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LITURGY AND SACRAMENT IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

by STEPHEN SMALLEY

MR. SMALLEY'S article on "The Eschatology of Ephesians" aroused much interest when it appeared in the *QUARTERLY* for July-September, 1956. His present study was prepared for a study course on St. John's Gospel held at Tyndale House, Cambridge, in the summer of last year, and we are glad to make it available to a wider circle.

"**E**GO in vita mea non legi librum simplicioribus verbis quam istum et tamen sunt inexpressibilia verba."¹ Luther's reaction to the Fourth Gospel is as easy to understand as the difficulty which baffled Goethe's Faust when he began to translate its Prologue—and we are more than willing to sympathize with both. For to raise the question of the place of sacrament in the Gospel is to raise the prior question of its view of history, which in turn fixes our attention on the matters of its date, sources and indeed, in Dodd's phrase, upon "the whole universe of discourse" within which the thought of *John* moves.² We are thus unable, again, to deal with this particular problem apart from the problem of the Fourth Gospel *in toto*.

But what *is* the problem of the Fourth Gospel? The work of Hoskyns, Dodd and Barrett in recent years has provided us with ample material for answering this question, and it is quite clear that, whatever else it may be, the primary problem of the Gospel is not the place of the Christian sacraments, nor the question of the Evangelist's historicity, but, in Hoskyns' words, the inclusive, "far more important, far more disturbing, problem of history itself and of its meaning."³ As we are being constantly reminded in current work on the Fourth Gospel, the glory of the Word made flesh is both completely historical *and* completely beyond history. Flesh must be seen as "flesh", not in the Pauline relation of "flesh versus

¹ "In all my life I have not read a book of simpler words than this, and yet they are inexpressible words."

² *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (1953), p. 3.

³ *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. F. N. Davey (2nd edn., 1947), p. 58.

spirit", but as the Johannine paradox of "flesh the carrier of Spirit" (Jn. 6: 63).

What, then, is the relation of sacrament in *John* to this central focus? It is here that we must at once define our terms of reference, for it seems to me that a failure to do this has complicated this issue more than any other in the Gospel, and left us as problematic what is in fact not a problem *per se*, but simply part of a larger consideration.

Oscar Cullmann, in the English translation of *Les Sacrements dans l'Évangile Johannique*,⁴ to which we shall return, connects, as we know, nearly everything in the Fourth Gospel with one or other of the sacraments—one is only sorry that he finds no home for Lazarus or the Nobleman's Son, though given time perhaps he will. And if we ask in what sense he is using the word "sacraments", we are left in no doubt as to the answer. In his treatment of the discourse in John 6, Cullmann says: "the author makes Jesus himself draw the line from the miracle of feeding with material bread to the miracle of the Sacrament" (p. 93)—by which he means the Eucharist (p. 94). Similarly, in the events of chapter 13 the Fourth Evangelist, according to Cullmann, establishes a direct connexion "between the *two* Sacraments, Lord's Supper and Baptism" (p. 107, italics his). Neville Clark, in the S.C.M. Biblical Theology Study *An Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments* (1956), takes John 6 even further than Cullmann: "In unmistakable terms the eucharist is set forth as the indispensable communion rite. We seem to be present at the eucharist of the early Church, hearing 'words of administration', as we listen to the solemn proclamation of the Johannine Christ: 'This is the bread which came down from heaven . . . ; he who eats this bread will live for ever'" (p. 53). It is interesting that Dodd, in a passage quoted by Clark as if it supported his argument, regards these same words of the Lord as "an expanded transcription of the 'words of institution', τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, as we have them in 1 Cor. xi. 24".⁵ These two writers, therefore, apparently equate σημεῖον and sacrament (as such), on the principle, stated by Cullmann, that "the sacraments mean the same for the Church as the miracles of the historical Jesus for his contemporaries" (*op. cit.*, p. 70). Cullmann is prepared to concede in a footnote that σημεῖον implies only a *reference* to the sacrament, not the sacra-

⁴ *Early Christian Worship* (S.C.M. Biblical Theology Study, 1953), Pt. II.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 338, italics mine; quoted Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 53, n. 8.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 70, n. 2, by a quotation from E. Gaugler.

ment itself, but in view of the way he treats his main thesis, it is questionable how much he is in fact giving away.

The point in question, surely, is not whether John 6 is a celebration of the Eucharist, or John 13 the baptism of the disciples, for the problem does not in principle, though it has become this in practice, resolve itself into an "all or nothing" scramble. The real issue, in fact, as my title suggests, is not one of sacraments, but one of sacrament. How far and in what sense is the pattern of the Fourth Gospel "sacramental"? To decide this we shall have to look briefly at the Evangelist's audience and background of thought.

The first part of Professor Dodd's recent work on the Fourth Gospel is sufficient indication of the complexity of the background of thought against which the Fourth Evangelist was writing. Apart from a number of specifically Christian presuppositions—the Church itself with its *κοινωνία*, the two primitive sacraments (significantly enough) and the primitive *κήρυγμα* (*op. cit.*, p. 6)—Dodd discovers and unweaves the strands of Rabbinic Judaism, Hellenistic Judaism represented by Philo, "Gnosticism", Mandaeism⁷ and the nexus of ideas characterized by the *Hermetica*. It is reasonable to suppose, if this is so, that the concept of a general "sacramental principle", running through all existence, was not one which would have remained a mystery to the Fourth Evangelist.

But what of his readers? C. T. Craig, in an article in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* for 1939 on "Sacramental Interest in the Fourth Gospel" (pp. 31-41), suggests that this Gospel "breathes the intimacy of the cult group", and was not written for outsiders (p. 32). The author presupposes the sacramental rites, and provides his readers with subtle teaching upon them. Professor Dodd, on the other hand, believes that the Evangelist is "subject to a self-imposed limitation. In writing for a non-Christian public he will not directly divulge the Christian 'mysteries'" (*op. cit.*, p. 342, n. 3). I wonder if in fact either is right. Cullmann himself has stressed the relation of "seeing" to "believing" which is basic to this Gospel, and has pointed out the "double" quality of each *σημεῖον*, which is fully appreciated after the Resurrection by the aid of the Holy Spirit (14: 26). The readers of the Fourth Gospel, then, are those within *or* without with eyes to see (20: 29); the desire of the Evangelist is that they

⁷ He does not, however, regard the literature of Mandaeism as outstandingly important in this connexion.

might believe (20: 31). Those within would not, *mutatis mutandis*, be unaware of the broad notion of the "sacramental" which, from the very nature of its intellectual climate, governs the thought of the whole of the Fourth Gospel; nor would they miss references to the actual Sacraments so far as these exist. Those who were not Christians would "believe" as much as they "saw".

What conditions the understanding of the Fourth Evangelist is, as Hoskyns says, "a truly Biblical realism" (*op. cit.*, p. 108). Certain facts—speech, light, darkness, water, bread, life, death and others like them—which are all facts of created existence, supply, as he says, "the fundamental material of the witness of the gospel" (*ibid.*). But they have a theological meaning, which the writer is at pains to elicit, and this meaning provides us with an interpretation of the observable world which is truly "realistic"—for the facts *are* what they symbolize. The Incarnation and the Cross are (in this sense) "signs", but they are also the thing signified.⁸ The Evangelist adopts a number of symbols, from Hellenistic Judaism and elsewhere, and thinks them through afresh in the light of the concrete reality of the Christian revelation which is centred in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Water and bread are among these symbols, and if from the Fourth Evangelist's point of view they differ in degree, they will not differ in kind from the rest.

For this reason the "Sacraments-or-no-sacraments" controversy, and the question of "sacramental indispensability" in the Fourth Gospel, are really irrelevant considerations; but as Oscar Cullmann persists in siding in the controversy, it will be necessary to turn to a more detailed examination of the relevant Johannine passages in the light of his arguments which appear in *Early Christian Worship*.

Cullmann's exposition rests upon his thesis that the chief concern of the Fourth Gospel is to "set forth the connexion between the contemporary Christian worship and the historical life of Jesus" (p. 37). The Evangelist, he says, "traces the line from the Christ of history to Christ the Lord of the community, in which the Word continually becomes flesh" (p. 38). We have already seen that for Cullmann the liturgical background presupposed is "sacramental" in the limited sense. Accordingly he goes on to insist that the Fourth Gospel "treats the two sacraments as expressions of the whole worship life of the early community and correspond-

⁸ Cf. C. H. Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

ingly sets forth the relation between the Lord of the community *present especially in these two sacraments* and the life of Jesus" (p. 58, italics his). As a matter of logic, Cullmann's claim that the "basis and goal" of every primitive Christian gathering was the Lord's Supper (apart from Baptism), rests on slender evidence. He quotes the two famous references in Acts to the breaking of bread (2: 42 and 20: 7), and concludes: "We have found a convincing argument for the view that as a rule there was no gathering of the community without the breaking of bread" (p. 29). I must confess, I am *not* convinced.

Cullmann's treatment of the conversation with Nicodemus (3: 1-21) is typical. "The relation of *rebirth* to *Baptism*", he says, "is already a common conception in the early Church" (p. 75, italics his). The Evangelist is concerned to underline for the primitive Christian community the fact that Baptism by the Spirit and Baptism by water belong together, and are not, as the tendency was, to be separated out (p. 76). This accords, as it happens, with the characteristic Johannine theology: "the Spirit is present in material elements just as the *Logos* became flesh" (*ibid.*). If we ask, as Nicodemus apparently did, *how* rebirth is effected in Baptism, the answer is that the "bestowal of the Spirit, together with the forgiveness of sins which is offered in the same sacrament, depends on the *death and resurrection of Christ*, and that in virtue of this, that miracle of rebirth, which to Nicodemus is so inconceivable, can take place" (p. 77, italics his).

Now the context of this discussion, which Cullmann ignores, is entry into the Kingdom; its background, which he also ignores, is Hellenistic. The problem, though Nicodemus would not have presented it in this way, is the method of transfer from τὰ κάτω to τὰ ἄνω; from the realm of σὰρξ to the realm of πνεῦμα. Jesus' mention of rebirth, which conforms initially to the same background of thought, leaves Nicodemus more puzzled than ever (3: 9)—and we might well ask whether a Jew was supposed to understand by the word "water" all that Cullmann expects. It is then that Jesus explains further, and He does so in terms of faith (v. 12) in the Person (v. 13) and work (v. 14) of the Christ. On the basis of this a response is demanded (3: 16), and entry into the Kingdom of God effected (vv. 17-18). The allusion to rebirth has in any case directed the reader's mind back to 1: 13, where the writer explains that becoming a child of God is not a physical process, but the result of a reception of the Logos (1: 12). If the reader still sees in the mention of "water" (3: 5) a reference to Christian

Baptism, he is entitled to do so only in the light of the content thus given to it.

The symbol of water is repeated in the discourse with the Woman of Samaria, chapter 4, but is given a differing content. There is here, as Dodd suggests, a link with the previous chapter. In 3: 5 water, as we saw, was associated with Πνεῦμα as the source of the higher life. Now the thought advances, and deals, if Dodd is right, with the *continuance* of that life through the same supply of "living water" which Christ gives (v. 14).⁹ By the time the conversation turns, therefore, the reader's mind is prepared for the central treatment which will be given to the notion of worship *Par excellence*, the characteristic of all worship for the Fourth Evangelist is worship ἐν πνεύματι — in Hellenistic terms ἐν ἀληθείᾳ — that is, "on the plane of full reality".¹⁰ Cullmann, nevertheless, is able to refer the whole of this incident as well to the Sacrament of Baptism, and he does so on questionable grounds—namely, that this passage speaks of the Spirit, which in chapter 3 meant for him "the Spirit who effects rebirth in *Baptism*" (*op. cit.*, p. 81, italics his); and secondly that, again for him, the mention of water and Spirit in 7: 37-39 also refers to Baptism (p. 82).

In dealing with the healing miracle at Bethesda (if that is the correct reading), Cullmann admits that to link this narrative as well to his main thesis "may be forcing a system" (p. 84). Nothing daunted, however, he is "compelled" to connect this miracle, too, with Baptism (p. 86), and concludes that Christ, in the miracle of healing which is continued in Baptism, "takes the place of the angel which troubles the water" (*ibid.*). The stress in this passage, nonetheless, is not baptismal. Again we have the symbol of water, again used differently; and although we may not go all the way with Dodd and identify the ineffectiveness of the water with that of the *Torah*, there is clearly intended by its introduction a contrast with the life-giving word and work of Christ. The miracle culminates in an expression of Jewish opposition: they "sought the more to kill him" because He "called God his own Father, ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ Θεῷ" (5: 18); and it introduces the discourse of 5: 19-47, which deals with the nature and attestation of the Lord's authority.

There is more basis for the Cullmannesque treatment of the healing of the man born blind, chapter 9. The miracle takes place,

⁹ Cf. Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. 313. The contrast with the water in Jacob's well (v. 13) is marked.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

apparently, in the vicinity of the Temple on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Its liturgical background, therefore, will not be without significance. The name "Siloam" is given a mystical interpretation, referring possibly to the true Ἀπεσταλμένος, sent by the Father. The use of ἐπιχρίειν in v. 11 may, on the witness of Hippolytus, have baptismal associations, and we know that φωτισθῆναι swiftly became a synonym for βαπτισθῆναι. But in this passage we are again pointed back to one of the leading themes of the Prologue: τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν (1: 5). Clearly, as Dodd says, "the healing of the blind is conceived as a 'sign' of the triumph of light over darkness" (*op. cit.*, p. 357). Yet even here we may still be moving in the realm of baptismal language and thought, if we take seriously Professor C. F. D. Moule's suggestion, in the new Dodd *Festschrift*,¹¹ that baptism turns on the concept of judgment—that it is a "willing acceptance of the verdict on sin", a setting of one's seal to the fact that ὁ Θεὸς ἀληθῆς ἐστίν (Jn. 3: 33).¹²

Enough has been said to illustrate the principle which forms the basis of Cullmann's exegesis. We are not surprised, therefore, when he connects the miracle at Cana in Chapter 2 with the Eucharist (*op. cit.*, p. 71), but his method of doing so is worth glancing at because it reveals the way his mind works. He finds the key to the incident in 2: 4, οὐπω ἤκει ἡ ὥρα μου, which, quite legitimately, he understands as "a pointer to the death of Christ" (p. 69). But from here on he constructs his argument on his own presuppositions. Because, in his view, the "bread" of chapter 6 is "connected with the bread of the Last Supper", *ergo* the "wine" of chapter 2 "points to the blood of Christ offered in the Lord's Supper" (*ibid.*).¹³ The point of this σημεῖον, surely, taken with that of the Cleansing of the Temple, is that the old order of religion has been replaced by the new—a thought which is not alien to the Synoptists. We shall not be far wrong if in this instance we see a connexion between the waterpots which were set out at the feast κατὰ τὸν καθαρισμόν τῶν Ἰουδαίων (v. 6), and, in Dodd's words, "the entire system of Jewish ceremonial observance" (*op. cit.*, p. 299). It is in this implicit con-

¹¹ *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology* (1956): the essay, "The Judgment theme in the Sacraments", pp. 464-81.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 466 f.

¹³ I am not sure what that last phrase of Cullmann's means, nor am I sure whether he intends to make a distinction here between the *Last Supper* and the *Lord's Supper*.

trast that the glory of Christ is manifested (2: 11). Admittedly the imagery of the Messianic banquet passed into the eucharistic symbolism of the Christian Church, and the Miracle of Cana in early Christian art often formed a counterpart to the scene of John 6 in allusion to the wine and bread of the Lord's Supper. But if the eucharistic complex of ideas occurred to the readers of this passage, it was not the main lesson they were intended to learn.

The discourse of John 6 has long formed the focus of this debate, and critics are sharply divided over its interpretation. Dom Gregory Dix, for example, thinks that "the symbolism of the eucharist is colouring the evangelist's thought" throughout the length of vv. 26-65, but that only vv. 51-58 "are intended to refer directly to the eucharist *as a rite*, while the remainder of the chapter is dealing with the much wider question of faith in Christ's Person and Office in terms of eucharistic symbolism".¹⁴ Bultmann, in line with his insistence that the Sacraments "play no rôle in John", dismisses 6: 51b-58 as an "ecclesiastical redaction", and says that the "bread of life" of vv. 32-51a does not in 51b-58 mean the sacramental meal, but Jesus Himself "as the one who brings life in that he is life".¹⁵ John Calvin is fairly representative of the Reformers in his exegesis: "this discourse does not relate to the Lord's Supper, but to the uninterrupted communication of the *flesh of Christ*, which we obtain apart from the use of the Lord's Supper".¹⁶ It is a *sermo* "de manducare et bibere mortem Jesu" (on eating and drinking the *death* of Jesus). Among the Fathers, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, unlike Chrysostom, Cyril and Cyprian, see no connexion between this discourse and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

John himself, as Barrett says, "is less ready than some of his commentators to argue about the eucharist".¹⁷ The stress of this discourse is governed by the logion which forms its heading, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (v. 29), and by the saying we have already looked at (v. 63) with which it concludes. The first part repudiates a definition of the new eschatological era, inaugurated by Jesus, in terms of the σάρξ (v. 32), and, if the writer also has in mind the Rabbinic symbolism of bread = *Torah*, illustrates the maxim ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωσέως ἐδόθη,

¹⁴ *The Shape of the Liturgy* (2nd edn., 1945), pp. 671 f., italics his.

¹⁵ *Theology of the New Testament* (E.T.), Vol. II (1955), pp. 58 f.

¹⁶ *Commentary on the Gospel according to John* in the Calvin Translation Society edition of 1847, p. 265, italics his.

¹⁷ *The Gospel according to St. John* (1955), p. 236.

ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο (1: 17). In the second part (vv. 35-50), Jesus associates *Himself* with the bread of life, and caps the contrast with the wilderness manna by asserting that He is able, in response to those who “see” and “believe”, to dispense ζωὴ αἰώνιος (6: 40). So far we have been moving in the realm of pure symbolism. With v. 51, the third part of the discourse takes another new turn when Jesus equates ἄρτος with—of all things—His own σὰρξ. Yet this is the logical deduction, for the discourse turns on belief in that which is completely *historical*, as well as beyond history. The Fourth Evangelist would have been the last to avoid the emphasis—indeed he becomes almost brutal in the expression of it: ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἐν ἐμοὶ μένει, καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτῷ (6: 56). Again the choice in this passage is not *either* a “spiritual” or a “sacramental” exegesis. The comprehensive symbol of ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς suggests a wealth of ideas, and if we see the Lord’s Supper as a focus of these, we are not betraying the *fons et origo* of the Evangelist’s belief, from which they stem.

The *Pedilavium*, chapter 13, is referred by Cullmann to both Sacraments (*op. cit.*, p. 105), and by Craig, in the *J.B.L.* article already mentioned, to the echo of a primitive debate on total immersion. Loisy, Bauer, Professor Dodd (*op. cit.*, p. 401) and Professor Moule (*loc. cit.*, pp. 475 f.), all find in the incident allusions to the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The dominant *motif* of the incident, as we gather from its exposition, is that of *κοινωνία*—a “fellowship” which is here disturbed by the presence of a traitor in the midst of the faithful disciples (13: 10 and 18), but marked by the characteristic of servility. The Fourth Evangelist does not answer the question “*how* can I be clean every whit?”, but he provides us with the clue for answering it by pointing to the supreme servility, in life and death, of the Master Himself. We shall be misled if, like Peter (in v. 9), we mistake the symbol of water for the reality it symbolizes. Cullmann’s treatment of this passage depends partly on the baptismal reference he is predisposed to find wherever water is mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, and partly on the eucharistic context which he claims for the Last Discourses. Allowing for the “eucharistic” *context* of the Discourses, I am more dubious about their general eucharistic *content*.

We are now in a position to see that the emphasis in these Johannine passages has been throughout historical, in the defined sense, and kerygmatic even, as Dodd shows, rather than “sacra-

mental". The same principles of examination will apply to any consideration of the incident of the spear-thrust (19: 34). Now that Christ is glorified the Spirit is given (7: 39), and, in Dodd's words, "it becomes finally clear that the sustenance of the eternal life in man depends on Christ's death as self-oblation in fulfilment of the will of God" (*op. cit.*, p. 438).

In spite of all that has so far been said, we are left in no doubt as to the way in which the Fourth Gospel was used in the early Church. In the treatise *De Sacramentis*, attributed to St. Ambrose, the narrative of the blind man in chapter 9 is spoken of as "pre-figuring" baptism (iii. 2, 11). Evidently, as with chapter 4, it was a Lenten lection for catechumens, and was chosen, like the narrative of the paralytic in chapter 5, which was read in Easter Week to the newly baptized, because it was interpreted as a baptismal miracle. From the *Manuale Ambrosianum*, which contains an eleventh-century lectionary used in the church of Milan, we learn that John 3 was read at the Mass for the newly baptized during Easter Vigil, and John 5 and 6 at similar Masses during Easter Week. There are also indications, according to Hoskyns, that the *Pedilavium* "once formed an integral part of the baptismal office" (*op. cit.*, p. 444), though the actual relation between that ritual and Baptism remained a difficulty. The evidence we have for this particular liturgical use of sections of John's Gospel suggest a tradition earlier than the fourth century, which is perhaps confirmed by the fact that on second-century frescoes in the catacombs at Rome, the Woman of Samaria, the Paralytic and the Blind Man appear as baptismal symbols. It has even been suggested that in the writing of his Gospel the Fourth Evangelist himself was influenced by liturgical considerations, and that the Prologue and Last Discourses, for example, are in the form of "prose hymns".¹⁸

Our view, however, of the extent to which the Evangelist has rewritten his sources, should be governed by the consideration that he was probably working from a tradition independent of that underlying the Synoptic Gospels. If, as Mr. Gardner-Smith suggests in his book, *St. John and the Synoptic Gospels* (1938), we have in the Fourth Gospel "a survival of a type of first century Christianity which owed nothing to synoptic developments, and which originated in quite a different intellectual atmosphere, its

¹⁸ Cf. Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 59, n. 2. In the Tyndale New Testament Lecture for 1956, which was given after this paper was prepared, Dr. Aileen E. Guilding suggested that the Evangelist had in mind as he wrote the form of the triennial Jewish Lectionary.

historical value may be very great indeed" (pp. 96 f.). Interestingly enough Professor Dodd, also, in a recent *New Testament Studies* article on "Some Johannine 'Herrnworte'", has examined four specimen dominical sayings in the Fourth Gospel which have parallels in the Synoptics (among them Jn. 13: 16 and 20), and come to the conclusion that there is, in their case, a high degree of probability that John has transmitted independently "a special form of the common oral tradition".¹⁹

It will not be irrelevant to refer briefly at this point to the *Dead Sea Manual of Discipline*. For there is, amongst other things, a possible connexion between John the Baptist and the Qumrân Community in their mutual recognition of an eschatological "baptism" still to come. We know that purification rites were important to the Qumrân Sect, and indeed entry into water, as a proselyte action, was paralleled with entry into the Community (Covenant).²⁰ This ritual, nonetheless, was not performed without prior repentance on the part of the initiate (3: 3-12), and in any case purification with "water-for-impurity", and sanctification with running water, may refer simply to ordinary lustration. But baptism ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ (John 1: 33), and the notion of judgment which is so integral to the Fourth Gospel, may well be in the same category of thought as this, from the *Manual*:

And then [that is, at "the season of the decreed judgment"] God will purge by His truth all the deeds of man, refining for himself some of mankind in order to abolish every evil spirit from the midst of his flesh, and to cleanse him through a Holy Spirit from all wicked practices, sprinkling upon him a Spirit of truth as purifying water . . . (4: 20-21).²¹

More direct still is the use in Qumrân literature of pairs of contrasted ideas already familiar to us from the Fourth Gospel—light and darkness, truth and falsehood (though falsehood appears in the Scrolls, not in the Gospel) and so on.

What is the significance of this evidence? W. F. Albright, writing on "Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John" in the *Dodd Festschrift* (pp. 153-71), thinks that the Qumrân literature in general may well demonstrate that John and the Synoptists drew on "a common reservoir of terminology and ideas which were well known to the Essenes and presumably

¹⁹ *N.T.S.*, November, 1955, p. 86.

²⁰ See, for example, column 5, ll. 8, 13 and 20.

²¹ The translation is that of W. H. Brownlee, in the edition of the *Manual* which appears in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Suppl. Studies 10-12), 1951.

familiar also to other Jewish sects of the period" (p. 169). This, of course, begs the whole question of the connexion between Qumrân and the Essenes, which has been hotly disputed, *inter alios*, by Dr. Casey in the *Cambridge Review* for May 5th, 1956 (p. 535). Albright concludes that "both narratives and *logia* of John's Gospel certainly or presumably date back to oral tradition in Palestine, before A.D. 70" (p. 170), and insists that while the Evangelist's material has been rearranged, "there is absolutely nothing to show that any of Jesus' teachings have been distorted or falsified, or that any vital new element has been added to them" (p. 171). The needs of the early Church, he says, influenced the *selection* of the material, but those needs were not responsible "for any inventions or innovations of theological significance" (*ibid.*). This conclusion, resting as it does on other than critical or purely theological grounds, is on any showing important for our subject.

Whatever else the Fourth Evangelist may have been, he was not a mere *alter Rufinus*, correcting the tradition where he disagreed with it, in accordance with his own ideas. It is to be hoped that this consideration has provided some materials for establishing, if not his identity, then at least the "sacramental principle" which underlay the *inexpressibilia verba* he wrote.

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