaeus' account is to be trusted - Grant's guess has no substantial base at all. Basilides, Saturninus, and Valentinus are all named as possible opponents of the Elder in Brooke's Commentary (p.xxxviii). H.P.V. Nunn said that the Christology of 1 John "may even be aimed at the beginnings of the heresy of Marcion." The First Epistle of St. John, Evangelical Quarterly, 17, 1945, page 297.
- ³¹⁵ But see E.R. Goodenough's article, 'John a Primitive Gospel' (J.B.L., 1945, pp.145-182). That writer denied that Cerinthianism

in particular or docetism in general was the error occasioning the writing of 1 John: "Actually nothing indicates any concern with the problem of docetism at all, that is with the reality of Jesus' flesh, or with the relation of the incarnate 'Christ' to 'Jesus'. 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh' is an early statement by a man unaware that a distinction would ever be made between 'Jesus' and 'Christ', or that it would be proposed that 'Christ' took up his temporary abode in 'Jesus' only to leave 'Jesus' before the crucifixion, since divinity could not suffer. The question simply was: 'Was Jesus the Son of God, or Logos incarnate?' To read anything more into these statements violates their primitive looseness." For a discussion of the Christological heresy see above, pages 202 ff.

- ³¹⁶ There was probably no such book as the so-called 'Gospel of Cerinthus': " - the gospel used by Cerinthus, and also by Corpocrates, was in fact identical with that of the Ebionites and apparently only a truncated version of Matthew." (This is Peuch's judgment based upon Epiphanius; New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.1, p.346. Peuch debates whether there were two men called Cerinthus, one a Jewish Christian and the other the notorious Gnostic). Edwin Yamauchi discusses and rejects the claims of the Dutch writer Quispel, who regarded Cerinthus as a Jewish Christian holding Magharian doctrines. The major problem for Quispel's position is that there is no evidence that Magharians existed in the pre-Christian era or that they lived in Palestine. The descriptions of the movement actually date from the 10th to the 12th centuries! Pre-Christian Gnosticism, Tyndale, London, 1973, pp.158,159. Epiphanius said that the Alogi ascribed both the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel to Cerinthus. Pan Haer, 51:2,3.
- ³¹⁷ Possibly the earliest attack directed against Cerinthus by name is that of the Epistula Apostolorum, which twice repudiates him and Simon as "false apostles" or "enemies". H. Duensing dates the work c.100-150. New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 1, pp.189-194. (M.Hornschuh also dates the work in the first half of the second century, but Hans von Campenhausen is adamant that it must be later. Campenhausen, The Formation of the Christian Bible (translated by J.A. Baker), A.& C. Black, London, 1972, page 217). Interestingly, John is named first in a list of Jesus' disciples. Ibid, p.192.
- ³¹⁸ So S.D.F. Salmond (Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, 1902-4, Vol.II, page 737), James Moffatt (Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, T. & T.Clark, Edinburgh, 1912, pp.586, 588), Alexander Ross (Epistles of James and John, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London, 1954, page 114), A.M. Hunter (Introducing the New Testament, S.C.M., London, 1957, pp.175-179), William Barclay (The Letters of John and Jude, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1960, pp.9,10), Leo G. Cox (The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1966, page 316), R.R. Williams (The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, C.U.P., 1965, page 10), Floyd V. Filson ('First John: Purpose and Message', Interpretation, 23, 1969, p.269), Stott and James D.G. Dunn ('Jesus and the Spirit', S.C.M., London, 1975, page 420, note 177). J.A.T. Robinson said "Cerinthianism" in 1962, but changed his mind by 1976 (see above, pp. 11 ff, and Redating the New Testament, S.C.M., London, page 286, note 154).
- ³¹⁹ Both Lewis and Houlden find Cerinthus as likely a candidate as any: Lewis, pp.69 and 116; Houlden, pp.36, 37. Houlden considers,

inter alia, that an anti-Cerinthus apologetic best explains the crux interpretum of 5:5: ΟΥΤΟΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ Ο ΕΛΘΩΝ ΣΙ' ὙΣΑΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΥΜΑΤΟΣ -

Commentary, pages 125-127. See also Benjamin W. Bacon (The Making of the New Testament, Williams and Norgate, London, pages 126 and 219), Claude M. Blagden (The Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude, C.U.P., 1929, page 53), W.F. Howard (Christianity according to St. John, Duckworth, London, 1943, page 55), Wolfgang Nauck (Die Tradition und der Charakter des ersten Johannesbriefes, 1957, page 150), George B. Caird (article, 'John, Letters of', in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by G.A. Buttrick, Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, page 947), Harold A. Guy (The Gospel and Letters of John, MacMillan, London, 1963, page 111), and F.F. Bruce (The Epistles of John, Revell, pages 17, 73, 105 and 118).

320 The famous baths story appears in Eusebius' H.E., Book III, chapter 28, and Book IV, chapter 14.

321 Adv. Haer, I: 26:1

322 Hans Jonas calls Cerinthianism a "quasi-monotheistic development" as far as Gnosticism in its cosmic aspect is concerned. The reason for the description is that "the figure of one world-god entirely absorbs the plurality of angels or archons and becomes, as he is represented in the Bible, the sole symbol of the creation and its law, so that the whole issue of salvation is narrowed down to one between him and the unknown God beyond." The Gnostic Religion, Beacon Press Paperback, Boston, 1963, page 136. Other examples of this development are Cerdon (Irenaeus I:27,1) and Marcion; all three systems come within Jonas' "Syrian and Alexandrian gnosis" category, which differs from "Iranian gnosis" in that the latter begins with a radical pre-existence dualism but in the former "the dualism of existing reality is derived from an inner process within the one divinity itself". (Jonas, p.105). Two further points of difference are (1) The original disturbance in the Iranian type of gnosticism "lies in the depth and not in the height" (ibid, p.212), and (2) the dualistic state of affairs is irrevocable and irredeemable in the Iranian gnosis, but in the other "It is ... a derivative state, therefore revocable - " (ibid, p.175). The Syrian and Alexandrian Gnostic type is capable of more speculative modifications; its culmination is represented by Valentinus and his school (p.174).

323 A summary of Cerinthus' doctrine appears in R.M. Grant's book, Gnosticism and Early Christianity, Columbia, New York and London, Second Edition, 1966, p.98.

324 For what follows see Book III:28 and Book VII:25. Some information about the Caius concerned is to be found in H.E.II:25.

325 Grant describes Cerinthus' millenarian doctrine as "Jewish". Ibid.

326 The heretical error included an inadequate conception of God, but certainly not a dualistic one (so far as we know). See p. 201 ff.

327 See Schnackenburg, pp.17 ff.

328 In part the present discussion overlaps with that of p. 202 ff.

329 See chapter 3, above.

330 Schnackenburg is well worth quoting again: "The rejection of the Incarnation, in which Cerinthus and the heretics meet, takes place with Cerinthus because with him in particular the virgin birth appears impossible, with the heretics of 1 John from general Christological-soteriological grounds". Ibid, p.20.

331 Nauck agrees with Schnackenburg on the Cerinthian question. Ibid, p.150.

332 The last argument is basically one *e silentio*, but that does not vitiate its relevance: the silence is almost deafening!

333 "The opposed religio-moral declension from Christianity is gnostic in origin." Schnackenburg, p.16.

334 Even with that anti-docetic verse 1 John 5:6, Schnackenburg says: "one must not be in too great a hurry to interpret 1 John 5:6 in a Cerinthian sense." Ibid, p.20.

335 Irenaeus attributed characteristics similar to those of Cerinthus - but even more heterodox - to Carpocrates. (Adv. Haer, Book I, ch. 25). Carpocrates differed from Cerinthus in making evil angels (plural!) responsible for creation. Like Cerinthus, Carpocrates claimed that Jesus was the son of Joseph; he was like other men except that "his soul was steadfast and pure". Because of this a special "power" descended upon him from the 'Father', enabling him to escape upwards from the creators of the world. Adherents of the movement could have even greater powers than Jesus and his apostles (it was claimed). Some other Carpocratic characteristics were pride, spiritism, magic, licentiousness, and transmigration of souls. Salvation is achieved through indulging in every sin; until this be accomplished, reincarnation goes on. Some adherents actually branded themselves, and possessed painted and other images. (The last point calls 1 John 5:21 to mind). Adoption of the man Jesus by the heavenly Christ was, of course, a feature of other heretical systems as well: e.g. Irenaeus ascribed the doctrine to the Ophites and Sethians (Adv. Haer, Book I, Ch.30). Such developed systems were considerably later than currently accepted dates for the Johannine Epistles, and so cannot have been the heresy (or heresies) opposed there. (Irenaeus - correctly? - says that the opinions of the Ophites and Sethians were "generated from the school of Valentinus", though he asserts more than once that all the heretics may be traced back to Simon Magus).

336 See especially Smyr. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 12; 'Ephes.' 18,20; Trall.9,10.

337 So Ignatius in dozens of places asserts the true humanity of Jesus Christ more or less directly. Sometimes he is so eager to do this that he inserts references to His "flesh" or "blood" in the most unexpected places, e.g. Philad. 5: "I flee to the Gospel as to the flesh of Jesus". Likewise Trall.8: " - be ye renewed in faith, that is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, that is the blood of Jesus Christ".

338 E.g. Trall, 2: "Jesus Christ died for us, in order, by believing in His death, yet may escape from death". See also the whole

of Trall.9, and 'Romans' 7 (which, in its references to eating the flesh of Jesus Christ and drinking His blood closely resembles John 6). Cf. Smyr.7.

339 "Jesus Christ - descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly born, and did eat and drink. He was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; He was truly crucified, and (truly) died, in the sight of beings in heaven and on earth, and under the earth. He was also truly raised from the dead, His Father quickening Him, even as after the same manner His Father will so raise up us who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart from whom we do not possess the true life." Trall. 9; Ch.10 goes straight on with references to the docetic error of the enemy: cf. 'Ephes.' 18 and 20, and Smyr. 1. In Smyr. 3 the reality of the flesh of Jesus is strongly affirmed not only in relation to the Incarnation, but in a post-Resurrection and even a heavenly sense.

340 Smyr. 1 and 2; Trall.9.

341 They are in juxtaposition in Mag. 10 and 11. Cf. C.K. Barrett (John and Judaism, pp.54,55), who says that, provided Ignatius "speaks of only one group of opponents rather than two ... It may be supposed that in Asia Christianity, Judaism, and Gnosis existed alongside one another and that they became intermingled with one another."

342 Philad. 6 says: "But if anyone preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him. Two chapters later Ignatius writes: " - I heard some saying, 'If I do not find it in the ancient scriptures, I will not believe the Gospel'". Similarly Mag.8: " - if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace".

343 Pace O'Neill! See above, pp. 152 ff. The Johannine Epistles do not refer to Judaism or the Old Testament at all save in 1 John 3:12.

344 "They have no regard for love; no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed; of the bond, or of the free; of the hungry, or of the thirsty".

345 Smyr. 4: " - those beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but, if it be possible, not even meet with; only you must pray to God for them - ". Cf. Smyr.7.

346 'Ephes.' 7

347 Cf. Smyr.5 with 1 John

348 Gnosticism and Early Christianity, Columbia, New York and London, Second Edition, 1966, pp.178, 179.

349 Philad. 8:2

350 Smyr.5:2, 2:1

351 Trall. 5:2; Smyr. 6:1

352 Smyr.7:1

353 i.e. one point of theological correspondence; the practical problem also seems similar to that faced by the Elder: "- noticeable in the letter to the Smyrnaeans is the adjacency of Christological docetism (2-5) and failing love (6,2)". Von Herbert Braun, Ibid, p.291.

354 p.20

355 Schnackenburg, page 22

356 The Epistle of Barnabas (dated between AD.70 and 100 in the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church) contains a number of anti-docetic statements, especially in chapters 5, 6, and 7. Examples are: (a) "He endured to suffer at the hand of men"
(b) " - it was necessary that He should suffer on the tree"
(c) "fasten my flesh with nails"
(d) " - He was to be manifested in the flesh, and to sojourn among us"
(e) " - the Son of God ... suffered"
(f) " - He whom we once despised, and pierced, and mocked, and crucified - ".

The difference between "Barnabas'" Epistle and the Johannine and Ignatian Epistles is that no specific opponents are in view in the former. The author states his views strongly, but that is all. His method is assertive, but not apologetic. Accordingly no reconstruction of an unorthodox stand is really possible with the Epistle of Barnabas. (Quotations from the Ante-Nicene Fathers - American Reprint - Buffalo, 1885, pp.139-141).

357 Cf. Von Herbert Braun, Ibid. p.290

358 Cf. Benjamin W. Bacon, The Making of the New Testament, Williams and Norgate, London (no date given), pp.213,214.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE JOURNEYS AND VISITS OF THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES

The intention in Chapter 5 is to investigate the journeys and visits inferred from, or referred to in, the Johannine Epistles in order to demonstrate that all fit neatly into the picture presented by the hypothesis. It is no longer necessary to examine opposing views in detail since (i) that was done in the Preparatory Chapter, and (ii) very few writers attempt a 1, 2, and 3 John synthesis of recorded movements anyway.

A list of visits and other important events follows. It is plainly impossible to give precise dates, though events from (4) onwards must have been separated by quite short intervals. Relatively unconnected events - e.g. the visits of various missionaries to Gaius' church (6) and the journey of the "sister's children" to the diocesan city (7) could easily have taken place the other way round, or both could have taken place in stages.

Such refinements are of very little significance from the point of view of the main chronological sequence. What is significant is the manner in which the dual theory that the Epistles were written on one occasion and to a single church environment provides not only a simpler but a more satisfactory explanation than alternative views, which frequently exhibit their authors' despair regarding the Epistles' inter-relationships.²

	Time (in relation to writing of Epistles)	PERSON/S	MILIEU	EVENT	REFERENCES
(1)	↑	ELDER	PALESTINE	WITNESSING JESUS' MINISTRY	1:2,3,5(cf.5:7,8); 4:14, John 1:14 etc
(2)		ELDER	PALESTINE/'DIOCESAN' BASE	JOURNEY	(see below) ³
(3)	THE	ELDER	BASE/EPISTOLARY DESTINATION	VISIT; FOUNING OF CHURCH, or 'EPISCOPAL' CALL/S	2 John 6
(4)	PAST ↓	HERETICS	CENTRAL (and perhaps other) CHURCH/ES	The "going out"	2:18,19 (cf.4:1, 2 John 7)
(5)		ELDER	BASE/EPISTOLARY DESTINATION	THE FINDING OF 'some' 'children' FAITHFUL	2 John 4
(6)	↓	VARIOUS TRUE MISSIONARIES	BASE/EPISTOLARY DESTINATION/BASE	ITINERANT MISSIONARY WORK; WELCOME AND REJECTION	3 John 3-8,10
(7)		SISTER'S CHILDREN	EPISTOLARY DESTINATION to 'DIOCESAN' CITY	JOURNEY; CONTACT MADE WITH ELDER	2 John 13
(8)	PRESENT	ELDER	BASE	THE WRITING OF 1, 2, and 3 JOHN	
(9)	← NEAR	DEMETRIUS	BASE/EPISTOLARY DESTINATION	JOURNEY; DELIVERY OF 1, 2, and 3 JOHN	3 John 12
(10)	FUTURE →	ELDER	BASE/EPISTOLARY DESTINATION	PROJECTED VISIT FOR DISCIPLINE and INSTRUCTION	2 John 12, 3 John 10,14
(11)	FUTURE	HERETICS	'DIOCESAN' CITY/ EPISTOLARY DESTINATION (and elsewhere?)	PROBABLE VISITS for PROSELYTIZATION	2 John 10

- (1) The assertion that the author of 1 John was a literal eyewitness of Jesus' earthly ministry⁴ has been challenged, by, for example, Rudolf Bultmann.

Bultmann admits (a) that "The clauses $\delta\acute{\iota}$ ἀκηκόσαμεν... $\delta\acute{\iota}$ θεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν⁵ refer ... to the historical appearance of the Logos of John 1:1".⁶

(b) that the verbs (ἀκούω and the rest) denote "sense perception" and not "spiritual perception..."^{7,8}

(c) that the verbs denoting sense perception "give the impression that the 'we' are the ear and the eyewitnesses of the historical Jesus."

So much is generally agreed. It is at this point, however, that Bultmann becomes critical of the traditional belief:

- (i) He says that the same assertions could have been made by Jesus' contemporary foes, and so the verbs must mean something more, viz., "perception on the part of believing eyes ... the 'we' therefore, are the 'eschatological' contemporaries of Jesus". In answer to this it can be said that Jesus' opposition did not have anything like the same opportunities for hearing and observing Him as did the Twelve and other close followers. Perhaps the perfect tenses convey something of this sense of continuity.⁹ Then the word "we" is to be understood as indicating Jesus' regular earthly associates (perhaps a group roughly coterminous with the '120' of Acts 1:15).¹⁰
- (ii) He says that (following Schnackenburg) "1 John ... was written at such a late period that it is scarcely possible that a rather large circle of ear-and eyewitnesses was still alive". If the early extra-biblical traditions can be believed, the writer - as an old man - is probably reiterating assertions he has made verbally¹¹ (and perhaps in writing) to this particular congregation from a time

when there were many living eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry.

- (iii) Bultmann very briefly considers an objection which is of far greater contextual significance - the author's lack of interest in history per se.¹² Schnackenburg¹³ provides a much more comprehensive treatment. That commentator writes that "the author was not concerned with the historical as such, but with the Divine clothed in earthly garb." Two or three sentences later the statement is amplified a little: "A predominantly historical interest in eye-witnesses and personal associates of Jesus is not present in 1 John; much rather a religious interest". Put in other words, this amounts to saying that the basal difference is between historicity and gnosticizing fantasy, not the contrast between saying that "we", Christians a, b, and c, have seen and heard, but 'you', Christians x, y, and z, have not". The author, we are told, "expresses a prophetic self-consciousness in which he takes over the authority of the actual eye-and ear-witnesses."¹⁴

Finally, "In the Incarnation the far-reaching difference between the Christian way of salvation and that of the Gnostics, as combatted in 1 John, becomes most clearly evident to the author. The Gnostic way is completely separated from the historical happenings and from an historical mediator - personality; the Gnostic believes he can attain salvation through direct perception and beholding of God. But the true Christian believer sees before himself a quite different way to salvation, and indeed the only one; he cannot achieve the divine life and the communion of God directly, but only on and through the historical Son of God come in the flesh (5:11 ff; cf. John 6:57). He is therefore Himself 'the Way', the Way absolutely (John 14:6). Against the direct 'grasping-after-God' of the Gnostics, the Christian faith proclaims the 'becoming apprehendable' of the Eternal-Divine in a once-only human form."¹⁵

Schnackenburg's suggestion has the great merit of being contextually fitting; it immediately links the Exordium with the most vital

theological insights and convictions of the orthodox Christians. For all that, it is very hard indeed to hold it exclusively. After a long discussion Dodd still says "this kind of language would be very natural from the Apostle John, or the Presbyter John ... or some other eyewitness to whom the authorship of the epistle might be ascribed."¹⁶ No equivocation is found in Brooke's Commentary: from the very beginning he writes, "The terms used in this preface can only be interpreted naturally as a claim on the writer's part to have been an actual eyewitness of the earthly life of Jesus Christ."¹⁷

It is not at all easy to see what more the writer could have said to make it clear to his readers that he was himself an actual witness of Jesus' ministry.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- (i) The 'natural' interpretation of A.E. Brooke is the obvious one.
 - (ii) The 'collective Christian testimony' concept of Schnackenburg chimes in with the 1 John author's theological position.¹⁸
 - (iii) There is nothing to prohibit the acceptance of both (i) and (ii) in a harmonising solution. If (i) be accepted, either alone or in concert with (ii), the original location of the writer in Palestine¹⁹ presents no problem to most scholars. The Apostle John, John Mark, and 'John of Jerusalem' all were, or are conjectured to have been, in Palestine. 'John the Presbyter' (if he existed) might or might not have been. The acceptance of (i) does not necessarily affect the present hypothesis except insofar as it provides a firmer anchorage for the 'epistolary events' which follow.
- (2) The location of the 'diocesan base' to which the writer journeyed, and near which he appears to have remained at least until the time of writing of the Epistles, cannot be determined.²⁰

Four different areas²¹ have been suggested for the location of

writer and primary readers: (almost always placed in the same locale as each other).

(a) The least likely is PARTHIA; the theory stems from the title 'ad Parthos' borne by all three Epistles in Cassiodorus' 'antiqua translatio'. The superscription became widely known through Augustine, and may have been used by Clement of Alexandria. Westcott, Brooke, Guthrie, and Schnackenburg all consider the Parthian address to be a late and by now untraceable error.

(b) PALESTINE has been proposed - at least for the Johannine tradition per se - since the Qumran discoveries and in the light of growing belief that Samaritan influence can be detected in the Johannine writings.²²

(c) SYRIA has enjoyed a certain popularity in recent times²³ for four main reasons:

(i) "the marked parallels in subject matter with the 'Odes of Solomon', which supposedly belong to Syria".²⁴

(ii) the apparent connection between Ignatius and John.^{24, 25}

(iii) the language suggests "a Greek-speaking author in a Semitic environment".²⁴

(iv) the conceptual environment shows contact with Gnosticizing circles close to Judaism.²⁶

The first of these considerations is a little more persuasive than the others, but their combined weight is small. It is to be noted that the Syrian theory relates basically to the Gospel of John, and only derivatively to the Epistles.

(d) EPHESUS is advocated by the supporters of the ecclesiastical tradition: Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius all link the Gospel and 1 John to Asia via the Apostle John,²⁷ "and the Asian provenance of Revelation can be taken to support this view, although it is far from decisive."²⁸ With respect to the Fourth Gospel, Barrett believes that an Ephesian origin best explains the tradition in Irenaeus,

and Aland accepted Ephesus because of the Montanists' appeals to John.²⁹ Schnackenburg favours Asia Minor on the grounds of the monarchical episcopate evident in the Ignatian Epistles, and, to a lesser extent, in the Johannine Epistles.³⁰

Sanders actually advocated an Asian location for the Johannine Epistles even though he claimed an Alexandrian origin for the Fourth Gospel. He was, of course, more readily able to hold these views because he separated the authorship of Gospel and Epistles;³¹ nevertheless, his suggestion that there were different points of origin caused him some misgivings.³²

Plainly, though none of the options is finally demonstrable, the Ephesian (or at least Asian) theory is the one of choice for the Epistles.³³

- (3) The third stage in the scheme set out above³⁴ revolves around the Second Epistle. There can be no reasonable doubt that the recipients normally resided in an area more or less adjacent to the 'diocesan base'.

The question naturally arises: When was the first contact between the Elder and the people concerned?

In attempting an answer one is immediately in the realm of conjecture. The only direct statements about earlier days are those of verse 5: οὐχ ὡς ἐντολῆν γραφῶν σοι καινῆν ἀλλὰ ἣν εἶχομεν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς -³⁵

and verse 6:

αὕτη ἡ ἐντολή ἐστίν, καθὼς ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς -³⁶

The former is ambiguous; it may mean that the "we" of the imperfect tense εἶχομεν signifies the readers plus the writer, or the writer and other early witnesses (apostolic or otherwise), or the Christian Church worldwide. Verse 6 provides more exact information - at some time designated "the beginning" the 2 John readers³⁷ "heard" the commandment. There is no way of telling whether the occasion concerned relates to the earlier ministry of the Elder in the area, or to missionary work before that again, the most obvious

possibility being the Third Missionary Journey of Paul³⁸ (or perhaps the Second Journey).³⁹

Further hints that the recipients of 2 John had been Christians for a considerable period occur in verses 1 and 8. The first verse of the book states that πάντες οἱ ἐγνωκότες τὴν ἀλήθειαν love the "lady" and her "children"; this surely necessitates a well-established work and sufficient time for that work to have become appreciated. Verse 8 is a warning lest εἰς εἰργάσασθε be vitiated. The whole tone suggests prolonged and hard labour in the Christian sphere. None of the four verses quoted demonstrates that the Elder was in the vicinity from the earliest days, but the wording and tone of 2 John suggest a close working relationship between him and his readers. The degree of familiarity between the two parties⁴⁰ would seem to demand at least one lengthy visit or frequent visits, or a visit and fairly frequent correspondence.

- (4) A relatively recent occurrence at the time of the writing of 1 John was the "going out"^{41, 42} of the heretics which is recorded in 1 John 2:18,19: "Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us." The event was fresh enough in the minds of the readers for it to cause them (it would seem) both puzzlement and pain.^{43, 44}

Now, 2 John 10 speaks of heretics⁴⁵ who had not yet come, but who might be expected to arrive and to seek to perpetrate their evil doctrines at any time.⁴⁶ On account of the backward glance of 1 John 2:19 and the forward look of 2 John 10, it has been suggested that the two Epistles were written at different times (i.e. 2 John earlier) or that they were to different places (i.e. 2 John to a more isolated destination not yet reached by the heretics).⁴⁷ Neither of these proposals is at all necessary. Of particular significance is the fact that it is the readers who betray puzzlement, not the writer.⁴⁸ He knows what is going on. He has the answers which they lack. It is a much more fitting solution to say that those who had "gone out" had done so from the standpoint of the Elder - i.e. from the

central church at Ephesus. The "us" in the expression $\xi\varsigma$ ἡμῶν $\xi\xi\eta\lambda\theta\alpha\nu$ at the beginning of 2:19 means the Christians there, in the 'diocesan centre'. The heretics had not "gone out" at all from the standpoint of the recipients of 1, 2, and 3 John, but were in danger of coming in, of seeking hospitality while attempting to subvert in a new area which they had not entered before. It is because the Elder's readers cannot fathom the stories of schism which have reached them that the Elder wrote the words "they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us -". Nor can they decide how to treat visitors from either side of the dispute:⁴⁹ hence the advice and warnings contained in 2 and 3 John apropos hospitality. This would also seem to be part of the explanation of the assertions in the two short books that the writer has much to say,⁵⁰ and the assurances that if his hopes are realised and he is able to come soon, he will provide full answers to much that puzzles on a verbal basis: - $\sigma\tau\acute{o}\mu\alpha$ πρὸς $\sigma\tau\acute{o}\mu\alpha$.^{51,52}

- (5) It is scarcely possible for controversy to arise over the fifth point in the scheme on page 252. In theory any one of several interpretations is in keeping with the statement Ἐχάρην λίαν ὅτι εὗρηκα $\xi\kappa$ τῶν τέκνων σου περιπατοῦντας ἐν ἀληθείᾳ - in 2 John 4. The Elder could have "found" the "children"⁵⁴ concerned faithful when visiting them in another part of the 'diocesan city' subsequently to their journeying there, and be conveying information about them to their parents' home (or to their home church). Again, he could have been informed of their encouraging spiritual development by itinerant missionaries.⁵⁵ Thirdly, and more probably, he is pleasurably recalling the situation he found when he last visited these 'children's' home area. The close study of the verb εὕρισκω⁵⁶ does not favour one interpretation above another.⁵⁷ Walter Bauer lists and illustrates three different uses of the term,⁵⁸ any one of which could fit the 2 John 4 sentence. It can mean
- (i) (after seeking) to find, discover, or come upon,⁵⁹ or
 - (ii) to find or come upon without seeking, as Paul "found" the altar "To an unknown god" at Athens,⁶⁰ or
 - (iii) (in a figurative sense) to discover something by intellectual activity - reflection, examination or investigation.

Thus Paul writes in Romans 7:21, "- I find it to be a law -".

However, the general impression coupled with a consideration of the Elder's past contacts with the recipients of 2 John combine to suggest that the writer deliberately journeyed and found, inter alia, this encouraging situation in his readers' own home. Furthermore, the 'finding' must be recent if the remark is to be meaningful.

- (6) Once more, there is nothing very controversial here, providing the exact order of points (5) to (7) is not insisted upon. However, it is most reasonable to regard the missionaries' last journey to Gaius as having taken place very shortly before the writing of 3 John. So short, indeed, was the interval that the return of the missionaries seems to provide part of the *raison d'être* of 3 John: the Elder praises Gaius for 'correct' behaviour towards "the brethren" concerned, yet sees it necessary to labour the point about supporting them. He writes: " - it is a loyal thing you do -", "You will do well to send them on their journey as befits God's service", and, "So we ought to support such men".⁶¹ Not only was there a Diotrephes in the church,⁶² but a general uncertainty about whom to support and how.

- (7) Ἀσπάζεται σε τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς σου τῆς ἐκλεκτῆς. So runs the final verse of 2 John. The identity of the "elect sister" is not the most vital point at this stage: the majority of writers affirm that she represents a church, while others prefer to regard her as an individual Christian.⁶³ Whatever the correct answer might be, the "children" must surely be understood as individual Christians who had been in contact with the Elder in the recent past. People do not send greetings as a rule from a date months or years before they can be passed on: if a considerable time had elapsed in this case, some comment to that effect would surely have been made by the Elder. Moreover, no mention of a trip to or a visit from the sister's children is made. Possibly, therefore, they lived with the Elder or at least under his pastoral eye.⁶⁴ No explanation is then required as to how he is able so matter-of-factly to convey salutations. It is taken for granted that he can do so. All in all, the placing of the contact between the Elder and the sister's children immediately prior to the writing of 2 John and even after the return of the

missionaries⁶⁵ would seem to be entirely justified.

- (8) In Chapter 2 (above) it was concluded that it cannot be proved that the three Epistles were written on one occasion, but that there are significant pointers to such having been the case.⁶⁶
- (9) Since the three Johannine letters collectively provide answers to one complex problem, since they all appear to be by one writer, and since they all seem to have been penned at approximately the same time, it is perhaps more probable than otherwise that they were delivered together. The oft-repeated suggestion that Demetrius was the bearer of 3 John (and perhaps the leader of the missionaries)⁶⁷ is in no degree surprising. An instructive comparison can be made with Phoebe and Romans,⁶⁸ Titus and 2 Corinthians,⁶⁹ Epaphras and Colossians,⁷⁰ and (possibly) Silvanus and 1 Peter.⁷¹ In none of these instances is the modern reader told that the named person is the bearer of the letter, but such a conclusion probably follows from the terms and tone of the commendation. Very significantly for the current hypothesis, the only Johannine commendation of this sort occurs in the Third Epistle, the only one which is addressed to a named recipient, and, incidentally, the only one which is unequivocally to a man (important in the ancient world). It seems logical to suppose that the one named and commended Christian was sent as courier to the one named recipient, bearing the three letters.⁷²
- (10) Both 2 John and 3 John contain references to the plans of the Elder to meet the recipients. In 2 John 12 the writer says ἔλπίσω γενέσθαι⁷³ πρὸς ὑμᾶς—in 3 John 10 ἐὰν ἔλθω—, and in 3 John 14 ἔλπίσω δὲ εὐθέως σε ἰδεῖν—.

The three references may indicate either one visit or two, since that of 3 John 10 is to be equated with that of 3 John 14, but that of 2 John 12 may or may not coincide with the other. A third possibility, of course, is the view of Bultmann, viz., that the journey of 2 John is imaginary because 2 John is a merely imitative (and relatively late) epistle. Bultmann's claim rests (at this point) upon the belief that in 2 John 12 "we have only a variation in expression"⁷⁴ relative to the conclusion of 3 John. Against

that commentator it can be asserted

- (1) that the terms of 2 John 12 and 3 John 14 are not identical, and so they may simply demonstrate the natural fluctuations in expression of one writer whose mind runs in fairly predictable patterns.
- (2) that (and this is important) the verses exhibit different degrees of certainty about the coming visit/s.

However, though point (2) may be used legitimately against Bultmann, it could well be contended that it is an argument in favour of two visits, or at least two planned visits, the 2 John 12 one being a possible trip, and that of 3 John certain. As with other questions in the Johannine Epistles, it is best to begin an attempted resolution with 3 John.

3 John 10 is drawn out by the bad behaviour of Diotrephes. On the face of it, the crucial statement is tentative, since the writer uses an ἐὼς plus subjunctive construction.⁷⁵ But, in the light of other uses of the same form in the Epistles,⁷⁶ such a conclusion is not justified. Schnackenburg has no doubts: he calls the 3 John 10 visit "an early planned visit".⁷⁷ Similarly, Moffatt (and the TEV) renders the sentence, "when I come - ". In 3 John 14 the writer shows that he has reached the point where he not only plans to see Gaius, but to see him εὐθέως. Now, this word is translated "shortly" in the A.V., "soon" in Moffatt and the R.S.V., "before long" in Phillips, and "very soon" in the N.E.B. In fact the word carries more sense of urgency than any of these: Bauer renders it "at once", "immediately", and in no other way.⁷⁸

In 2 John the terminology betrays less sense of haste. Accordingly, Brooke writes: "The εὐθέως may possibly suggest that the intended journey is nearer than when 2 John was written. The action of Diotrephes, and perhaps of others in other places, may have brought matters to a crisis".⁷⁹ Brooke, then, makes the tentative proposal that 2 John was written some time before 3 John. His idea might have carried some weight but for one consideration, viz., that there is a more precipitate attitude in 3 John 14 than in 3 John 10. That is to say, the writer appears to have become more and more convinced of the need of an immediate visit ⁸⁰ even as he was writing.

It may very well be, therefore, that 2 John was written marginally earlier (perhaps only an hour or two).⁸¹ Then, as the author took up his pen to write to Gaius, he considered again the disturbing machinations of Diotrephes. As he thought about the evils perpetrated by that opponent, he had a growing sense of anxiety, and by the time he reached his last paragraph the inevitability of a personal visit (and one in the immediate future at that) to the local church had come home to him.⁸² Hence the εὐθέως.

Diagrammatically, the rapidly developing situation in the Elder's mind as he wrote can be represented thus:

STAGE IN	↓	I	2 John 12	A <u>possible</u> visit
THE WRITER'S		II	3 John 10	A <u>definite</u> visit
THINKING		III	3 John 14	An <u>immediate</u> visit

- (11) Plainly, there is a question mark over the order of points (10) and (11). The modern reader may perhaps be permitted to console himself with the knowledge that the author himself did not know which would take place first at the time when he wrote! - and we have no other subsequent source of information. Certainly the heretics⁸³ are likely to come and try to convert Gaius, the elect lady, and those of like mind to their own way of thinking. At the time of writing Diotrephes is still within the fellowship,⁸⁴ but seems inclined to accept the heretics in preference to true missionaries.⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

If the eleven points above are not to be contemplated merely as a series of single, more or less isolated events, but as an integrated complex, it is essential to concentrate some attention on the "cross-over points", the places where two or more Epistles coincide in the matter of journeys and visits.

FIRST, 1 John 4:1 and 2 John 7 look very much as if they refer to the same event.⁸⁶

SECONDLY, the treatment of itinerant missionaries advised in the two short letters is wholly complementary (see points (6) and (11)).

THIRDLY, the visits of the Elder contemplated in 2 and 3 John co-ordinate well. Indeed the absence of any reference to a visit in 1 John is also of some evidential value. It is highly unlikely that the Elder would tell the whole congregation - including an apparently implacable foe - the details of his campaign. Those details are to be reserved for the faithful Gaius and the "lady" alone.

FOURTHLY, 3 John 9 refers to an opponent within the church, and both 1 John 2:26 and 3:7 appear to do the same.⁸⁷

No indisputable proof has been offered (or could be offered on the basis of extant material) for the contention that the events of the Johannine Epistles took place in a single environment, i.e. along an Ephesus/Single-Epistolary-Destination axis, and that the Epistles were written and delivered concurrently, but it has at least been shown just how easily this could have been the case.

FOOTNOTES:

- ¹ even relative dates in a number of instances.
- ² e.g. Bultmann says: "so far as the relationship of the three letters to each other is concerned, complete clarity, in my opinion, is not possible". Commentary, p.1. For further details regarding this and other views see the Preparatory Chapter (above).
- ³ The internal evidence for this non-Palestinian base is the lack of Old Testament references or Jewish flavour in the Epistles. (save 1 John 3:12).
- ⁴ "It should - be noted that the author of the First Epistle claims to be one of the original disciples who saw and handled the word of life ... the note of authority which underlies the epistle rests upon this claim." Edwyn Hoskyns, A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, S.C.M., (edited by Gore, etc), 1951, pp.659, 660- cf. p.671.
- ⁵ The Gnostic writer of the Gospel of Thomas adds the words "and which hand has not touched" to the Pauline verse 1 Cor. 2:9. Perhaps the writer had 1 John 1:1 - with which he disagreed - in mind. See 'Thomas and the Evangelists' by H.E.W. Turner and Hugh Montifiore (S.C.M., London, 1962, page 88).
- ⁶ Commentary, p.8 (see the whole section). Alan Richardson underscores this point very heavily. An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, S.C.M., 1958, pp.332, 333, cf. p.162.
- ⁷ Bultmann refers particularly to the Stoic pantheistic notion, and quotes a vivid - but spiritual - expression from Corp. Herm V:
ἀβροθεῖ αὐταῖς ταῖς χερσίν.
- ⁸ Cf. Dodd (Commentary, p.13): "He (the author) could not have made it clearer that he is speaking of sensible experience and not of spiritual vision." See also Schnackenburg, p.54.
- ⁹ Bultmann claims that the perfect/aorist vacillation in 1 John is "without significance", but in some of the instances he adduces the point is certainly arguable.
- ¹⁰ Dodd (Commentary, p.13) asserts that "The 'I' of the Psalms for example, seems to expand and contract between the individual, a group, and the entire nation." Yet he is not very ready to admit a far more logical point, viz. that the first person plural in the Johannine Epistles can likewise expand and contract. Regarding 4:14 (" - we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son as the Saviour of the world") Dodd states "This generalising 'we' persists throughout the whole context, 4:7-19, which contains some of the most important general propositions about the Christian life. At no point should we for a moment suspect any restriction of the scope of 'we', except in the phrase 'we have seen'. It is difficult to accept a sudden shift of meaning so radical that whereas all through the passage 'we' has meant Christians in general, it now means a group of eyewitnesses sharply distinguished from Christians in

general". Why should it be so difficult? Having made his categorical statement on page 12, three pages later Dodd turns to the Exordium and says that "we" in these verses can vary in its range.

¹¹Eusebius, H.E. 3:23 and 24

¹²Commentary, p.11

¹³For what follows, see Schnackenburg, pp.53 - 58.

¹⁴This is not what Schnackenburg says in *The Gospel according to St. John*, (E.T.) Burns and Oates, London, 1968, p.270 (re John 1:14): "The evangelist undoubtedly voices here - as in 1 John 1:1-3 - his own experience as a believer, based on immediate fellowship with the incarnate Logos". Cf Eduard Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament*, (E.T.) S.C.M., London, 1961, p.196 and p.177, note 642, and F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John*, Revell, pp.35 - 38.

¹⁵Commentary, pp.57,8. ¹⁶Commentary, p.16

¹⁷Commentary, page 2. John Painter (*John: Witness and Theologian*, S.P.C.K., London, 1975, p.105) argues convincingly that John 1:14, 19:35, 21:24 "and especially 1 John 1:1 ff" refer to personal seeing: "In the Gospel, seeing Jesus is certainly not equated with believing nor is believing seeing". Cf. Floyd V. Filson, article, 'First John: Purpose and Message', *Interpretation*, 23, 1969, pages 264-266, and Ralph Russell, who speaks of "the author's solemn insistence that he was an eyewitness". '1, 2, and 3 John' in *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, edited by R.C. Fuller, Nelson, London, 1969, page 1257.

E. Schweizer appears to admit that 1 John 4:14 refers to actual eyewitnesses, but suggests that 1 John 1:1 ff means "witnesses of later generations". Article 'The Concept of the Church in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John', in *Studies in Memory of T.W. Manson*, Manchester University Press, 1959, page 238.

¹⁸Particularly his position on soteriology

¹⁹See above, pages 252 ff.

²⁰So, e.g., Kümmel's remark: "Concerning the place of writing (of 1 John) we know nothing". *Introduction to the New Testament*, p.312.

²¹The possibilities are discussed from Schnackenburg's point of view on page 29 (above); Greece is perhaps implied as a fifth possible place of origin of the Epistles.

²²See above, p. 101 and also A. Wind, Article 'Destination and Purpose of the Gospel of John' in *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. 14, pp.26 ff.

²³Advocated by Jülicher-Fascher, Burney, Bauer, Schweizer, Haenchen, and said to be "probably the best conjecture" by Kümmel for the Fourth Gospel and so perhaps for the First Epistle. Kümmel, pp.175 and 312. See also Schnackenburg, p.40. Among ancient writers Ephrem Syrus alone claimed that the Gospel was written at Antioch. M.F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, Cambridge, p.8.

²⁴ Kümmel, p.175

²⁵ The point is still valid even if Sanders' view of a "common Christian tradition" behind both Ignatius' Epistles and the Johannine writings is preferred to the dependence of the former on the latter. Sanders, *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church*, page 13.

²⁶ Another point may be appended to this list. There are significant points of contact between 1 John and passages in Matthew which are peculiar to that Gospel. If Matthew was Antiochene (?), then it could perhaps be claimed that 1 John was as well. See T.W. Manson, article 'Entry into Membership of the Early Church', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 48, 1947, pages 31 and 32, and the pages in Dodd's commentary on the Johannine Epistles referred to there. Cf. H.P.V. Nunn, 'The First Epistle of St. John', *Evangelical Quarterly*, 17, 1945, page 298.

²⁷ H.E. 3:25 and 5:8

²⁸ D. Moody Smith, Jr. 'Johannine Christianity : Some Reflections on its Character and Delineation', *N.T.S.* 21, 1974, p.237. Cf. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, pp. 43 and 44.

²⁹ See Kümmel, p.175

³⁰ Commentary, p.301

³¹ "If then the Gospel and Epistles are not by the same author, it follows that the 'Presbyter' who wrote the Epistles did not write the Gospel, and also that it is no longer necessary to hold that the Gospel was written in Asia Minor, a conclusion which it would be hard to avoid if the Gospel was the work of the writer of the Epistles, whom it is reasonable to identify with the Asian John". *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church*, page 11.

³² "The greatest difficulty involved in the Alexandrian hypothesis is that it leaves unexplained the close affinity there is between the Gospel and the Johannine Epistles, which seem fairly certainly to have been written in Asia Minor". *Ibid*, p.86.

³³ The 11th century minuscule 465 actually adds $\epsilon\nu \epsilon\phi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega$ to 2 John 13.

³⁴ p. 252

³⁵ Cf. 1 John 2:7

³⁶ Cf 1 John 2:24. $\alpha\tau\tau' \alpha\rho\chi\eta\varsigma$ occurs eight times in 1 John. It usually refers to the doctrine of Christ (2:7, 2:24(bis), 3:11) which, being original, is contrasted with heretical novelties, but also to Christ Himself (1:1, 2:13,14) in whom personally the readers must abide (2:27, 3:6). See Schnackenburg, p.58.

³⁷ Plural; $\eta\ \kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\tau\epsilon$.

³⁸ Acts 19:1 ff.

³⁹ Acts 18:19-21

- ⁴⁰ Cf. the Elder/Gaius and Elder/1 John readers relationship.
- ⁴¹ Dodd explains that the "going out" may be taken (1) as a demonstration of dissatisfaction with the orthodox on the part of the heretics, or (more probably) (2) as a fulfilment of God's purposes. Commentary, pp.52,3. Schnackenburg (p.219) says that there is no need to allegorise the move, nor to regard it as anything but a physical departure of the heretical element from the orthodox fellowship on the ground of incompatibility of doctrine (cf. Wolfgang Nauck, p.125).
- ⁴² The parallel verse 2 John 7 - "many deceivers have gone out into the world - " seems to be loosely quoted in the Apocalypse of Peter: "this is the deceiver who must come into the world - ". This is possibly the earliest known quotation or paraphrase of 2 John (providing the dating given by Ch. Maurer, viz. c.135, can be accepted, and providing Polycarp's Epistle refers in 7:1 to 1 John 4:2,3 and not 2 John 7). New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. II, pages 669 and 664.
- ⁴³ The recent nature of the schism is also apparent in that the heretics seem not to have formed a group, "a unified private sect" at the time of writing, even though the ancient world was noteworthy for its "urge to religious group formation". Schnackenburg, p.119. Against this, however, may be set the statement of Schnackenburg that the deceivers "are many (πολλοὶ) and everywhere (κόσμος)". (p.312). Yet the number of heretics need not necessarily have any bearing on the time of the schism, while the mention of κόσμος may indicate the sphere of their propaganda rather than their ubiquity (cf. 1 John 4:2,5).
- ⁴⁴ There is no hint that the church had any part in the exclusion recorded in 1 John 2:19; this stands in contrast to the attitude of Diotrephes (3 John 10).
- ⁴⁵ The wording is actually singular, but general - εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμῶν κ.τ.λ.
- ⁴⁶ The prohibition in 2 John 10,11 is very closely paralleled (so far as content is concerned) by a passage in the Didaché: "Who-soever then shall come and teach you all these things aforesaid, receive him. But if the teacher himself be perverted and teach a different doctrine to the undoing thereof, hear him not; yet if he teaches to the increase of righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord". (11:1,2).
- ⁴⁷ "- Whereas I John's readers seem already embroiled in conflict with the heretics, II John's church appears to have been so far without first-hand experience of the seceding heretics. Is II John, then, a prelude to I John? Does it reflect an early stage in the heretical trouble which, when it later spread and raged at its fiercest, occasioned I John at a diocesan level?" N. Alexander, page 140. See also Schnackenburg, p.301.
- ⁴⁸ 1 John 2:19 is definitely explanatory in tone.
- ⁴⁹ See below, pp 273 ff re Diotrephes and the missionaries; the internal situation in the receiving church greatly complicated matters.

⁵⁰2 John 12; 3 John 13

⁵¹2 John 12; 3 John 14. Neither 2 John 12 nor 3 John 13 actually says what the content of the planned conversations is to be, but the above construction seems wholly reasonable.

⁵²1 Cor. 13:12 employs the expression *πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον* and Numbers 12:18 *πῶς-ἴα πῶς* (cf the French 'bouche à bouche').

⁵³The partitive *ἐκ*, sometimes without *τίς* or the like, is part of the Johannine style, due no doubt to Semitic idiom". Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, p.292; cf. p.109. See John 7:40, 16:17, and 18:17,25.

⁵⁴Whether *τέκνα* represents actual sons and daughters or church members: see Chapter 6.

⁵⁵See 3 John 3 - 8 and point 6 on page 252 above. Presumably missionaries went more than once to each centre: the expression in 3 John 5 is in the present tense- *ἄγκλητέ, πιστὸν ποιεῖς*.... It is equally possible that points (5) and (6) are to be reversed.

⁵⁶The verb is found nowhere in the Johannine Epistles except in 2 John 4.

⁵⁷So also Bultmann, *Commentary*, p.110, note 7.

⁵⁸A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, Chicago Press, 1957, page 325.

⁵⁹Illustrated - in the passive voice - in Rev. 20:15.

⁶⁰Acts 17:23

⁶¹Part of the support was monetary, and part of it the offering of hospitality (cf. 2 John 10) (i) *προπέμψας* (3 John 6) implies not only good wishes but material support". Wilder/Hoon, *The Interpreter's Bible*, Abingdon, New York, 1957, p.310. (ii) Hospitality was generally rated very highly in the ancient world. In the Eighth Parable of the Shepherd of Hermas, those whose willow rods were "withered, yet with a very small part green ... never separated from God, but bore the Name gladly, and gladly received into their houses the servants of God." Later, bishops are described as "hospitable persons (*φιλόξενοι*), who gladly received into their houses at all times the servants of God without hypocrisy". (*The Apostolic Fathers*, J.B. Lightfoot, MacMillan, London, 1891, pp.459 and 477).

Ignatius expresses the same view as 2 John 10 and 11 in Smyr. 4 (cf. Smyr.7): "I guard you beforehand from those beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but if it be possible, not even meet with - " (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Buffalo, 1885, Vol. 1, pp.87,88).

Hospitality is one of fourteen essential virtues in the Acts of Peter, dated c.180-190 by W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol.II, pp.281,275. Later (c.400?) the Apocalypse of Paul relates that Paul met Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Lot, Job and others, and indeed "all those who have given hospitality to strangers" at the heavenly "river of wine". *New Testament Apocrypha*, II, pp.776, 777.

⁶²See below, pp. 272 ff.

⁶³Her identity is of course bound up with that of the "elect lady"
See below, pp. 278 ff.

⁶⁴In 1886 A. Plummer suggested that "The Lady's nephews may be engaged in business at Ephesus under S. John's Apostolic care: their mother may be living elsewhere, or be dead". Commentary, p.142. The idea appealed to A. Ross also. Commentary, p.232.

⁶⁵Point (6) - see pp. 252 and 260 ff. (above.

⁶⁶See above, pp. 137 ff

⁶⁷e.g. Dodd and Schnackenburg both make both points: Bultmann the former.

⁶⁸Romans 16:1,2

⁶⁹2 Cor. 8:16 ff. especially verse 23

⁷⁰Col. 1:7, but see 4:12.

⁷¹1 Peter 5:12

⁷²Guthrie in fact barely hints at something like this, and then passes on to other matters. New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation, pp. 220,221.

⁷³Γίνεσθαι in the sense of 'come' is frequent both inside and outside the Johannine corpus. See Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, p.277.

⁷⁴Commentary, p.115

⁷⁵Thus Greville P. Lewis thinks that there is doubt about the coming of the Elder: it will take place (he believes) only if Diotrephes does not revert to previously agreed policy regarding the entertainment of missionaries. Commentary, p.139.

⁷⁶See 1 John 2:28,29; in the first of two instances in these verses, ἔαν is equivalent to "when", and in the second it may be accurately rendered as "since". When commenting on 2:28, Bruce says: "Neither here nor in the repetition of the clause in 3:2 does 'if' suggest any uncertainty; it is the equivalent of when". Commentary, pages 78 and 79. Bauer in his Lexicon says "At times the meaning of ἔαν approaches closely to that of ὅταν 'whenever' or 'when'. He quotes 1 John 2:28 as an example. (p.210).

⁷⁷p.327; cf. p.331

⁷⁸Alexander Ross appreciates this point: Commentary, p.239.

⁷⁹Commentary, p.194 (cf. Schnackenburg, p.332). Brooke thinks that there might possibly be a difference between the meaning of γενέσθαι in 2 John 12 and the ἔλθειν of 3 John 10. Modern writers discount this - see Bultmann, Commentary, p.115, note 2, and Walter Bauer's Lexicon.

⁸⁰ One purpose of the hoped-for journey to the lady and her family was ἵνα ἡ χάρις ἡμῶν πεπληρωμένη ᾖ (v.12) - in spite of the current problems. See Dodd, Commentary, p.153.

⁸¹ The order of writing may be reflected in the order in which the Epistles have come down to us.

⁸² W. Bauer (in his Lexicon, p.334) says that ἔχειν with the infinitive - as in both 2 John 12 and 3 John 13 - means "to have to do something", not under coercion, but by an inner compulsion.

⁸³ A singular construction in 2 John 9, 10, and 11.

⁸⁴ Cf. 1 John 2:18,19, and point (4) above.

⁸⁵ See below, pages 284 ff.

⁸⁶ Cf. above, page 258 point (4). The Epistles as a whole, in respect of their pervasive anti-error slant, supplement each other.

⁸⁷ Plural in 1 John, and probably so in 3 John, though Diotrephes alone is named. See above, page 260, point (6), and below pages 284 ff.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PERSONALITIES OF THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES

The central question of this final chapter is: Do the personal details of the Johannine Epistles indicate only one local church situation, or more than one?

The investigation may be prosecuted along four separate lines:

- Do Gaius and Diotrephes belong to the same church?
- Is the "Lady" an individual person or a local church?
- Do the "Elect Lady" (if she is an individual) and Gaius belong to the same church?
- Does 1 John fit or conflict with the situation mirrored in 2 and 3 John in respect of the people involved?

(A) GAIUS AND DIOTREPES

Five men in the New Testament,^{1,2} as well as one other known Christian in the early church,³ are named "Gaius". Γάιος is the Greek form⁴ of the Latin Gaius ("rejoiced", "(I am) glad") - it is "one of the eighteen names from which Roman parents could choose a praenomen for one of their sons".⁵ Plummer speculated that it was "perhaps the most common of all names in the Roman Empire".⁶ Accordingly, it is wholly profitless to try to equate the recipient of 3 John with any other Gaius known from the ancient literature.

Several facts concerning Gaius emerge from the Third Epistle: he is described as ἀγαπητός⁷ (vv.1 and 5), he is living a healthy Christian life - or perhaps is now fully recovered from some illness.⁸ He is a convert of the Elder's⁹ or at least a member of his spiritual flock (v.4), he is well spoken of by the missionaries because of his adherence to the ἀλήθεια (v.3; cf. vv.5 and 8). He has in fact already been host to itinerant Christian workers, so that even strangers have testified to his love (vv.5, 6).

Not so much as a word in 3 John ascribes any sort of title to Gaius.¹⁰ All theories as to his exact rôle, therefore, enter the realm of speculation. Brooke rightly expressed some impatience

with the many positions proposed on Gaius' behalf, saying that "there is a time to keep silence." "

From the point of view of function in the church, only two certain things can be said about Gaius: one, that he is a regular host to missionaries, and two, that he is a confidant of the Elder, and apparently a worthwhile ally to him.¹²

What, then, of Diotrephes? Abbott-Smith¹³ describes the name as a compound of ΖΕΪΣ and ΤΡΕΦΩ, and the meaning is therefore "cherished by Zeus". L. Foster¹⁴ gives a similar rendering: "Nourished by Zeus", or "foster-child of Zeus". The name, which of course occurs only once in the New Testament, was current more than four centuries before Christ.¹⁵

The Third Epistle devotes two verses - 9 and 10 - to the activities and, implicitly, the character of Diotrephes.

In the first place, a writing is referred to. This can hardly be 2 John, since that book does not seem relevant to the 3 John sequel, which deals with insubordination and its consequences. A lost work could be indicated, but, as has been argued above,¹⁶ the peculiarly vague description ΤΙ (and the even vaguer textual alternatives)¹⁷ is a fitting way to indicate 1 John. It is not clear what the relationship between Diotrephes and the writing is, but one thing is certain, viz., that Diotrephes can be counted on to oppose its contents. Diotrephes wishes to be first;¹⁸ he repudiates the authority of the Elder, talking nonsense about him (or bringing unjustified charges against him - φλυαρέω), refuses hospitality to the Elder's missionary colleagues, and even puts those who would receive them out of the church.¹⁹ Schnackenburg sums up Diotrephes' evil in four points:

- (1) the unfounded reproaches directed against the Elder,
- (2) the sin against the duty of hospitality towards the missionaries²⁰
- (3) hindering the church members who would make good his own sins of omission
- (4) thrusting those who oppose him out of the church.²¹

Diotrephes, like Gaius, has no named position within the church of which he is a member. That he enjoys considerable influence - whether by legitimate appointment or no - is unarguable in the

light of verses 9 and 10. Much debate has of course gone on about Diotrephes' actual status,²² but a universally acceptable answer is impossible because the material available is so very slight. It is probably true to say that all suggestions fall into one or other of three categories: Diotrephes appears to have been

(i) a monarchical bishop "the first monarchical bishop we know".²³

In fact this opinion seems too definite, suggesting a fixity of office not implied in the New Testament period.^{24,25} Dodd says of Asia, "the churches of this region are represented in the Acts of the Apostles and the Pastoral Epistles as governed by a board of presbyters, who might also be called bishops (Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5-9). In the Ignatian Epistles (about AD.115) they are governed by bishops, assisted by a board of presbyters".²⁶ It seems that the 3 John situation is much nearer to that of Acts than that in Ignatius' day, since no remote parallels to Ignatius' statements about the bishop²⁷ can be found in 3 John or in its companion epistles.

or

(ii) A "member of a senior council",²⁸ i.e. a presbyter or deacon²⁹

in the church. There is no special difficulty about such a theory, which accords very satisfactorily with the conscious striving of Diotrephes to gain (or perhaps to retain) a position of privilege. If Diotrephes was a presbyter in this sense, and if it may be assumed for the moment that they were members of the same church,³⁰ an explanation is more readily available for Gaius' apparent immunity from expulsion.³¹ Furthermore, the difficulty of accepting that the Elder ever appointed such a man as Diotrephes to a bishopric is removed.

or

(iii) A demagogue, a popular (?) local leader who had built up his own party and who enjoyed unofficial support in his church: "a layman, who had usurped quasi-episcopal functions".³² C.H. Dodd says that as far as the Presbyter (i.e. the author) is concerned, Diotrephes is "Nothing but an ambitious demagogue. From his point of view at least, Diotrephes was no bishop".³²

Other theories regarding the position of Diotrephes have of course been advanced: these are usually modifications of the above, often with extra points added. W. Bauer, for instance, regards Diotrephes

as a Gnostic,³³ while Käsemann reverses the picture by making the author of the Epistles an unorthodox figure, a disaffected and excommunicated member of Diotrephes' church. Many writers conceive of "a conflict between a fixed ecclesiastical organisation and an earlier, freer charismatic situation."³⁴

Any possible conclusion regarding Diotrephes' position in his church is intertwined with the basic question of this section, viz., were Gaius and Diotrephes in the same church or not? If two churches were involved, then Diotrephes could perhaps have been an 'embryonic' monarchical bishop; if one, the two men were probably members of the same presbytery. Predictably, the commentators are divided. Brooke favoured one church in which Diotrephes had gained the ascendancy.³⁵ Greville Lewis prefers two neighbouring churches,³⁶ Dodd two,³⁷ Stott one,³⁸ and Houlden two separate gatherings which represent the fragments of a single original fellowship.³⁹

THE EVIDENCE FOR ONE CHURCH

- (1) Only one church is mentioned in verses 9 and 10; ⁴⁰Ἐγραψά
τι τῆ ἐκκλησίας (v.9) and ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας
ἐκβάλλει. (v.10).
- (2) The Elder not only mentions but one church so far as the epistolary destination is concerned, but he does not name the church to which he wrote/is writing 'τι'. Dodd (who advocates two nearby churches) says "Gaius will know at once which church is meant - ". It is possible to accept this statement, but not so convincing to be informed that the subject of the "something" is one which "Gaius will readily divine without being told."³⁷
- (3) The Elder says ἐὰν ἔλθω - "if (when) I come" (3 John 10). The more natural understanding is that the Elder will come to the church where both Diotrephes and Gaius are members, and is informing his friend of the fact and purpose of his impending visit in order that he (Gaius) may be better prepared to take advantage of the situation.

- (4) The Elder needs the hospitality that Gaius can provide all the more because Diotrephes is withholding his - hence the great stress on the value of hospitality and the way it has been and will be appreciated.
- (5) The "them that would" (τοὺς βουλομένους- v.10) are loyal to the Elder's view of hospitality. It is likely, then, that they resent Diotrephes' ideas and methods in other respects as well, and are faithful to the Elder there, too. If, on the other hand (as, for example, Houlden would have it) an original group split into two, a new split of so great importance that it involves a second schism is seemingly necessitated. Such fragmentation is perfectly possible, but surely less likely than the 'one church - two groups' (led by Gaius and Diotrephes respectively) theory.⁴¹

THE EVIDENCE FOR TWO CHURCHES

- (1) Gaius and Diotrephes have their spheres of influence which seem not to impinge on each other⁴² (cf. v.10 with vv.5 ff).
- (2) The Elder has to inform Gaius of what Diotrephes is doing in the church to which the latter belongs. This appears incredible if the Elder is far away (even if informed by missionaries of the local situation) and Gaius is right in the church concerned.⁴³

AN ASSESSMENT

All the 'one church' arguments are reasonably weighty, but even collectively they do not constitute a proof. On the other hand, the first 'two-church' argument is of no great consequence, since it could easily have been the case that the two men were simply opposing leaders within one congregation. A very much stronger plank in the 'two-church' platform is the argument based upon the ignorance of Gaius. Yet the problem is not insuperable. It is quite possible that Gaius had been sick - hence the wish for "health" for him that is included in the greeting.⁴⁴ If the sickness had been prolonged Gaius might well not have known what Diotrephes was up

to in the church. It may even be that Diotrephes never exercised power in the church until that time, and then, at the first taste of it, he became 'drunk with power'. In particular, it is possible that Diotrephes was never considered as a host until Gaius was out of action. Then, because of ignorance or an ungenerous spirit, he abused his privilege and both turned missionaries away and put people out of the church. Because Gaius had been sick he had heard neither this nor of Diotrephes' denigration of the Elder. Thus the Elder makes much of the hospitable spirit and record of Gaius, hoping that he will continue the work (or rather take it up again) and at the same time he criticises Diotrephes' 'effort'.

On balance, the best answer to the question "What is the relationship between Gaius and Diotrephes?" is that they are leading members of one church,⁴⁵ that they both have positions of less than total responsibility,⁴⁶ but that they are opposed in the depth of their Christian experience and maturity, their love, and their allegiances. Diotrephes' problem is apparently desiring what he has not (i.e. the influence of the Elder; perhaps also that of Gaius and others) and not desiring merely to retain what he has. He has no pre-eminent position, but dearly wishes that he had. This accords with the tantrums he seems to be having as a result of his frustrations. Although no direct reference is made to false doctrine on his part,⁴⁷ he is quite possibly the enemy within, the Trojan Horse that sympathizes with the docetic heretics, even though he and his followers have not yet left the fellowship.^{48,49} If it can be shown - or accepted as reasonable - that 2 and 3 John are to the same church⁵⁰ it is a warrantable assumption that Diotrephes rejected true missionaries (from the Elder) but accepted false missionaries (from the heretics). Hence the warning of 2 John 10.

The affirmative answer to the first question of this chapter, viz. "Do Gaius and Diotrephes belong to the same church?"⁵¹ adds another brick to the hypothesis. Had Gaius and Diotrephes belonged to different churches, 3 John and the "something" of 3 John 9 would have been to different churches.

(B) THE 'LADY' : INDIVIDUAL OR CHURCH?

At the outset, it is necessary to discuss the enigmatic appellation $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\eta\ \kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$ concerning whose translation (but not interpretation) there now seems to be a fairly well established consensus. Guthrie sums up adequately: "The fact is that his words ($\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\eta\ \kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$) have been construed in five different ways: 'the Elect Lady', 'an Elect Lady', 'Electa the Lady', 'the elect Kyria', 'Electa Kyria!'"⁵² Guthrie eliminates the last three at once, since Electa does not occur elsewhere as the name of a lady, and in any case it is "incredible" that two sisters should have the same (otherwise unknown) name (cf. v.13 with v.1). Kyria, moreover, is very rare in this sense.⁵³ The combination of these two words, both as proper names, would likewise be extremely unlikely. Strictly, of course, the better of the remaining possibilities from a grammatical point of view is "an elect lady" because there is no definite article. Guthrie, however, prefers "the elect lady ... since the address is evidently intended to be specific".^{54,55}

Many arguments have of course been assembled in attempts to demonstrate either the individuality or corporateness of the 'lady'.

The view that $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\eta\ \kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$ signifies a church or Christian group of some sort.

- (1) Neither lady nor children nor sister nor nephews (and/or nieces) is mentioned by name - "which detracts from the personal character of the letter".⁵⁶ Westcott makes the remark "it is not easy to suppose that the letter was addressed to an unnamed person."⁵⁷ Significantly, however, Dodd says that the names of writer and recipients normally "appeared on the outside of the postal packet".⁵⁸ The puzzling lack of specificity is wholly explained by the hypothesis. If - as is generally accepted - 'Electa' and 'Kyria' are not proper names, but a description,⁵⁹ 2 John's destination would be unmistakable as soon as Gaius opened his 'parcel'. So easily is the problem confronting Guthrie - "The anonymous character of the personal allusions are as perplexing for either view -" solved.

- (2) Some ancient writers regarded 2 John as having a church destination: Clement of Alexandria even suggested in one place that the whole Church was intended.^{60,61} Both Clément and Augustine indicated (in different ways) that the τέκνα⁶² of the Epistle were Parthians.⁶³ That the whole world-wide Church cannot be meant by the writer is proved by the most casual glance at verse 13.
- (3) The use of οὓς (ἐγὼ ἄγαπῶ) has been claimed as evidence that a church is addressed, but this is "very precarious".⁶⁴ Not only does the word exhibit the natural construction κατὰ σύνεσιν, but it applies no better to a church than to a matron plus a number of male (and female?) offspring.
- (4) Bultmann says that τέκνα - "can only be members of the congregation".⁶⁵ Such an identification is possible, but it is not the only one.⁶⁶ If the children be grown up, the reference can just as easily denote members of an actual physical family.
- (5) It is said by certain writers that "some" children are walking in the truth (v.4) "points to a community, not a family";⁶⁷ verses 1 and 13 also direct attention to a "large and scattered family".⁶⁸ Again the options (church versus family) are fairly evenly balanced.
- (6) The substance of verses 6, 8, 10, and 12 is "clearly not addressed to children".⁶⁹ The assertion is true enough provided the children were young at the time of writing. That need not have been the case. In any event, it may be the matron herself (as an adult) who is primarily addressed throughout the letter.
- (7) The predominance of the second person plural "suggests a composite understanding of the addressee".⁷⁰ (As far as the addressees are concerned the plural occurs about twice as often as the singular). Once more, the alternative possibilities

of plurality of church members or individuals within a family have about equal weight; perhaps the scales tip slightly in favour of the former.

- (8) The statement that the 'lady' is loved by "all who know the truth" (v.1) better fits a church.⁷¹ Possibly the statement is marginally more appropriate if understood in that manner, though a woman of the calibre of Priscilla, or Lydia, or Dorcas, or any one of the daughters of Philip the evangelist might well merit the description.⁷²
- (9) The personification of the church in feminine terms in the New Testament⁷³ (not to mention Old Testament passages where Israel is portrayed as virgin,⁷⁴ married woman,⁷⁵ mother,⁷⁶ or widow⁷⁷) is a common device.^{78,79} Nonetheless, it must surely be conceded on a priori basis that it is more likely that a lady be called a lady than that a church be so described!
- (10) The greeting of v.13 is more natural from one church to another "than from one group of people to their aunt by means of a third party".⁸⁰ The issue here is finely balanced.
- (11) The "children" of the lady are spiritual, not physical children, just as is the case with the Elder's "children".⁸¹ The Second Epistle is therefore intended for "a concrete, particular church".⁸² Clearly the argument makes sense, but it must not be forgotten that in 1 John 3:11 ff the writer - in his use of ἀδελφός - alternates between natural and spiritual relationships.⁸³
- (12) The "new commandment" of verse 5 is better understood as addressed to a community. John Stott says: "John's language is not appropriate to a real person, either in his statement of love (1:2) or in his exhortation to love (5). The elder could hardly refer to his personal love for a lady and her children as a 'commandment....which we had from the beginning'".⁸⁴ The crucial words in the quotation are "commandment" and "personal". The very fact that the Elder uses "commandment" sufficiently demonstrates that he is not talking of love -

human love - in a merely "personal" sense. To put it in other words, when Dodd writes " - the expression, 'whom I love in the truth' probably conveys the idea that the love which the Presbyter has for members of the church is not merely the natural affection of ordinary human friendship, but that divine charity, which, as it is God's gift to us in Christ, is also the proper relation of Christians one to another"⁸⁵ his judgment is sound, but it applies in either case; i.e. the Elder may have been thinking more pastorally than personally whether he was writing to a church or a family.

It has to be agreed that more writers favour the idea of a church destination⁸⁶ than a family one.^{87,88} What, then can be said on the other side?

The view that ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ signifies an individual Christian Lady

- (1) This is "the most obvious understanding".⁸⁹
- (2) The 'family destination' theory more readily accounts for the reluctance of early Christians to use the Epistle. Guthrie writes: "A private letter written to a lady would not seem of sufficient importance to receive canonical status".⁹⁰
- (3) If 2 John was written to a church, why was it not specifically addressed? The addressee is (to the modern reader at least) referred to vaguely enough if an individual person be signified, but if a whole church be the recipient, the 'title' is practically meaningless. It is true that Bultmann claimed that 2 John was conceived of by its writer as "a 'catholic' letter",⁹¹ but the idea has not gained general approval.
- (4) Allegory was not only common in the ancient world, but, among New Testament books, it is to be discerned particularly in the Johannine corpus. "But (as Ross says) is a sustained

allegory of this kind likely in the case of so slight a letter?"⁹² There seems to be no real reason for it.⁹³

- (5) Bultmann says "whom I love in the truth" need not designate a personal tie: by so saying he implies that it can do so. Similarly, Dodd said "the love which the Presbyter has ... is not merely natural affection."⁹⁴ It was suggested above that the Elder was speaking more pastorally than personally at this point, but such a statement does not exclude a personal reference, indicating the warmth of friendship and that affinity which comes from long years as colleagues in Christian work.
- (6) If the 'lady' is a church, the distinction between her and her children would vanish. The writer says **ἘΚΛΕΚΤῆ ΚΥΡΙΑ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς** no one would normally say "To the church at X and its members". On this ground, v.13 **τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς σου τῆς Ἐκλεκτῆς** could probably apply to a church without being at all forced, but verse 1 could not.⁹⁵
- (7) The reference to children in verse 4 and the general tone of the letter are quite intelligible provided the children were in their late teens or older at the time of writing.⁹⁶ In the same way the reference to **τέκνα** in verse 13 may be taken literally.
- (8) The very preservation of 2 John may stem from its personal destination. It may owe its survival (humanly speaking) to the fact that it belonged from the beginning to the little literary corpus in the hands of Gaius. Indirectly - and probably unwillingly - Houlden bears eloquent testimony to such a possibility: " - the Second Epistle of John is a shadowy, faceless little work, and if it were necessary to declare redundant one item in the New Testament canon, it would be highly eligible".⁹⁷

Assessment of the above points is difficult. There is an elusiveness about many of them, and all (or nearly all) can be answered from the opposing benches. One sympathises with the judgment of Westcott,

that "no interpretation can be accepted as wholly satisfactory".⁹⁸ The strongest 'pro-church' arguments would appear to be those that 2 John is not to children,⁹⁹ that the addressee is composite,¹⁰⁰ and that the "new commandment" best fits a church.¹⁰¹ The most impressive 'pro-individual' arguments are the natural meaning of verses 1 and 13,¹⁰² the omission of any church name,¹⁰³ the awkwardness of the 'church'/'members' reiteration in verse 1,¹⁰⁴ and perhaps the unnecessary nature of the alleged allegory concerning a hypothetical 2 John church.¹⁰⁵

All in all, these opposing arguments almost exactly cancel one another out. In the end the simplest point of all - viz. that the writer states that he is writing to a lady - must carry the day.¹⁰⁶ As a corollary to this it is apparent that two or three points made in the foregoing are explained much more adequately by the present hypothesis than in other ways, a conclusion that is justified in respect of the lack of names, lack of an address, and the survival of the Epistle.¹⁰⁷

(C) THE 'LADY' AND GAIUS

It is beyond the power of man (with presently known documents!) to say whether or not the lady and Gaius belonged to the same church, and, more particularly, whether they were wife and husband. A few matters do point to the very real possibility of this being the case, however:

- (1) They are both what Ross calls "noble" people: "If in the recipient of 2 John we have a noble example of Christian womanhood in the first century, in this letter (3 John) we are introduced to a first century gentleman of kindred spirit."¹⁰⁸
- (2) The two letters 'fit together' in that they are addressed in complementary fashion: i.e. 2 John is to a mother plus children but not to a father; 3 John is specifically to a householder but not to a wife or children.¹⁰⁹
- (3) The letters are complementary regarding contents; it is

as if the writer reserved something for each - he could have said to Gaius what he says in 2 John about true doctrine and prohibiting false teachers on the strength of it, or to the Elect Lady what he said to Gaius by way of commendation.

Taken together, the above facts plus those that the letters are by the same author^{"10} and written (probably) on the one occasion^{"11} indicate that there is a considerable possibility (at least) that they were sent to husband and wife. If that be so, few would quarrel with the claim that they belonged to the same church!

(D) SOME PERSONAGES OF 1, 2, and 3 JOHN

It certainly cannot be proved that any of the persons discussed or addressed in any one of the Johannine Epistles is to be identified with those in any other of the books. Nor, however, can the possibility be discarded.^{"12} The indications are as follows:

(1) Unnamed characters in 1 John

These fall into two definite groups - (a) the readers, (b) those who held heretical views and who had left the fellowship;^{"13} they are also called "false prophets".^{"14}

It is quite probable that a third group, doctrinally identifiable with the heretics but not at the time of writing physically separated from the orthodox, is indicated by 2:26. The verse reads *ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανούντων ὑμῶς.*

("I have written these things to you about those who are deceiving you"). With this may be compared Houlden's translation, "those who are leading you astray",^{"15} Von Herbert Braun's statement "There are people, in great numbers, who deceive the believers",^{"16} and the A.V. rendering "concerning them that seduce you". The R.S.V. obscures the present tense by saying "those who would deceive you". The Greek implies one of two things: either that those who had already left the fellowship are now leading the faithful astray (by example or proselytization) or that

people within the fellowship are actually now leading them astray. The latter is more probable. It may be a veiled reference to Diotrephes and his convinced followers. (G.W.H. Lampe, in commenting on false prophets referred to or described in the Synoptics, Acts, 1 Cor., 1 Thess., 2 Peter and 1 John, says that they may have acted "as a kind of 'fifth column' within the community").¹¹⁷

Chapter 3, verse 7, with its injunction μη δεῖς πλανᾶτω ὑμᾶς may be simply prospective (as 2 John 10 is), or it may just as easily be understood as referring to people still within the fellowship.¹¹⁸ The same can be said of the sinner/s characterised so sharply in 3:4, 3:8, and 3:10, verses which contain what Büchsel called "the weightiest and boldest thoughts of the entire letter".^{119, 120}

(2) Unnamed characters in 2 John¹²¹

These are (a) the readers (called τέκνα in some places in both 2 John and 1 John)¹²² (b) other (unbelieving) members of the same family,¹²³ (c) the "many deceivers"¹²⁴ who "have gone out into the world"¹²⁵ (2 John 10¹²⁶ presumably refers to the same people as verse 7, though the former simply says τις).

(3) The two groups¹²⁷ in the 3 John environment

- (a) the pro-Elder group led (it would seem) by Gaius,
- (b) the anti-Elder group led by Diotrephes.

In the three Epistles as a whole, then, there are at least two anti-Elder factions. One group (indicated in 1 and 2 John) departed from the church (2:18,19, 4:1, 2 John 7). Another group was apparently still wreaking havoc within it in the 1 John situation (2:26; cf.3:7). In the 3 John picture an insubordinate group led by Diotrephes was definitely within the local church. Is it not easily possible, therefore, to identify the 1 John 2:26/3:7 group with Diotrephes and his followers? 1 John fits the situation mirrored in 2 and 3 John.¹²⁸

A hypothetical reconstruction, based on a co-ordinated view of all three books follows:

The central ('diocesan') church, presided over by the Elder, had experienced doctrinal deviation and practical immorality in certain parts of its membership. As a result of the ensuing strife a number of the unorthodox had left the fellowship. Before long the Gaius/Diotrephes church had heard of the schism: the Gaius faction advocated theological and moral purity, while the Diotrephes party had stood for theological 'toleration'. He disagreed with the Elder's handling of the situation which had led to the split. He thought that the Elder had unnecessarily alienated his opponents, he himself not recognising the need for separation from the world nor the centrality in the Faith of true Christological belief and love. Under the banner of "broad-mindedness", then, Diotrephes, a member of the local church council and an ambitious man, sought local ecclesiastical autonomy. He felt strongly that by being so narrow, so tradition-bound, the Elder had lost members from his own church. Had he been a bit more accommodating, more 'advanced' (Diotrephes contended), the tragedy might never have happened.

The Elder, not very hopeful (on the basis of past experience) of winning Diotrephes round, had written 1 John to the local church in the 'epistolary destination'. He explained in that book to the congregation (as he had presumably explained to Diotrephes before) that popular though 'advanced' (i.e. docetic) Christology might be (4:2; 2 John 7), it is not true (so 1 John 1:1-3; 4:14).

Diotrephes had lost patience with the reactionary spirit of his senior. Feeding his own ambition and rejecting the Elder's strictures and advice, he boldly sent off the 'official' missionaries, and rounded on orthodox people within his own church. Diotrephes' future policy was to proclaim a 'unilateral declaration of independence', going even to the extent of welcoming docetic heretics excluded from the central and other churches (2 John 10).

In all this he was assisted by some temporary illness of Gaius, who could be counted on to adhere loyally to the orthodox pro-Elder line.

The Elder's reaction was to strengthen what remained by writing to the church (1 John),¹²⁹ Gaius (3 John), and Gaius' wife (the 'elect lady'). Both of the latter he encourages and commends warmly.

Thus the simplest explanation, and one which appears to accord with all the facts of the three Epistles, is that all the personal details indicate that there was only ONE receiving church for all the Epistles.¹³⁰

FOOTNOTES:

- ¹ Or perhaps four if the Gaius of Romans 16:23 is to be identified with the church member at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14). See the next footnote.
- ²(1) Gaius of Macedonia, a companion of Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19:29)
- (2) Gaius from Derbe (Acts 20:4). If the variant reading - **Δουβέριος** for **Δερβείος** - were correct, this Gaius could be equated with the former (i.e. the man of Acts 19:29). See Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, U.B.S., London and New York, 1971, pages 475, 476. An unimportant fourth century work, the Apostolic Constitutions (7:46,9), names Gaius of Derbe as the person to whom 3 John was sent, and the one appointed as the first Bishop of Pergamum by John. Interestingly, Clement of Alexandria relates how the Apostle John returned from Patmos to Ephesus and carried on a wide-ranging ministry: " - in some places to establish bishops, in others to organise whole churches, in others to ordain to the clergy some one of those indicated by the Spirit". Eusebius, H.E. III:23.
- (3) Gaius of Corinth, who was baptized by Paul (1 Cor.1:14). Origen (Commentary on Romans 10:41) says that by tradition this Gaius was the first bishop of Thessalonica.
- (4) Gaius the host of Paul when Rom.16:23 was written.
- (5) The addressee of 3 John.
- ³ The copyist of the Martyrdom of Polycarp. M.Pol.22:2.
- ⁴ The Greek form "bore a somewhat Plebian stamp - " G.G. Findlay, Fellowship in the Life Eternal, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1909, page 36.
- ⁵ F.F. Bruce, Commentary, p.147.
- ⁶ Commentary, p.144; cf. Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, p.477.
- ⁷ i.e. highly respected in the Christian community.
- ⁸ Walter Bauer (Lexicon, p.839) gives as the meaning of **ὑγιαίνω** "be in good health", "be healthy (or) sound". The word may be used in any of three contexts:
- (i) of physical health, as in Mt. 8:13
- (ii) as a formula in an epistolary greeting
- (iii) figuratively with reference to Christian teaching.
- The second meaning is apposite in 3 John 2, and some writers see **ὑγιαίνω** solely in such terms in the present context - e.g. Schnackenburg (p.321) says " - the Elder particularly wishes health, and indeed out of courtesy, not because Gaius suffered from an illness". The comment is interpretative: Greville Lewis has every right to add, "John also prays that his (Gaius') physical health will continue - or does he mean 'improve'? Has Gaius

been overtaxing his strength in the Master's service?" Commentary, p.135. See also Westcott, p.236, Brooke p.182, and the discussion on p.486 of Hoskyns' The Fourth Gospel:

⁹ Bultmann, Commentary, p.95.

¹⁰ Far from claiming any official position for Gaius, Schnackenburg denies it to him: "a befriended layman" (p.312); "a prominent Christian and intimate friend of the 'Elder', but no official church person" (p.320). No reasons are given for the assessment.

¹¹ For all that it may be legitimate to conjecture that Gaius had a position of some importance in the church, since the provision of hospitality was often the privilege of leaders - see 1 Tim.3:2, Titus 1:8, and Hermas 59:27 (J.B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, MacMillan, London, 1891, p.477). Stott says: " - the Elder would hardly have written so outspokenly of Diotrephes to any but a church leader". Commentary, p.218. At the very least Gaius is to be conceived of as "a leader of his party" (Houlden, p.151; cf. Bultmann, Commentary, p.95.

¹² Though Bultmann sees an admonition directed against Gaius in verses 5 and 6. Commentary, p.98.

¹³ Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1937.

¹⁴ Article 'Diotrephes' in the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Grand Rapids, 1975, Vol. II, p.129.

¹⁵ Walter Bauer records its appearance in the writings of Thucydides: Lexicon, p.198. According to G.G. Findlay the name was found only "in noble and ancient families", and so Diotrephes "belonged to the Greek aristocracy of the old royal city" (Pergamum). Fellowship in the Life Eternal, Hodder & Stoughton, 1909, p.41.

¹⁶ p.167

¹⁷ ἔγραψα ἄν, ἔγραψα ἄν τι, ἔγραψα αὐτῇ
and ἔγραψα. None of these except the rendering in the text of the U.B.S. Greek Testament (ἔγραψά τι) or the first marginal reading has very weighty support. Metzger says: "The reading that best explains the origin of the others appears to be ἔγραψά τι, read by α^a A (B) 048 1241 1739 (Cop.sa, b0) arm. In order to prevent the reader from drawing the conclusion that an apostolic letter was lost, the reading ἔγραψα ἄν (I would have written....') was introduced into α^c 33 81 181 614 vg al. Other copyists, to avoid undue deprecation of apostolic authority, omitted τι ". A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, page 723.

¹⁸ φιλοπρωτεύω. The word is known only in Christian literature, though cognates appear in pagan writings. Bauer, Lexicon, page 868. See also W. Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, S.C.M., London, 1972, page 133. Houlden states that "power-hungry seeks to convey the distinctly perjorative flavour". Commentary, p.153. The word does not resolve the problem about whether Diotrephes is usurping or misusing office (Schnackenburg, p.327).

- ¹⁹ Whether or not **ἐκβάλλει** means formal excommunication cannot be determined. The verb may have a 'conative' sense - "he is for excommunicating them" - or it can be understood with strict literalness: "he throws them out of the church". Dodd (Commentary, p.162) favours the sense of a real excommunication in preference to either of these options, believing Diotrephes "either possessed or arrogated to himself" the required authority. Cf. G. Bornkamm's article **πρόεδρος** in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964 -.
- ²⁰ According to 1 Clement, he who is to gain God's rewards must cast aside "all unrighteousness and iniquity ... all hatred of God, pride and haughtiness, vainglory, and ambition." The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Buffalo, 1885, Vol.1, p.14. A footnote against the word "ambition" says "The reading is doubtful: some have **ἠφιλοξενίαν**, 'want of a hospitable spirit'". The passage might almost have been written for Diotrephes!
- ²¹ Commentary, pp.327 - 329.
- ²² Sometimes, but not often, Gaius is accorded a higher position than Diotrephes: Hoskyns says that it is not at all clear "that Gaius is not of equal, if not of greater, importance than Diotrephes". A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, S.P.C.K., London, 1951, page 672.
- ²³ The quotation comes from Harnack, and is seconded by Bultmann and Eduard Schweizer (Church Order in the New Testament, S.C.M., London, (E.T.) 1961, pages 127, 128). Schnackenburg treats the suggestion as a serious possibility, and Guthrie says "it is reasonable to suppose that he occupied the position of leader of this church". New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation, p.218. Floyd V. Filson, without discussion, expresses the same belief. A New Testament History, page 312. G.W.H. Lampe calls Diotrephes "the chief person in a local church ... quite possibly an early monarchical bishop." (Article - 'Church Discipline and the Epistles to the Corinthians' in Christian History and Interpretation, C.U.P., 1967, pages 360, 361). Gore called Diotrephes a bishop who was installed by John himself. Commentary, pp.231, 232. Houlden regards Diotrephes as a legitimate bishop making a stand for "congregational independence". Commentary, pp.7,8. Greville Lewis agrees (Commentary, p.138), and expresses views similar to those of J.G. Simpson, who said that Diotrephes "was becoming something of a little tin god". The Message of the Epistles, article in the Expository Times, Vol. 45, 1933/4, pp.486 - 490.
- ²⁴ 1 Clement possibly refers to the office of the episcopate, if that is what **τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς** means. The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Buffalo, 1885, p.17, and Light-foot, The Apostolic Fathers, MacMillan, London, Part I, Vol.II, pp.131,132.
- ²⁵ But see E. Schweizer, who makes the claim that, in the Johannine milieu, "There are no 'offices' except among Jesus' enemies - the Jews, Judas (John 12:6), Diotrephes(3 John 9)". Article, 'The Concept of the Church in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John', in Studies in Memory of T.W. Manson, Manchester University Press, 1959, page 237.

²⁶Commentary, p.162.

²⁷Ignatius teaches (a) that the bishop is entirely in harmony with the commandments of God (Philad.1), (b) that Christians must reverence the bishop and be in subjection to him ('Ephes.'2, Magnes.3, Smyr. 9, and Polycarp 6), (c) that nothing is to be done in the churches apart from the bishop (Magnes.7, Trall.7, Smyr. 8), (d) that the sacraments in particular must be administered by the bishop (Smyr.8).

²⁸The expression is Schnackenburg's.

²⁹S.D.F. Salmond, article 'Diotrephes' in H.D.B., T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1900.

³⁰The point which is to be proved! See above page 272 and pages 275 ff.

³¹3 John 5-8,10

³²Dodd, Commentary, pp.162,163. Kümmel says almost the same thing: "according to the opinion of the 'elder', Diotrephes has usurped an exclusive rôle, to which he has no right, in spite of his de facto rôle of leadership". Introduction, page 314. Bruce concurs: "The language suggests a self-promoted demagogue rather than a constitutional presbyteros or episkopos". Commentary, p.152.

³³A position taken above (pp. 191 ff, 207 and 214 ff). McNeile/Williams say "Diotrephes may have had Gnostic tendencies which easily fostered spiritual pride". Introduction, p.308. Houlden, on the strength of 3 John 3 and 4, classifies Diotrephes with the heretics of 1 John and 2 John. Commentary, pp.7, 8.

³⁴Kümmel, Introduction, p.314.

³⁵Commentary, p.lxxxii

³⁶Commentary, p.133

³⁷Commentary, p.161

³⁸Commentary, p.224

³⁹Commentary, p.153

⁴⁰ἐκκλησίας in 3 John 6 must mean the church to which the missionaries returned; it is irrelevant to the present issue.

⁴¹Interestingly, Bultmann discerns two groups of differing spiritual status in 1 John. He says (of 5:13): "Those addressed are the readers as believers, not the congregation as such - ". Commentary, p.83.

⁴²Dodd credits Diotrephes with majority support. Commentary, pp.162,163. Significantly, Houlden says that the dissidents in 2 John may have been in a majority (because of the tone of 2 John 4). Commentary, p.143. If such be the case, theories that 2 John is later and/or to a more remote place than 1 John obviously lose much of their force.

⁴³See Dodd, Commentary, p.161, and Wilder/Hoon (Interpreter's Bible

Vol.12) pp.209, 310, and 311.

- 44 **ὁ γαίος** (v.2) see above, p.288, note 8 and Dale Moody, *The Letters of John*, Word, Waco, Texas, 1970, page 127: (re Gaius) - "His spiritual health is better than his physical condition ... This may indicate some physical frailty or temporary illness".
- 45 Moffatt held this view, but in his case because the **τι** of 3 John 9 was equated with 2 John. Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, p.477. B.W. Bacon appears to have held the same view for the same reason. *The Making of the New Testament*, Williams and Norgate, London, pp.215, 217 (no date given). So also A.M. Hunter, *Introducing the New Testament*, S.C.M, London, 1957, p.180.
- 46 Whatever may be said about Gaius, the limits of Diotrephes' influence are hinted at in the last verse of 3 John: " - V.15 probably shows that there were followers of the elder, or at least his line of thinking, in the congregation". Bultmann, *Commentary*, pp.101,103; cf. Schnackenburg p.332.
- 47 See page 291 note 33 and the references there. Houlden very correctly affirms: "doctrinal elements are not as lacking in 3 John as may at first sight appear". That commentator goes on to remark on the six occurrences of "truth" in 3 John. *Commentary*, p.150. The quite disproportionate frequency of **ἀλήθεια** relative to the New Testament generally and its greater frequency in 3 John even than in 1 John and 2 John seems to indicate the writer's concern about the theological situation even as he wrote this book.
- 48 With reference to 1 John 2:20 ff, 2:27, and 4:1-3, Schnackenburg says, "the former rebel 'brothers' recruit around the faltering church members in order to expand their own circle". *Commentary*, p.119. In another place he says of the church (i.e. at least of the 1 John church) that "the front passes directly through its own ranks". (p.151). The lines were apparently not clearly drawn at the time of writing.
- 49 See above concerning the connection with "those who deceive" in 1 John, p. 284 ff.
- 50 p. 272 above, and pp.283 ff above.
- 51 Schnackenburg reaches the same conclusion even without resolving the issue of Gaius' ignorance of Diotrephes' activities: "Gaius ... must according to the whole situation belong to the same church".
- 52 *New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation*, pp.212, 213.
- 53 **Κυρία** means a mistress, especially the mistress or lady of the house (cf the Latin Domina). **Κυρία** was sometimes used of various feminine gods - Artemis, etc.
- 54 Bultmann affirms that, as far as he is aware, all commentators insert the article; he then says "Jülicher translates correctly as 'to an elect lady'". *Commentary*, p.107.

- ⁵⁵ Earlier, Brooke had generally anticipated Guthrie's judgment:
"If the theory of individual address is maintained, it is certainly better to assume that the name is not given".
Commentary, p.168.
- ⁵⁶ Guthrie, p.213
- ⁵⁷ Commentary, p.214
- ⁵⁸ Commentary, p.145
- ⁵⁹ Perhaps even a nickname!
- ⁶⁰ As did Jerome - Moffatt, Introduction - pp.476, 477. See the discussions in the commentaries of Brooke (p.169) and Schnackenburg, (p.302).
- ⁶¹ and/or "virgins" - See Dodd, Commentary, p.xiii. In the Pistis Sophia the Apostle John is called **παρθένος** ! New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.I, p.256.
- ⁶² John uses neither **παιδία** (3 times in 1 John) nor **τέκνιά** (7 times in 1 John). Bultmann says that Christians are called **τέκνα** in other places in the New Testament and in Jewish writings (Commentary, p.108, note 5), but in the three Pauline verses he quotes and in 3 John 4 the people concerned are **τέκνα** of the apostle or Elder, i.e. of a father in the faith. By contrast, in 2 John, the **τέκνα** are children of someone else, viz. the **ἐκλεκτῆ κυρίᾳ**.
- ⁶³ Moffatt, *ibid*, p.476, note.
- ⁶⁴ Brooke, p.170
- ⁶⁵ Commentary, p.108
- ⁶⁶ Against Bultmann it can be said that if some "children" were not following "the truth", it seems that some heretics are nonetheless called "children". This does not accord with 1 John 2:19 ff or 5:21 (where deviationists are reckoned to be pagans). However, if 2 John is to an actual mother rather than a church, the problem of non-Christians still being designated "children" is solved.
- ⁶⁷ A.H. McNeile/C.S.C. Williams, An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, Oxford, 1952, p.307.
- ⁶⁸ Lewis, Commentary, p.127.
- ⁶⁹ See Brooke, p.169. McNeile/Williams also say that the subject-matter, e.g., *inter alia*, the warning against false teachers, is more suitable to a community.
- ⁷⁰ Guthrie, p.214
- ⁷¹ Dodd, Commentary, pp.143, 144.
- ⁷² See below, page 296 note 107 re Mary and Martha.
- ⁷³ 2 Cor.11:2 ff, 1 Peter 5:13 (both referring to a local church, Eph.5:29 ff, Rev. 2:19 (the universal church)).

- ⁷⁴ Ezek. 15:7; cf. Is.52:2
- ⁷⁵ Is. 62:4,5; Jer. 2:2
- ⁷⁶ Is. 54:1 ff - cf Gal.4:26
- ⁷⁷ Is. 54:4; Lam.1:1
- ⁷⁸ In two articles published in 1902 and 1905 respectively, H.J. Gibbins argued for a church destination for 2 John. He showed that it is common in Isaiah 54 and 55 and in Baruch 4 and 5 for Israel to be represented symbolically by a mother and children or a mother only or children only. The same kind of thinking (he said) lies behind the use of **ἘΚΛΕΚΤΟῖΣ** and **ΣΥΝΕΚΛΕΚΤῆ** in the opening and closing sections of 1 Peter and **ἘΚΛΕΚΤῆ** and **ΚΥΡΙΑ** in the salutations of 2 John. The obvious difference from the Jewish books is that "in 2 John as in 1 Peter the prophetic figure of a woman to represent a community has been transferred to a Christian Church". 'The Problem of the Second Epistle of St. John', Expositor, 6th Series, 12 (1905), pages 412 - 424, and the somewhat less important earlier article, 'The Second Epistle of St. John', Expositor, 6th Series, 6 (1902), pages 228 - 236. The obvious questions go unanswered: (a) Why so obscure a method of writing for so slight a book as 2 John? (b) Why 2 John only, and not the other 'Johannine' books (viz. 1 John, 3 John, and the seven letters of Revelation 2 and 3)?
- ⁷⁹ "'Lady' has also been proved as a honorary designation of a political community (Kuria Patris), and appears to have gone over from the profane sphere to the church." Schnackenburg, p.306. F.F. Bruce comments on 2 John 1: "Cf. also the disconsolate female figure 'Captive Judaea' on Roman coins celebrating the fall of Jerusalem and suppression of the Jewish revolt". The Epistles of John, page 145.
- ⁸⁰ Guthrie, p.214
- ⁸¹ 3 John 4
- ⁸² Kümmel, p.313
- ⁸³ There is uncertainty over whether **ἀδελφόν** in 5:16 means a spiritual or physical brother, but in that passage there is no alternation; one or the other is meant throughout. See Stott, pp.189,190.
- ⁸⁴ Stott, p.201. Obviously it is very inappropriate to go further and to consider (as J. Rendel Harris did in the 'Expositor' of 1901) that 2 John was "virtually a love-letter".
- ⁸⁵ Commentary, p.146
- ⁸⁶ Thus Lightfoot (St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, Zondervan, 1970, page 305), Westcott, Bernard Weiss (A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament, Hodder & Stoughton,

London, 1896, p.199), Brooke, Gore, R.W. Stewart ("1 - 2 Timothy, Titus, 1-3 John" in the Speaker's Bible, edited by Edward Hastings, Aberdeen, 1942, page 119), G.T. Purves/H.S. Gehman (The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, Collins, 1944, pages 320,321), Blagden (The Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude, C.U.P., 1929, pages 56 and 75), T.W. Manson (A Companion to the Bible, T.& T.Clark, Edinburgh, 1939, page 124), Dodd, Clogg (An Introduction to the New Testament, Hodder & Stoughton, 1948), Hoskyns (2 John in A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, edited by Gore, Goudge, and Guillaume, S.P.C.K., 1951, page 671), McNeile/Williams, Wilder/Hoon (Interpreter's Bible), E. Schweizer (article 'The Concept of the Church in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John', in Studies in Memory of T.W. Manson, Manchester University Press, 1959, pages 244, 245), Love (I, II, III John, Jude, Revelation, Layman's Bible Commentaries, S.C.M., 1960), William Barclay (The Letters of John and Jude, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1960, pages 161,162), Ernst Haenchen, Lewis, George B. Caird ('John, Letters of', The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by G.A. Buttrick, Abingdon, Nashville, 1962,2, pages 947 and 949), F.C. Grant (The Epistles of John, Nelson's Bible Commentary, Nelson, New York, 1962), William Neil (One Volume Bible Commentary, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1962, page 531), I.H. Marshall (article, 'John, Epistles of', New Bible Dictionary, I.V.F., London, 1962, page 644), Schnackenburg, Stott, R.R. Williams (The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, C.U.P., 1965, pages 12 and 63), Kümmel, R.E. Brown ('Epistles of John' entry in New Catholic Encyclopedia, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1967, Vol.7, pages 1078-1080), Bultmann, Filson ('First John: Purpose and Message', Interpretation, 23, 1969, pages 259 - 276), Ralph Russell (1, 2, and 3 John in A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, edited by R.C. Fuller, Nelson, London, 1969, page 1261), Bruce, Dale Moody (The Letters of John, Word, Waco, Texas, 1970, pages 15, 16, and 119), Houlden, and Drumwright (article 'Elect Lady' in Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, 1975). Sometimes the 'church' is reckoned to be that of Pergamum - see George Johnston, 'I, II, and III John' in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, edited by M. Black, Nelson, 1962, page 1039.

⁸⁷Henry & Scott (A Commentary on the Holy Bible, Romans to Revelation, Religious Tract Society, London, 1835, page 573), F.D. Maurice (The Epistles of John, MacMillan, London and New York, 1893), William Alexander (The Expositor's Bible, The Epistles of John, 1901), S.D.F. Salmond (Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, 1902-4, Vol.II, page 741), H.A. Ironside (Addresses on the Epistles of John, Loizeaux Brothers, New York, 1930,1), J.G. Simpson (Expository Times, Vol. 45, 1933/4, pages 486-490), G.T. Manley (The New Bible Handbook, I.V.P., London, 1950, page 404), Ross, Charles C. Ryrie (Johannine Epistles entry in the Wycliffe Bible Commentary, edited by C.F. Pfeiffer and E.F. Harrison, Moody Press, 1962, page 1479), Donald Guthrie, Leo G. Cox (The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1966, page 315) and Leon Morris (New Bible Commentary Revised, edited by D. Guthrie & J.A. Motyer, I.V.P., 1970, pages 1270/1).

⁸⁸H. von Campenhausen takes a 'via media' regarding the 'lady': "A small group of spiritual elect within the congregation". Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power, London, 1969, p.140.

- ⁸⁹ Guthrie, page 213. Ross agrees: "The first impression made on us by that form of address and by the whole tone of the letter is undoubtedly this, that it was written to an individual, to some outstanding lady of Asia Minor." Commentary, page 129.
- ⁹⁰ P.215. Earlier, on pp. 206 ff, Guthrie summarises the growing use and acceptance of 2 John by the early church.
- ⁹¹ Commentary, p.108
- ⁹² Commentary, p.129
- ⁹³ Still less is there a reason if 1, 2, and 3 John belong together. Moreover, the fact that 3 John is addressed to an individual perhaps suggests that 2 John is also.
- ⁹⁴ Commentary, p.146, see above p. 281
- ⁹⁵ See the discussion in Ross's Commentary, pp.129,130.
- ⁹⁶ Cf. point (4) on page 279
- ⁹⁷ Commentary, p.139
- ⁹⁸ Commentary, p.214
- ⁹⁹ Point (6) on page 279
- ¹⁰⁰ Point (7) on page 279
- ¹⁰¹ Point (12) on page 280
- ¹⁰² (1) on page 281
- ¹⁰³ (3) on page 281
- ¹⁰⁴ (6) on page 282
- ¹⁰⁵ (4) on page 281
- ¹⁰⁶ So J.G. Simpson, after discussing the possibility of a church destination for 2 John: " - it seems to me far more natural to suppose that the obvious suggestion of the letter itself, that it was addressed to a household, is correct -". The Message of the Epistles, Expository Times, Vol.45, 1933/4, p.486.
- ¹⁰⁷ Theories that the 'lady' is Mary the mother of Jesus because of her supposed residence in Asia on the strength of John 19:27, or Martha (Aramaic for 'lady') are unprofitable conjecture.
- ¹⁰⁸ Commentary, p.130. See also the identical terms employed in the greetings of 2 John 1 and 3 John 1 $\delta\upsilon\varsigma$ ($\delta\acute{\nu}$) $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ $\lambda\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{\omega}$ $\epsilon\nu$ $\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$.
- ¹⁰⁹ See p.8
- ¹¹⁰ See Chapter 1, above
- ¹¹¹ See Chapter 2, above.

¹¹² Though fanciful "identifications" involving other New Testament books must be discarded; see pp. 45 ff above.

¹¹³ i.e. the "antichrists", 2:18,19

¹¹⁴ 1 John 4:1 ff. "The false teachers are now called 'pseudo-prophets' no doubt because 'prophet' is a person who speaks in the Spirit of God, and these deceivers falsely represent themselves as Spirit-filled". Schnackenburg, p.219. Dodd says that the false prophets had a wider hearing than the orthodox. Commentary, pp.xviii, xix. In particular 1 John 4:5 (ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν ἀκούει) supports Dodd's judgment.

¹¹⁵ Commentary, p.75

¹¹⁶ Literar-Analyse und theologische Schichtung im ersten Johannesbrief, p.287.

¹¹⁷ Article 'Church Discipline in the Epistles to the Corinthians', in Christian History and Interpretation C.U.P., 1967, p.360.

¹¹⁸ Schnackenburg is convinced (on linguistic grounds) that "actual opponents and seducers are envisaged" in 1 John 3:7. Commentary, p.184.

¹¹⁹ See Schnackenburg, p.184

¹²⁰ It would be difficult to find a more exact description of Diotrephes and his frame of mind than that of Schnackenburg when he is commenting on 1 John 4:17 : The writer "denies ... that the ἀγάπη Θεοῦ can abide in a Christian who turns away his needy brother from the door-step of his heart". p.200.

¹²¹ Strictly, of course, the Elder is not named either.

¹²² Five times in 1 John, 3 times in 2 John, and once in 3 John.

¹²³ See 2 John 4. It should be noted, however, that the implied "some" could conceivably be connected with εὐρηκᾶ rather than "following the truth". Bruce, Commentary, p.139.

¹²⁴ The word πλάνος may mean a wanderer, vagabond, juggler, deceiver, or impostor. Probably the last two meanings (a deceiver teaches wrongly; an impostor masquerades) are both apt in 2 John 7. E.W. Bullinger, A Critical Lexicon and Concordance, Bagster, London, 9th Edition, 1969, p.210. Braun says that the πλανῶν word-group "carries on eschatological accent". Literar Analyse - p.288.

¹²⁵ Such people probably left the church finally, but they may have been aping true Christians as the latter followed the commission of Christ to go out as missionaries. Stott, p.208.

¹²⁶ The verse says that the heretics are not to be received "εἰς οἰκίαν - into the house church perhaps, or given hospitality in a Christian's home". C.K. Barrett, article 'Conversion and Conformity: the Freedom of the Spirit and the Institutional Church' in Christ and Spirit in the New Testament, C.U.P., 1973, p.375.

- ¹²⁷ Additionally, (1) unnamed ἔθνη Gentile individuals, are referred to in 3 John 7. The term is quite general, and does not denote any particular group (cf. Mt.18:17). J.A.T. Robinson says that "in III John 7 - the word is used in its typically Jewish contemptuous sense of 'the heathen'. Twelve New Testament Studies, Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 34, S.C.M., 1962, p.132.
- (2) Demetrius and other itinerant missionaries, plainly 'pro-Elder', must be included: "Demetrius is presumably an active figure in one of the deputations in view - ". Wilder/Hoon, Interpreter's Bible, 1957, page 312.

¹²⁸ See p.272

¹²⁹ Hence 3 John 9

¹³⁰ One receiving church; there was also the 'diocesan' church, and possibly others in the area with similar problems, though perhaps not so acute, as they had no Diotrephes!

FINAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The hypothesis advanced in the opening pages of this study amounted in essence to the claim that the Johannine Epistles were complementary writings, that all were written at one time 'by one writer' and to one place dealing with one main problem. The problem had the two aspects of doctrinal error and sub-Christian behaviour: the treatment in the Epistles is refutation combined with a many-sided positive presentation of Christian life as it should be.

While the questions posed by the Epistles can never be answered with absolute certainty, an examination seems to support the various aspects of the thesis with a varying degree of historical probability: the 'single author' contention of chapter 1 is strong, and so are the claims based on structure² and the nature of the error.³ Common dating is unprovable⁴, but fairly likely. The pattern of events⁵ and position and status of persons⁶ fit the hypothesis admirably, but they do not exclude other possibilities.

While enjoying less than proof, then, the hypothesis has opened up a fascinating field for further enquiry, particularly in the areas of the richness and manysidedness of first century church life⁷ in the 'Johannine' environment. It co-ordinates the previously unco-ordinated, poorly co-ordinated, or allegedly unco-ordinatable.

It constitutes what Aristotle might have called a 'probable-possible'.

FOOTNOTES:

¹The Fourth Gospel was included at these points; the study of its structure was also important. See above, Chapters 2, 1, and 3 respectively.

²Chapter 3

³Chapter 4

⁴Chapter 2

⁵Chapter 5

⁶Chapter 6

⁷especially personal relations and church discipline. For more details of the consequences of the hypothesis, see above, pages 3 and 50 to 52 .

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

- ABBOTT, EDWIN A. Johannine Grammar, A.& C.Black, London, 1906.
- ABBOT-SMITH, G. A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament,
T.& T.Clark, Edinburgh, (3rd Edition) 1937.
- ALBRIGHT, W.F. (Article) 'Recent Discoveries in Palestine and
the Gospel of St. John', in The Background of
the New Testament and its Eschatology, C.U.P.,
1964.
- ALEXANDER, NEIL The Epistles of John, Torch Bible Commentaries,
S.C.M., London, 1962.
- ALEXANDER, WILLIAM The Epistles of John, Expositor's Bible,
Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1901.
- ALLEGRO, JOHN The Dead Sea Scrolls, a Reappraisal, Pelican
Paperback (2nd Edition), 1964.
- APOCALYPSE of PAUL New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.2 (E.T. edited
by R. McL. Wilson), Lutterworth, London, 1965,
pp.775 ff.
- APOCALYPSE of PETER New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.2 (ET. edited
by R. McL. Wilson), Lutterworth, London, 1965,
pp.663 ff.
- APOCRYPHON of JOHN New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.1 (E.T. edited
by R. McL. Wilson), S.C.M., 1963, pp.314 ff.
- B.G.U. 27 (contained in C.K. Barrett's 'The New Testament
Background: Selected Documents'; see below)
- BACON, B.W. Making the New Testament, Williams & Norgate,
London.
- BARCLAY, WILLIAM The Letters of John & Jude, The Saint Andrew
Press, Edinburgh, 1960.
- BARNABAS, EPISTLE The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.1, (edited by
A. Cleveland Coxe), The Christian Literature
Publishing Company, Buffalo, 1885, pp.133 ff.
- BARRETT, C.K. (Article) 'Conversion and Conformity' in Christ
and Spirit in the New Testament, C.U.P., 1973.
- BARRETT, C.K. The Gospel According to St. John, S.P.C.K.,
London, 1955.
- BARRETT, C.K. The Gospel of John and Judaism, S.P.C.K., London,
1975.
- BARRETT, C.K. The New Testament Background: Selected Documents,
S.P.C.K., London, 1961.

- BARTH, KARL Church Dogmatics, 1/2 (editors of E.T.-G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance), T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1956, p.379.
- BARUCH Apocrypha (Revised Version).
- BAUER, WALTER A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature (Tr. by Arndt and Gingrich), University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- BAUER, WALTER Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, S.C.M., London, 1972.
- BERGMEIER, ROLAND Zum Verfasserproblem des 2 und 3 Johannesbriefes, Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde die älteren Kirche, 57, 1966, pp. 93-100.
- BETTENSON, HENRY Documents of the Christian Church (2nd Edition), Oxford, 1963.
- BIRDSALL, J.N. (Article) 'The New Testament Text' in The Cambridge History of the Bible, C.U.P., 1970.
- BLAGDEN, CLAUDE M. The Epistles of Peter, John and Jude, C.U.P., 1929.
- BOICE, J.M. Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1970.
- BORNKAMM, GÜNTHER *προβύς* in The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1964 -.
- BOUSSET, WILHELM Kyrios Christos (Tr. by John E. Steely) Nashville, Abingdon, New York, 1970.
- BRAUN, VON HERBERT Literar-Analyse und theologische Schichtung im ersten Johannesbrief, Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 48 (1951), pp.262-292.
- BROOKE, A.E. I.C.C.; A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1912.
- BROWN, RAYMOND E. The Gospel According to John (2 Volumes), Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1966.
- BROWN, RAYMOND E. (Article) 'Epistles of St. John', The New Catholic Encyclopedia, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1967, Vol.7, pp.1078 - 1080.
- BRUCE, F.F. The Epistles of John, Revell, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1970.

- BRUCE, F.F. The Epistle to the Hebrews, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London, 1964.
- BRUCE, F.F. (Article) 'The Spirit in the Apocalypse' in Christ and the Spirit in the New Testament, C.U.P., 1973.
- BRUNS, J. Edgar (Article) 'A Note on John 16:33 and 1 John 2:13-14', Journal of Biblical Literature 86, 1967, pp.451 - 453.
- BULLINGER, E.W. A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek Testament, Bagster, (9th Edition) 1969.
- BULTMANN, RUDOLF (Article) Analyse des ersten Johannesbriefes in Festgabe für Adolf Jülicher, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1927, pp.138 - 158.
- BULTMANN, RUDOLF Das Evangelium Johannes, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1964.
- BULTMANN, RUDOLF (E.T. of the preceding) The Gospel of John (Tr. by Beasley-Murray), Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1971..
- BULTMANN, RUDOLF The Johannine Epistles (edited by R.W. Funk), Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1973.
- BULTMANN, RUDOLF Die kirchliche Redaktion des ersten Johannesbriefes, in In Memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer, Evangelisches Verlagswerk, Stuttgart, 1951.
- BULTMANN, RUDOLF Theology of the New Testament (Tr. by Kendrick Grobel) S.C.M., London, 1952..
- CAIRD, GEORGE B. (Article) 'John, letters of' in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (edited by G.A. Buttrick), Abingdon, Nashville, 1962.
- CAMPENHAUSEN, H. VON Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries, A. & C. Black, London, 1969.
- CAMPENHAUSEN, H. VON The Formation of the Christian Bible (Tr. by J.A. Baker), A. & C. Black, London, 1972.
- CHAPMAN, DOM (Article) 'The Historical Setting of the Second and Third Epistles of St. John', The Journal of Theological Studies, 1904, pp.357 ff and 517 ff.
- CHARLESWORTH, J.H. The Odes of Solomon, Clarendon, Oxford, 1973.
- CLAPPERTON, J. ALEX 'Τὴν Ἀμφοτίαν (1 John 3:4)' Expository Times 47 (1935-6), pp.92,93.

- CLEMENT of ALEXANDRIA Eusebius, H.E., Book 3.
- CLEMENT of ROME The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1 (edited by A. Cleveland Coxe), The Christian Literature Publishing Company, Buffalo, 1885, pp.5 ff.
- CLOGG, F.B. An Introduction to the New Testament, Hodder & Stoughton, London, (3rd Edition), 1948.
- COX, LEO G. The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1966.
- COMMUNITY RULE Dead Sea Scrolls (see Vermes - below)
- CRIBBS, F. LAMAR (Article)'A Reassessment of the Date of Origin and the Destination of the Gospel of John', Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 89, 1970.
- CULLMANN, OSCAR The Johannine Circle, (E.T.), S.C.M., London, 1976.
- DEEKS, DAVID (Article)'The Structure of the Fourth Gospel', New Testament Studies, Vol. 15, 1968/9, pp.107 ff.
- DEISSMANN, ADOLF Light from the Ancient East, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1910.
- DE JONGE, M. (Review of J.L. Houlden's Commentary), The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 28, 1975, p.83.
- DE JONGE, M. (Article) 'The Use of the word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ in the Johannine Epistles' in Studies in John, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1970.
- DIDACHÉ The Apostolic Fathers, J.B. Lightfoot, Mac-Millan, London, 1891, pp.215 - 235.
- DOBSON, JOHN H. (Article) 'Emphatic Personal Pronouns in the New Testament', Bible Translator, 22, 1971, pp.58 - 60.
- DODD, C.H. The Bible and the Greeks, Hodder & Stoughton, London (3rd Impression), 1964.
- DODD, C.H. (Article) 'The First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel' in the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, April 1937.
- DODD, C.H. Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, C.U.P., 1965.
- DODD, C.H. The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, Cambridge, 1953.
- DODD, C.H. The Johannine Epistles, Moffatt New Testament Commentary Series, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1946.

- DRUMWRIGHT, H.L. (Article) 'Elect Lady' in The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, 1975.
- DUENSING, H. Epistula Apostolorum, New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.1. (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), S.C.M., pp.189 - 194.
- DUNN, JAMES D.G. Jesus and the Spirit, S.C.M., London, 1975.
- EBRARD, J.H.A. The Epistles of John (Tr. by W.B. Pope), T. & T. Clark, London, 1860.
- EGERTON 2 (see J. JEREMIAS - below)
- EPISTULA APOSTOLORUM New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.1 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), S.C.M., pp.189 - 194.
- EUSEBIUS The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus (Tr. by C.F. Crusé) George Bell, London and New York, 1894.
- EVANS, C.F. (Review of 'St. John's Gospel', R.H. Lightfoot) Hibbert Journal, Vol. 56 (1957-8).
- EVANS, C.F. (Review of Bultmann's Commentary on the Fourth Gospel) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 26, 1973.
- EVANS, C.F. (Article) 'The New Testament in the Making' in The Cambridge History of the Bible, Vol.1, C.U.P., 1970.
- FEUILLET, ANDRÉ (Article) 'The Structure of First John. Comparison with the Fourth Gospel. The Pattern of Christian Life' in Biblical Theology Bulletin, Vol.3, June 1973, No. 2, pp.194 - 216.
- FILSON, FLOYD V. (Article) 'First John: Purpose and Message', Interpretation 23, 1969, pp.259 - 276.
- FILSON, FLOYD V. A New Testament History, S.C.M., London, 1965.
- FINDLAY, GEORGE G. Fellowship in the Life Eternal, Hodder & Stoughton; London, 1909.
- FRANCIS, FRED O. (Article) 'The Form & Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and 1 John' in Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche, 61, 1970, pp.110 - 126.
- FUNK, ROBERT (Article) 'The Form and Structure of 2 and 3 John' in Journal of Biblical Literature, 86, 1967, pp.424 - 430.

- GIBBINS, H.J. (Article) 'The Problem of the Second Epistle of St. John' in Expositor, 6th Series, 12 (1905), pp.412 - 424.
- GIBBINS, H.J. (Article) 'The Second Epistle of St. John' in Expositor, 6th Series 6 (1902), pp.228 - 236.
- GOODENOUGH, E.R. (Article) 'John a Primitive Gospel' in Journal of Biblical Literature, 1945, pp.145 - 182.
- GORE, CHARLES The Epistles of John, John Murray, London, 1920.
- GOSPEL OF THOMAS 'Thomas and The Evangelists', H.E.W. Turner & Hugh Montifiore, S.C.M., London, 1962.
- GOSPEL OF TRUTH New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.1 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), S.C.M., pp.523 ff.
- GRANT, F.C. The Epistles of John, Nelson's Bible Commentaries, Nelson, New York, 1962.
- GRANT, R.M. Gnosticism: An Anthology, Collins, 1961.
- GRANT, R.M. Gnosticism and Early Christianity, Columbia University Press, 1966.
- GRANT, ROBERT A Historical Introduction to the New Testament (Fontana Edition), 1971.
- GUTHRIE, DONALD New Testament Introduction, Gospels and Acts, Tyndale, London, 1964.
- GUTHRIE, DONALD New Testament Introduction, Hebrews to Revelation, Tyndale, London, 1964.
- GUTHRIE, DONALD New Testament Introduction, Pauline Epistles, Tyndale, London, 1964.
- GUY, HAROLD A. The Gospel and Letters of John, Mac Millan, London, 1963.
- HAENCHEN, ERNST Neuere Literatur zu den Johannesbriefe, Theologische Rundschau 26, 1960, pp. 1 - 43, 267 - 291.
- HARRIS, J. RENDEL (Article) 'The Problem of the Address in the Second Epistle of John', Expositor, 6th Series 3 (1901), pp.194 - 203.
- HENDRIKSEN, WILLIAM John, Banner of Truth, 1954.
- HENRY & SCOTT A Commentary on the Holy Bible, Romans to Revelation, Religious Tract Society, London, 1835.

- HERMAS The Shepherd, J.B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, Mac Millan, London and New York, 1891.
- HILL, DAVID Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings, C.U.P., 1967.
- HOSKYNS, EDWYN The Fourth Gospel (edited by Francis Noel Davey), Faber and Faber, London, 1947.
- HOSKYNS, EDWYN The Johannine Epistles section in A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, S.P.C.K., London, 1951.
- HOWARD, W.F. Christianity According to St. John, Duckworth, London, 1943.
- HOWARD, W.F. (Article) 'The Common Authorship of the Johannine Gospel and Epistles', Journal of Theological Studies, O.S. 48 (1947), pp.12 - 25.
- HOWARD, W.F. The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, Epworth, London, 1945.
- HOULDEN, J.L. A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles, Black's New Testament Commentaries, 1973.
- HUNTER, A.M. The Gospel According to John, C.U.P., 1965.
- HUNTER, A.M. Introducing the New Testament, (Third Revised Edition), S.C.M., 1972.
- IGNATIUS Epistles to the EPHESIANS, MAGNESIANS, PHILADELPHIANS, ROMANS, SMYRNAEANS, TRALLIANS and POLYCARP, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.1, (edited by A. Cleveland Coxe), The Christian Literature Publishing Company, Buffalo, 1885.
- IRENÆUS Adversus Haereses, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.1, (edited by A. Cleveland Coxe), The Christian Literature Publishing Company, Buffalo, 1885, pp.309 ff.
- IRONSIDE, H.A. Addresses on the Epistles of John, Loizeaux Brothers/Western Book & Tract Co., New York and Oakland, 1930/1.
- JAMES, A.G. (Article) 'Jesus our Advocate', Expository Times, Vol. 39, 1928, pp.473 - 475.
- JEREMIAS, J. (Section on EGERTON 2), New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.1 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), S.C.M., London, pp.94 ff.
- JOHNSTON, GEORGE (Section on 1, 2 and 3 John) Peake's Commentary on the Bible (edited by Matthew Black), Nelson, 1962.
- JONAS, HANS The Gnostic Religion, Beacon Press Paperback, Boston, 1963.

- JOSEPHUS Antiquities of the Jews, Josephus, Complete Works (Tr. by William Whiston), Pickering and Inglis, London, 1960, pp.23 ff.
- KÄSEMANN, ERNST (Article) 'Ketzer und Zeuge. Zum johanneischen Verfasserproblem', in Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, 48 (1951), pp. 292-311.
- KÄSEMANN, ERNST The Testament of Jesus. A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17 (E.T. by Gerhard Krodel), Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1968.
- KAUDER, E. (Article) 'Antichrist' in The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, (edited by Colin Brown), Paternoster, Exeter, 1975, Vol. 1, pp. 124 - 126.
- KERUGMA PETROU New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.2 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), Lutterworth, London, 1965, pp. 94 ff.
- KILPATRICK, G.D. (Article) 'What John tells us about John,' in Studies in John, a supplement to Novum Testamentum, Vol. XXIV, pp.75 ff.
- KING, J.S. (Article) 'The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, Unsolved Problems', Expository Times, Vol.86, No. 12 (September 1975), pp. 372 - 375.
- KÜMMEL, W.G. Introduction to the New Testament (E.T. from the 14th Revised Edition), 1965, S.C.M., London.
- KÜMMEL, W.G. The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems, S.C.M., London, 1973.
- KURFESS, A. New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.2 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), Lutterworth, London, 1965, pp.133 ff.
- KYSAR, ROBERT The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1975.
- LADD, GEORGE ELDON A Theology of the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1974.
- LAMPE, G.W.H. (Article) 'Church Discipline in the Epistles to the Corinthians' in Christian History and Interpretation: Studies presented to John Knox, C.U.P., 1967.
- LAODICEANS, EPISTLE to New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 2 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), Lutterworth, London, 1965.

- LAW, ROBERT The Tests of Life. A Study of the First Epistle of St. John, Clark, Edinburgh, 1909.
- LEWIS, GREVILLE P. The Johannine Epistles, Epworth, London, 1961.
- LIGHTFOOT, J.B. The Apostolic Fathers, MacMillan, London, 1891.
- LIGHTFOOT, J.B. St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, Zondervan, 1970.
- LINDARS, BARNABAS Behind the Fourth Gospel, S.P.C.K., London, 1971.
- LINDARS, BARNABAS The Gospel of John, Oliphants, London, 1972.
- LOVE, J.P. 1, 2, 3 John, Jude, Revelation, Layman's Bible Commentaries, S.C.M., London, 1960.
- 1 MACCABEES REVISED VERSION
- MALATESTA, EDWARD The Epistles of St. John, Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, 1973.
- MANLEY, G.T. The New Bible Handbook, I.V.P., London, 1950.
- MANSON, T.W. A Companion to the Bible, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1939.
- MANSON, T.W. (Article) 'Entry into Membership of the Early Church' in the Journal of Theological Studies, 48, 1947, pp.25 - 33.
- MANSON, T.W. On Paul & John, S.C.M., 1963.
- MARSHALL, I.H. (Article) 'John, Epistles of' in The New Bible Dictionary, I.V.F., London, 1962.
- MARTYRDOM of POLYCARP Martyrdom of Polycarp - Eusebius' H.E., Book IV, Chapter 15.
- MAURER, CH. The Apocalypse of Peter, New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 2 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), Lutterworth, London, 1965.
- MAURICE, F.D. The Epistles of John, MacMillan, London and New York, 1893.
- McNEILE, A.H. and WILLIAMS, C.S.C. An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, (second edition), Clarendon, Oxford, 1953.
- MEEKS, WAYNE A. (Article) 'The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism' in Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 91, 1972, pp. 44 - 72.
- METZGER, BRUCE M. The Text of the New Testament, Clarendon, Oxford, (2nd Edition), 1968.

- METZGER, BRUCE M. A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, U.B.S., London and New York, 1971.
- MINEAR, PAUL S. (Article) 'The Idea of Incarnation in First John' in Interpretation, 24, 1970, pp.291 - 302.
- MOFFATT, JAMES An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1912.
- MOODY, DALE The Letters of John, Waco, Texas, Word, 1970.
- MORRIS, LEON The Gospel According to John, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1971.
- MORRIS, LEON (Section on the Johannine Epistles) The New Bible Commentary Revised (edited by D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer) I.V.P., 1970.
- MOULE, C.F.D. An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek, C.U.P., 1953.
- MOULE, C.F.D. (Article) 'The Individualism of the Fourth Gospel' in Novum Testamentum, Vol. 5, 1962.
- MOULE, C.F.D. (Article) 'A Neglected Factor in the Interpretation of Johannine Eschatology' in the supplementary volume to Novum Testamentum, Vol. 24, pp.155 ff.
- MOUTON, RICHARD G. The Literary Study of the Bible, Heath, Boston, 1899.
- MOULTON & GEDEN A Concordance to the Greek Testament, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1897.
- MURATORIAN CANON (contained in Documents of the Christian Church - see HENRY BETTENSON, above).
- MURRAY, GILBERT Five Stages of Greek Religion, Clarendon, Oxford, 1925.
- NAUCK, WOLFGANG Die Tradition und der Charakter des ersten Johannesbriefes zugleich ein Beitrag zur Taufe im Urchristentum und in der alten Kirche, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 3, Mohr-Siebeck, Tübingen, 1957.
- NEIL, WILLIAM One Volume Bible Commentary, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1962.
- NEW BIBLE DICTIONARY I.V.F., London, 1962.
- NOACK, BENT (Article) 'On 1 John 2:12-14', New Testament Studies, 6, 1959/60, pp.236 - 241.
- NUNN, H.P.V. (Article) 'The First Epistle of St. John', Evangelical Quarterly, 17, 1945, pp.296 - 303.

- OKE, C. CLARE (Article) 'The Plan of the First Epistle of John', Expository Times, 51, 1939/40, pp.347 - 350.
- O'NEILL, J.C. The Puzzle of 1 John. A New Examination of Origins , S.P.C.K., London, 1966.
- ORR, J. (Article) 'Love', Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 3, 1900. pp. 153 - 157.
- OXFORD DICTIONARY of the CHRISTIAN CHURCH O.U.P., London, 1957.
- PAINTER, JOHN John: Witness and Theologian, S.P.C.K., London, 1975.
- PAPIAS Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord (found in Eusebius' H.E. 3:39).
- PARKER, PIERSON (Article) ' Two Editions of John', Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 75, 1956, pp. 303 ff.
- PAUL & SENECA (Spurious Correspondence) New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 2 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), Lutterworth, London, 1965.
- PERRIN, NORMAN The New Testament, An Introduction, Harcourt Bruce Jovanovich, New York, 1974.
- PESCH, RUDOLF (Article) ' Antichrist' in Encyclopedia of Theology (edited by Karl Rahner), Burns & Oates, London, 1975.
- PEUCH, HENRI-CHARLES (on the Apocryphon of John), New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 1 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), S.C.M., London, 1963, pp. 314 ff.
- PISTIS SOPHIA New Testament Apocrypha, Vol, 1 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), S.C.M., London, 1963, pp. 250 ff.
- PLUMMER, ALFRED The Epistles of S. John, C.U.P., 1886.
- POLYCARP Epistle to the Philippians, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1 (edited by A. Cleveland Coxe), The Christian Literature Publishing Company, Buffalo, 1885, pp. 31 ff.
- PS. CYPRIAN New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 2 (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), Lutterworth, London, 1965, pp. 91, 92.
- PURVES, G.T. and GEHMAN, H.S. (Article) 'John, The Epistles of', The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, Collins, 1944.

- QUMRAN HYMNS (contained in G. VERMES' The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, Pelican Paperback, 1968).
- REV. E G. 1919 (contained in C.K. BARRETT's 'The New Testament Background : Selected Documents' - see above).
- RICHARDSON, ALAN Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, S.C.M., London, 1958.
- ROBINSON, JOHN A.T. The Human Face of God, S.C.M., London, 1972.
- ROBINSON, JOHN A.T. Redating the New Testament, S.C.M., London, 1976.
- ROBINSON, JOHN A.T. Twelve New Testament Studies, Studies in Biblical Theology, 1st Series, 34, S.C.M., London, 1962.
- ROBINSON, JOHN A.T. (Article) 'The Use of the Fourth Gospel for Christology Today' in Christ and Spirit in the New Testament, C.U.P., 1973.
- ROSS, ALEXANDER The Epistles of James and John, The New London Commentary, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London and Edinburgh, 1954.
- RUSSELL, RALPH (The section) '1, 2 and 3 John' in A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture (edited by R.C. Fuller), Nelson, London, 1969.
- RYRIE, CHARLES C. (The section on the Epistles of John) The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (edited by C.F. Pfeiffer and E.F. Harrison), Moody Press, 1962.
- SALMOND, S.D.F. (Article) 'Diotrephes' in Dictionary of the Bible (edited by James Hastings), T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1900.
- SALMOND, S.D.F. (Article) 'Epistles of John' in A Dictionary of the Bible (edited by James Hastings), T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1902-4, Vol. 2, pp. 728 - 742.
- SANDERS, J.N. The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church, C.U.P., 1943.
- SANDERS, J.N./
MASTIN, B.A. A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John, A. & C. Black, London, 1968.
- SCHNACKENBURG, RUDOLF The Gospel According to St. John, Herder and Herder, New York, (Vol.1), 1968.
- SCHNACKENBURG, RUDOLF Die Johannesbriefe. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 13, 3, Freiburg, (4th Edition) 1970.
- (N.B. When the name 'SCHNACKENBURG' appears alone in the thesis it indicates 'Die Johannesbriefe').

- SCHNACKENBURG, RUDOLF The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, Burns & Oates, London, (E.T.), 1965.
- SCHNEEMELCHER, W. (Section on 'Epistles'). The New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 2, (E.T. edited by R. McL. Wilson), Lutterworth, London, 1965, pp. 88 ff.
- SCHWEIZER, E. Church Order in the New Testament, (E.T.) S.C.M., London, 1961.
- SCHWEIZER, E. (Article) 'The Concept of the Church in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John' in Studies in Memory of T.W. Manson, Manchester University Press, 1959.
- SHORTER OXFORD
DICTIONARY 3rd Edition (Revised with Addenda: edited by C.T. Onions), 1956, Clarendon, Oxford.
- SIBINGA, J. SMIT (Article) 'A Study in 1 John' in Studies in John, a supplement to Novum Testamentum, Vol. XXIV, pp.194 ff.
- SIMPSON, J.G. (Article) 'The Message of the Epistles: The Letters of the Presbyter', The Expository Times, 45, 1933/4, pp.486 - 490.
- SMALLEY, STEPHEN (Review of Oscar Cullmann's book The Johannine Circle), The Expository Times, October, 1976, p.30.
- SMITH, D. MOODY, JR. (Article) 'Johannine Christianity : Some Reflections on its Character and Delineation', New Testament Studies, 21, 1974.
- SMITH, MOODY, JR. The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel, Yale University Press, 1965.
- SOBOSAN, JEFFREY (Article) 'The Rôle of the Presbyter : An Investigation into the Adversus Haereses of Saint Irenaeus', Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 27, 1974.
- STEWART, R.W. 'I - II Timothy, Titus, I-III John' in the Speaker's Bible (edited by Edward Hastings), Aberdeen, 1942.
- STOTT, JOHN R.W. Epistles of John, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, London, 1964.
- STRACHAN, R.H. (Article) 'Fourth Gospel' in Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, 1906.
- SYNGE, F.C. (Article) '1 John 3:2' in Journal of Theological Studies, N.S.3, 1952, p.79.

- TARELLI, C.C. (Article) 'Johannine Synonyms', Journal of Theological Studies, 47, 48, 1946/1947, pp. 175 - 177.
- TILDEN, ELWYN E. JR. (Article) 'The First Epistle of John', Interpretation, 4, 1950, pp.193 - 201.
- TOBIT REVISED VERSION
- TOMOI, KOZUE (Article) 'The Plan of the First Epistle of John', Expository Times, 52, 1940/41, pp. 117 - 119.
- TURNER, H.E.W. and MONTIFILORE, HUGH Thomas and the Evangelists, S.C.M., London, 1962.
- TURNER, NIGEL (Article) 'Jewish and Christian Influence on New Testament Vocabulary', Novum Testamentum, Vol. 16, 1974, pp.149 ff.
- VERMES, G. The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, Pelican Paperback, 1968.
- WAR RULE The Dead Sea Scrolls (see VERMES - above).
- WEIR, J. EMMETTE (Article) 'The Identity of the Logos in the First Epistle of John', Expository Times, January, 1975, pp.118 - 120.
- WEISS, BERNARD A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1896.
- WESTCOTT, B.F. The Epistles of John, MacMillan, London, 1883.
- WESTMINSTER DICTIONARY of THE BIBLE Collins, 1944.
- WILDER, A.N. 'The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John: Introduction and Exegesis' in The Interpreter's Bible (edited by George Buttrick et al) Abingdon, Nashville and New York, 1957, Vol. 12, pp. 207 - 313.
- WILES, M.F. The Spiritual Gospel, Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- WILLIAMS, R.R. The Letters of John and James, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, C.U.P., 1965.
- WILSON, R. McL. Gnosis and the New Testament, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1968.
- WILSON, R. McL. The Gnostic Problem, Mowbray, London, 1958.

- WILSON, W.G. (Article) 'An Examination of the Linguistic Evidence Advanced against the Unity of Authorship of the First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel', Journal of Theological Studies, O.S.49, 1948, pp.147 - 156.
- WIND, A. (Article) 'Destination and Purpose of the Gospel of John', in Novum Testamentum, Vol.14, 1972, pp. 26 ff.
- WINTER, PAUL (Review of 'The Message of the Scrolls' by Yigael Yadin) Hibbert Journal, Vol. 56, 1957/8, pp. 194, 195.
- YAMAUCHI, EDWIN Pre-Christian Gnosticism, Tyndale, London, 1973.
- ZONDERVAN PICTORIAL Grand Rapids, 1975.
ENCYCLOPEDIA of
THE BIBLE