

- Johannine Christianity: Essays on its Setting, Sources, and Theology* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1984), 180–81.
2. Smith, *Johannine Christianity*, 178.
  3. Author's translation, here and throughout.
  4. Bryan R. Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Movements of Protest among Tribal and Third-World Peoples* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); David Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 27–28.
  5. See Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community*, 92–95.
  6. *Ibid.*, 142.
  7. Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 37.

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Hans Weder

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## *Deus Incarnatus:* On the Hermeneutics of Christology in the Johannine Writings\*

That the New Testament writings were not originally written for the canon as such constitutes a historical insight that enhances rather than diminishes their significance. On the other hand, that these same writings are now collected together in a canon is a historical fact whose significance for understanding the individual writings is still underestimated even today. The present essay, in honor of D. Moody Smith, attempts to move one step closer toward *hermeneutics within the canonical context itself*. One might engage in such hermeneutics by interpreting those particular New Testament passages that *take the process of understanding itself as their theme*, as is the case, for example, in the Johannine farewell discourses, in the concept of *ἀνάμνησις* ("remembrance") in the Gospel of John, or in the reading guides in the Johannine letters. A compilation of all the pericopes that exhibit this characteristic in the canon would yield a hermeneutics that itself actually occurs within the New Testament canon.

In what follows, however, the topic of hermeneutics within the canonical context will be approached somewhat differently. That is, we will not inquire concerning the explicit hermeneutics of individual texts; rather, hermeneutical insights can probably best be acquired where one can observe the concretely developing process of understanding itself, preferably through several stages of theological development. This we will undertake, using the example of the Christology of the Johannine writings. Christology is the central and decisive process of reflection within the *corpus Johanninum*.<sup>1</sup> Hence, it is no exaggeration to say that Christology is the central theme of hermeneutical reflection in these writings. Furthermore, in the Johannine writings we possess a *corpus* in which, with a certain degree of probability, we are able to say something about the process of theological reflection itself. One must, after all, proceed on the assumption that the Johannine writings originated in a school, which carried forward its theological reflections over an extended period of time.<sup>2</sup> A pre-Johannine stage can be distinguished fairly clearly from the Gospel itself, with an additional distinction (which need not be, necessarily, diachronic) discernible between the farewell discourses and the other sections of the book. Finally, in the letter of 1 John we

\*Translated by Douglas W. Stott.

encounter an even later stage,<sup>3</sup> which over long stretches explicitly picks up and clarifies themes of the Gospel itself. We are dealing here with acts of reflection whose association with various stages of tradition is possible but not necessary.

For these reasons, the status of Johannine Christology as an example of a hermeneutical process within the canonical context should be considered seriously, since Christology is the long process of penetrating reflection concerning the coming of Jesus of Nazareth. Christology offers an estimation of just what this coming was really about. One is wont to refer to Johannine Christology as a "high" Christology. If this includes the view that the heavenly Christ touched the earth only fleetingly, however, then it does not represent an adequate estimation of Johannine Christology and would be based on a docetic misunderstanding of the Johannine writings.<sup>4</sup> Reference to high Christology does, however, precisely articulate the characteristic uniqueness and the center of the Johannine writings, if it attributes to that which has actually occurred in the flesh in the foreground of the world, a dignity beyond which nothing higher is conceivable. This is precisely what makes the Christology of these writings hermeneutically interesting. Our investigation—commensurate with the stages of the actual process of reflection—will proceed in four steps. We will consider the pre-Johannine Christology on the basis of the prologue, particularly on the basis of the incarnation statement of 1:14. The assertion that the Logos became flesh will be further interpreted in the Gospel's I Am sayings, which in their own turn interpret the *semeia* narratives. A further stage of reflection resides in the Paraclete statements in the farewell discourses. Finally, at the end we encounter statements from 1 John that, significantly, can again be characterized as theological rather than christological.

The concept of Christology employed here must be clarified more precisely. "Christology is second-order language about Jesus. John's Gospel is a first-order presentation of Jesus."<sup>5</sup> One can hardly take Moody Smith's hermeneutical observation here seriously enough. If Christology were conceived as a theoretical, secondary language that, as it were, conceptualized what Jesus Christ represents, it would completely miss the point of Johannine Christology. Christology here is *not a theory of the incarnation, but rather an evocation in language of what Christ embodies*. Christology is anything but a theory that replaces Christ. Rather, it is a language with but one goal, namely, to provide access to the event of the incarnation itself. It is the making present—the representation—of something that can never be comprehended theoretically, since its fulcrum point is the assertion that the Christ represents the *reality* of God in the world, in the sense of his efficacious presence. The Christ is not information about God, but rather the incarnation of the divine Logos.

#### THE ONE WHO BECAME FLESH (JOHN 1:14)

The pre-Johannine prologue cannot be understood without reference to the wisdom theology of Hellenistic Judaism. What was once said of Sophia is now said of the Logos, the Christ. Jesus of Nazareth is understood as the embodiment

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of this Logos, an assertion admittedly no longer attested for wisdom. Nonetheless, in its own turn the figure of wisdom still functions hermeneutically with regard to Jesus. It discloses the depth and significance of that which entered upon the world-stage with Jesus. The one great theme of wisdom theology was the relationship between God and world, between truth and reality. And if one were to characterize in one sentence the figure of Sophia, one might say—at least with regard to its early Jewish form—that in it the turning of God's love toward the world, the coming of God into the world of experience, took on the form of a person. Wisdom theology responded to the question of how God's presence in the world of experience might be conceived and perceived.

It is no accident that the community turned to wisdom in their estimation of Jesus of Nazareth, since his own characteristic feature, after all, was an act of coming, an approach to human beings, a turn toward the world itself. This unequivocal direction of movement is attested to in a variety of ways in the prologue: The light (of life, which is in the Logos) shines in the darkness (1:5); it illuminates every person who comes into the world (1:9); the Logos was in the world (1:10); it came into its own (1:11) and—as a final answer to its perpetual rejection—became flesh (1:14). Thus the hermeneutical accomplishment of wisdom consists, on the one hand, in the fact that it teaches one to understand the fundamental movement of turning that characterizes the being of Jesus as a movement *originating with God*. It teaches one to recognize, in the turning of Jesus, the turning of God's own love toward the world. The Logos hymn admittedly does not originate in the religious speculation of the Johannine community, in speculation (for example) concerning just how a connection between God and world might be conceived. The Johannine community was not facing the question of how one might conceive God's presence in the world but rather, the question of how one might appropriately understand the experience with Jesus of Nazareth. The Logos hymn originated in the experiences that were to be had with Jesus of Nazareth and with his own words, as well as words about him.

These experiences are concentrated in the prologue into a single fundamental experience: the experience of reception (ἡμεῖς παύρεξ ἐλάβομεν ["we have all received"], 1:16). This experience is, as it were, the reverse side of the fundamental movement of turning. Turning toward (on the one hand) and reception of (on the other) fit precisely together and constitute an asymmetrical relationship in which the qualitative distinction between the two sides comes clearly to expression. The person who receives is qualitatively different from the person who gives, although both—each in his own way—are completely oriented toward each other in the process of giving and receiving. At the same time, the correlation of giving and receiving constitutes a relationship in which both sides maintain their own dignity (as opposed, for example, to a relationship of repression, which does not really deserve the name "relationship," insofar as the repressed side has lost its dignity). This *asymmetrical relationship* reflects the fundamental relationship between God and human beings, the relationship between divine creativity and human receptivity.

John 1:16 initially mentions only the act of receiving, without adding an object. Neither does the object have to be added, since whenever we are dealing with reception in the true sense of the word there can be no other object than grace. For only that which comes from grace (χάρις) is that particular gift that allows a person to be a recipient in the pure sense. (All other gifts are bound to conditions: for instance, the gift of the law to the condition of obedience, a condition no longer allowing a person to be merely a recipient but also a perpetrator, worker, payer, and so forth.) This is why 1:16 speaks of grace not directly, as the object of reception, but rather only in an explicative phrase: καὶ χάριν ἔχοντα χάριτος, "grace upon grace." The object appended here merely carries through what is already implied in the process of genuine reception. What is made more precise here is that the object of reception is self-evidently grace: more exactly, grace that in being received actually increases (rather than decreases).

The prologue brings this experience of grace into connection with the origin of the world itself, with the being of God prior to all creation. This reference back to the most primal origin makes good sense, since it serves to facilitate recognition of the real significance of this experience of grace. This experience in the foreground of the world itself demands to be adequately evaluated and appreciated. Whoever experiences grace experiences creative power, the same creator-power present at the origin of the world. Although it is quite possible to discern something like righteousness or requital by referring to the constitution of the world (comparable to the second law of thermodynamics, according to which energy is perpetually maintained), the experience of grace must derive from the God who constituted the world in a creative act. Hence, the prologue must refer to the origin, to the being of the Logos with God, in order to evaluate and appreciate adequately this experience of grace that takes place in the foreground of the world. One might also say that a Christology that associates Jesus completely with God is nothing other than an acknowledgment of the fact that Jesus of Nazareth exercised a creative influence on human beings. Christology is the attempt to understand this reality of Jesus from the perspective of its truth in God.

The hermeneutical accomplishment of wisdom theology consists, on the other hand, in the fact that it makes possible a clarification of the relationship between God and Jesus of Nazareth. Just as wisdom is present in the reality of the world and yet at the same time belongs completely to God, so also does the Crucified, however much he does indeed belong to the world of the flesh, belong completely on the side of God (1:1-2).<sup>7</sup> The Logos that became a human being is without beginning, since—and in this it is like God—it was in the beginning (1:1a). Hence its being—in contradistinction, for example, to wisdom<sup>8</sup>—is primal in the same way as the being of God. The relationship between the Logos and God is no less primal: In the beginning the Logos was oriented toward God (1:1b; this statement is expressly confirmed in 1:2). It is also like God in its essence (1:1c). Although the Logos hymn also seeks to distinguish between the Logos and God (only between

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differentiated sides is the relationship mentioned in 1:1b possible), it at the same time comes infinitely close to asserting that God and the Logos constitute a unity.

This determination of the relationship between God and the Logos can be explicated with regard both to the Logos and to God. With regard to the Logos, it means that in it God is encountered in his entirety. There is no remnant concealed in God that would not encounter the world in the Logos. This means, further, that it is not merely a particular aspect or part of God that has become flesh in the incarnation. John 1:14 expresses the fullness of the presence of God with the metaphor of the *μωρογενής* ("the only[-begotten]"). The weight and significance of the one who has become a human being, the dignity with which he is equipped, is described as that dignity that he as the first-born has from his Father. Accordingly, the prologue maintains that Jesus of Nazareth is the revealer of God.<sup>9</sup>

One must not, however, understand this revealer as a person who merely supplies information concerning God's essence, his will, and his commandments. In the case of the Incarnate, revelation precisely does not mean information about God but rather, an embodiment of the essence of God. Revelation means God's reality in the sense of efficacious presence. Jesus of Nazareth reveals God precisely in the sense that he becomes an event of God. If an evaluation of the relationship just mentioned is then made with regard to God, it yields an important conclusion regarding the concept of God. If the Logos was itself also in the beginning, then God is no longer conceived apart from his Logos. That means that the turning of God's love toward the world—be it in the creation of the world, in the coming of wisdom, or in the turning of the Christ toward that world—is not conceived as an *accidents* of the divine being; rather, the turning of God's love toward the world is understood as God's primal essence itself. Although, in the view of the world, the incarnation must appear as a chance occurrence, just as the coming of every stranger is a chance occurrence, in the view of God it is given with his very essence itself.

At the same time, this means that God can no longer be conceived apart from the incarnation of the Logos. Whoever would think or conceive of God is directed to the experience of his reality, which in the New Testament bears the name of Jesus Christ. Of course, this may not be misunderstood in the exclusive sense, as if God might be experienced only in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>10</sup> For it is and remains the Christ who is encountering every person in the light that illuminates every person's life (1:9). The Christ is encountered in that particular vitality bestowed upon every human being, and is encountered in the grace and truth from which every life lives. The Logos, God's word, is equally primal with God himself. The hermeneutical significance of this statement is that God, accordingly, is understood exclusively as the one who speaks—that is, as the God who speaks through his only word, the Christ.

No silence is presupposed from which this speaking might issue, in contradistinction (for example) to Ignatius' notion of the Logos that emerges from silence

(*Magn.* 8.2)<sup>11</sup> and to the independent reality attributed to that silence in Pseudo-Philo (*Bib. Ant.* 60.2).<sup>12</sup> The Logos hymn must be carefully distinguished from this conceptual development, pointing toward gnosis.<sup>13</sup> For a God whose essence is speech cannot fall back into silence, and the notion of a silence from which the Logos emerges at least comes perilously close to a priority of the negative (something actually quite commensurate with later gnosis). Whoever grants this sort of independent reality to silence and darkness is taking a dualistic conception as the basic point of departure, a conception unwilling to refer the whole of reality to God. As frequently as such a conception may well have been entertained in late antiquity, it is in any case not present in the Logos hymn. With that, however, we have made an extraordinarily far-reaching hermeneutical decision.

In summary, one important hermeneutical accomplishment of wisdom theology is that within the experiential world of human beings, something like the turning of God's love yet remains fully conceivable, and it is this possibility that provides the Logos hymn with its point of departure. Despite this, however, a decisive difference should be kept in mind regarding the theological presuppositions. The Logos hymn does not simply represent a type of wisdom theology. Rather, it draws on wisdom theology in order to address its own problem. Whereas wisdom theology primarily responds to the (theological) question of how the coming of God into the world might be conceived, the hymn responds to the (christological) question of how the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth might be adequately evaluated and understood. The hymn does not answer the question of how the Logos comes into the world, but rather, the question of just what significance is to be attributed to the experience of grace and truth<sup>14</sup> that one had with Jesus Christ in the Johannine community.

#### THE CHRISTOLOGY OF INCARNATION

One important problem attaching to the statement of the incarnation in the hymn is that it might be understood in the formal sense. That is to say, John 1:14 does not associate the Logos's becoming flesh with any information concerning the concrete form of the one who became flesh. Hence, one might understand the incarnation as a kind of tangential contact between heaven and earth, whereby the point of contact itself would have no extension and, accordingly, no form. The humanness of the Incarnate is conceived formally insofar as it is reduced to his mere humanity, quite apart from the concrete form of that humanity. Yet already as regards the prologue, such formalization is quite inappropriate,<sup>15</sup> and the Gospel of John itself, for which the prologue now serves as an overture, made this point perfectly clear. The humanness of the Logos is presented in the story that the Gospel narrates concerning Jesus. With that, the contact between God and world acquires concrete form: namely, the form of the life, ministry, and death of Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

In the transition between prologue and Gospel, the evangelist holds fast to the assertion that the one who became a human being—in constant contact with

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God—has made God known in the world (1:18). Neither can this statement be understood in the sense of a communication of heavenly information. In this Gospel, the making known of God through Jesus Christ means that Jesus ministers in God's place, speaks in God's place, and even dies as God. Such exposition means basically a carrying-through of God's essence in the world, the actual presence of God. The giver (God) is present in his gift (Christ) in such a way that he himself is at risk along with that gift. In 1:17 the evangelist already gives us a hermeneutical hint in this direction. Whereas the law was given by Moses and thus represents an object different from Moses, one says of grace and truth that they "*came to be* [mediated] through Jesus Christ" (*ὅτι ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐγένετο*). God's grace and truth are not something that—in the form of a text such as that of the law—might be given over. Grace and truth can only come to be; and they come to be in the sense that they occur as a reality in the world. To that extent, it is true that the Christ does not offer grace and truth as something extraneous to himself. Rather, he himself embodies this grace and truth; they came to be with him in that primal beginning, and they enter into human experience through him. The difference between the gift of the law and the coming-to-be of truth derives from the different ontological status of the two entities. The law is a word expressing the will of God in the sense that it charges a person with obedience to that will. The commandment of the law does not actualize itself, but rather, enters into reality insofar as a person acts according to its sense. In contrast, truth and grace belong to the essence of the creative God. Grace and truth have their own reality and enter into reality only insofar as they are *effacious among human beings*. Whereas the law prompts a person to act, grace and truth exercise their effects on that person quite of their own accord. Thus Christ does not *give* grace and truth but, rather, *is* true, insofar as he leads a person into truth, and *is* merciful, insofar as he heals and delivers.

One should bear in mind that the Gospel of John also engages in Christology that is expressed in titles of majesty, such as Son of Man, Son, Christ, and others.<sup>17</sup> At this point, however, we will follow the above-mentioned suggestion concerning the reality of the Incarnate and concentrate on those statements within the Gospel of John in which Christology is associated with Jesus' ministry. In this respect the I-Am sayings, with which the evangelist christologically interprets the traditions of the *semeia* (σημεῖα, "signs") narratives, are particularly suitable. Hermeneutically, this interpretation accomplishes precisely that which was the center of the prologue's focus: a perception of the reality of God in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The *semeia* narratives ground statements concerning God in the reality of the Christ.<sup>18</sup> Contrary to a frequently defended position within scholarship according to which the Gospel of John represents a view critical of miracles, one must remember that the *semeia* narratives constitute an important part of the Gospel itself, something already evident in the quantity of miracle stories and in the penetrating intensity of their interpretation. The

*semeia* narratives are anything but ballast drawn from tradition. Rather, they were quite consciously incorporated into the Gospel because "they aptly put the question of Jesus' identity (and thus create the possibility of genuine faith), not because the author wished to correct their erroneous theology."<sup>19</sup> The signs (*semeia*) are narratives in which the identity of the Christ reveals itself. They express what is intended, concretely, by the making known of God through the one who became a human being, and to that extent they express the glory (*δόξα*) of the one who became a human being. "The *doxa* of the Son, bestowed by the Father before the foundation of the world (John 17:5bc, 24cd; see also 12:41), visible in the incarnation of the Preexistent One (John 1:14ab), is manifested in the miracles (John 2:11; 11:4, 40) and perfected on the cross, in order to return to the one *doxa* with the Father (John 17:1b, 5, 10b, 22, 24c)."<sup>20</sup> Again, the reality of the sign (*σημεῖον*) must be taken seriously, since it is not only a reference to the *δόξα* but also an expression of the same.<sup>21</sup> The *semeia* are thus not events referring or pointing to something extraneous to themselves; rather, in them *the* *δόξα* of the Christ actually takes place.

The Christology of the incarnation can be observed anew in the *semeia* narratives interpreted by the I-Am sayings, since these narratives—like John 1:14—as-sociate the heavenly truth of the Christ with the earthly reality of bestowed life. The *fullness* of the bestowed goods is a clear indication of the heavenly dimension. This indication seems to come from the same fullness (*πλήρωμα*) from which "we" ourselves have received grace upon grace (see 1:16). The *semeia* narratives explicate just what this received grace really is by speaking about that in which is graciously bestowed. The heavenly dimension also comes to expression in the fact that Jesus expressly identifies his works as works of the Father. "Throughout the Gospel Jesus repeatedly asserts that he works not by his own power and authority, but by God's, and not by his own will, but in submission to that of the Father."<sup>22</sup> Although the *σημεῖα* are immersed in the material reality of the world, they are misunderstood if taken to be innerworldly phenomena. Thus, for example, the crowd is criticized in John 6:26–27 because in the miracle of the bread they have not perceived any sign pointing to heaven, but rather, seek Jesus out merely because they have eaten their fill. In this respect the *σημεῖα* are related to the center of Johannine Christology. In them, too, the most important thing is the identity of the Christ, and to that extent the revelation of the Father.<sup>23</sup> Once again, we must emphasize that this revelation does not involve information but, rather, efficacious presence—not merely a showing but, rather, a taking place or substantiating. Precisely these miracle stories make it quite clear that the revelation of the delivering God exists only in the form of an actual deliverance of human beings from sickness and death.

The earthly dimension is secured through the massive materiality characterizing all the *semeia* narratives.<sup>24</sup> It is as if these stories were trying to discourage any merely symbolic interpretation, even though they—precisely as *σημεῖα*<sup>25</sup>—

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culminate in such symbolic meaning. Here, apparently, everything hinges on the symbolic meaning being perceived *within* that massive materiality, and not through it or tangential to it. This is analogous to the incarnation statement, according to which the heavenly glory (*δόξα*) can be discerned in no one other than this specific one who became human. If one views its connection with the incarnation, there is no need to find an antiochic feature in the materiality and concreteness of the *σημεῖα*.<sup>26</sup> One might just as easily understand this peculiarity as exhibit an independent, innovative function within the developmental process of Johannine Christology and are not merely reactions to degenerative manifestations within that Christology. It generally makes more sense to understand Johannine theology as a process deriving from the fact that faith in Christ itself prompted reflection and was not merely the occasion for reacting to external misunderstanding. The *semeia* narratives and their interpretation in the Gospel carry the pre-Johannine Christology conceptually further, insofar as they conceive the coming of the heavenly deliverer (thus, 3:17) together with those particular deeds of deliverance that also affect the materiality of the world. To that extent, they express nothing more than the being of the Christ himself, which has its origin in God and at the same time extends into the most extreme reaches of the world's materiality.

The fulcrum point of the interpretation of the pre-Johannine *semeia* narratives in the I-Am sayings consists in the fact that they present Jesus himself as the gift that the miracles bestow. Thus, for example, John 6:35 interprets the miracle of the bread, narrated in 6:1–15, so that the bread of life bestowed there is identical with the person of the Christ. He is the bread of life insofar as he bestows bread in abundance. Or John 8:12 identifies the light, given to the blind through healing, with the person of the Christ. He is the light insofar as he bestows light, illuminating thus the lives of human beings. In this way the Gospel holds fast to the notion that the gift Christ gives cannot be distinguished from Christ himself. Jesus himself is the gift he gives; he is himself the reality he embodies. The person of Jesus is just as inseparable from the bread he gives and the light he causes to shine as is the Christ, in 1:17, from the grace and truth he bestows. The christological assertion in 1:17 is exactly repeated in the interpretation that the *semeia* narratives undergo in the Gospel of John.

Thus, the I-Am sayings secure the fact that the efficacious presence of Jesus in the miracle of deliverance is understood, not merely as a sign for something else, but rather, as the reality of the God who is present. When the Christ identifies himself as the bread of life, this means that the Christ must be perceived in the bread, and, in this, Christ also the giver of all goods necessary for life—namely, God himself. (That God, as the giver, enters completely into the gift is a notion that virtually demands a consideration of trinitarian implications.) Only now does the evangelist realize what the *semeia* really mean. As long as the bread as a gift is

distinguished from Christ, the sign is not adequately understood. In that case it is still merely a sign of legitimation. Whoever understands the sign as a (formal) sign of legitimation will only approach the periphery of the Christ. And whoever sees merely bread in the bread will not know who is actually being encountered in this gift. This is why the *semeia* narratives explicate the reality of Christ from the perspective of content; they show the concrete<sup>27</sup> fashion in which Jesus Christ is creatively efficacious in the world.

#### THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (THE PARACLETE)

As developed in the Johannine writings, the Christology of incarnation necessarily involves the notion that the Christ is bound to a particular moment in the history of the world. Because he became flesh, he became temporal. But as self-evident as the idea of temporality is with regard to the human being Jesus, it is just as problematic with regard to the assertion that this particular human being represents the reality of God in the world. For the idea of God quite correctly includes the idea of perpetual presence; the turning of God's love toward the world is conceived as perpetual, taking place ever anew and in every age. Thus, the Johannine Christology of incarnation stands before the problem of how it is able to conceive of the Christ simultaneously as the *Incarnate Logos* in its entire temporality, on the one hand, and as the incarnate *Logos* in its never-ending presence, on the other. This problem is resolved with the help of the specifically Johannine<sup>28</sup> figure of the Paraclete.<sup>29</sup>

The extent to which the Johannine school was conscious of the problem of temporality can already be seen in the fact that chapters 13–17 deal with the farewell of Jesus to an extent unique in primitive Christianity. Because temporal limitation belongs to the essence of the one who became flesh, Jesus' farewell is understood as a necessary presupposition for the coming of the Spirit. Hence, it is said of the Paraclete that he cannot come before Jesus has gone, and that Jesus will send him after he, Jesus, has departed (16:7). This statement makes it clear that the everlasting presence of the Spirit is assured only because of the temporality of the Christ. The Paraclete appears as the fruit issuing from the fact that the presence of Jesus Christ was finite. Any digression from this temporality constitutes a limitation of the idea of incarnation. The Paraclete is something like the eternal presence with his own of the one who became flesh. Thus, it is the goal of his coming to be with his disciples in all eternity (14:16); they recognize him because he abides with them (14:17). It is commensurate with the strictly conceived temporality of the incarnate *Logos* that the presence of the Paraclete in the world and among the disciples is conceived with equal strictness as eternal presence. The Paraclete is the attempt to bring to expression those experiences of the efficacious presence of the Christ, produced after the death of Jesus.<sup>30</sup> The sending of the Paraclete is completely and exclusively bound to the Christ who was sent. The Spirit

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is sent by the Father in the name of Christ (14:26). Wherever the name of Christ is spoken, the Paraclete will be present (a local understanding of *ἐν* ["in"]), or the speaking of Christ's name prompts the sending of the Paraclete (an instrumental understanding of *ἐν*). However, this *ἐν* is understood, in either case it is clear that the Paraclete remains closely bound to the Christ. (To that extent the church made a fortunate decision with its formula *filioque* ["and the Son"], since it thereby understood the Spirit as proceeding *from the Father and from the Son*.) The Paraclete is, thus, the everlasting presence of that which was once embodied in Christ.

Bound up with this everlasting presence of the Christ in the Paraclete is the unsurpassable character of his presence among the disciples. It is said that the Paraclete will teach the disciples *all things* and will bring to their remembrance *all* that Jesus said to them (14:26). This assertion is commensurate with the fact that this Spirit of truth will lead them into the realm of the *whole* truth (16:13). This consistent emphasis on "all" (*πάντα*) brings to expression the belief that nothing need be added to the reality of this Spirit; that reality is the whole and, to that extent, needs no complement or completion. This unsurpassable character itself emerges of necessity from Johannine Christology. If Jesus Christ represents the incarnation of the one divine *Logos*, then the Spirit embodying his presence among his own can be surpassed by nothing more. This unsurpassable character reflects the fullness of God's presence in Christ. It is said that the Paraclete represents the absent Jesus among the disciples and will abide with them eternally (14:16). It follows from this that the presence of the Paraclete can never be surpassed by the coming of a different Spirit.

The Christology of the Gospel is consistently characterized by the unity of Father and Son, and this recurs in the notion of the Paraclete. Thus does Jesus entreat the Father to send the Paraclete (14:16). Christ sends the Paraclete from the Father; at the same time, this Paraclete is the Spirit that has proceeded from the Father (15:26). Finally, the unity of Father and Son explains why the Paraclete takes from that which belongs to Christ (16:14). The Paraclete is the Spirit who proceeds both from the Father and from the Son. This corresponds to the pointed unity of Father and Son, which characterizes the Christology of the rest of the Gospel.

This close relationship with the Christ also manifests itself in the fact that the Paraclete places the Christ completely at the center. He is identified as the Spirit of truth (15:26; 16:13), of that truth that Christ himself is (1:17). The Spirit too is sent (14:26) like the Christ; just as the latter came, so also comes the Spirit (16:13). He will maintain the Christ in remembrance among the disciples (14:26). It is also said that the Paraclete will bear witness to the Christ (15:26); he will bring to all the world's attention that which is the truth of the Christ. That the Paraclete will teach nothing other than the Christ is shown by the summary statement that the Paraclete will glorify the Christ (16:14). In this sense the Paraclete fulfills a hermeneutical function.<sup>31</sup> Just as it is the task of Christology to bear witness to

the δόξα—the significance, the dignity of the one who became a human being—so also is it the task of the Spirit everlastingly to express precisely this dignity.

One might say that the point of the Christology of incarnation is that it perceives Jesus Christ as the reality of deliverance in the world. Christology ensures that the Christ never degenerates into mere information. In this regard, too, the Paraclete constitutes a repetition of the christological point, since he represents, as it were, the activity of the Christ after his death. The Christ remains active among the disciples even after his death inasmuch as the "other" Paraclete teaches the disciples all things (14:26). This teaching (διδάσκειν) is already a comprehensive process of education in the Septuagint, a process only marginally related to our own theoretical understanding of teaching. Teaching actually means to direct someone's attention to what is essential, to introduce that person to the truths of life.<sup>32</sup> This introduction to the truths of life, the teaching of the disciples, takes place through the Paraclete in that he will recall to the disciples everything Jesus said to them (14:26). The task of the Paraclete is not, however, merely to remind them of how things were. The Paraclete is not some worldly protocolist. The nature of this recollection, prompted by the Paraclete, can be discerned in the Gospel of John itself. The Gospel decisively describes—according to its own self-understanding—the earthly reality of Jesus of Nazareth, but at the same time it envisions a δόξα ("glory") in the one who became flesh, a dignity comparable to that particular dignity that an only-begotten son has with his father. One might say, therefore, that the Paraclete is the form that the Easter recollection of the human being Jesus assumes. That this recollection takes on the form of the efficacious Spirit suggests that the recollection of Christ is not the work of the disciples but is, as it were, the work of the substance or content of the recollection in them. This offers a possibility for conceiving anew the efficacious presence of Christ, a presence secured in Christology, as the efficacious presence of the Spirit at work in the recollection of Christ. In both cases the Christ is conceived as reality. Precisely this is the fulcrum point of Christology.

The Paraclete is admittedly at work, not only among the disciples, but in the world as well. He will convict the world—which cannot accept him—in matters of sin, righteousness, and judgment (16:8–11). One might understand this conviction forensically: When the Paraclete comes, he will sit in judgment over the world by pronouncing sentence upon the condition of the world. This would then constitute a supplemental final judgment, one that according to John has actually already taken place with the coming of the Christ (see 3:17–18). In this case, however, the Paraclete enters into a certain contradiction with the Johannine conception of the time of Jesus as the eschatological moment, unless one understands him strictly as the evocation or making present of that particular eschatological moment of crisis. One might understand this conviction of the world in a purely accusatory sense: the Paraclete is transformed from an intercessor into an accuser of the world by proving to the world itself that it is in the wrong. Yet this under-

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standing, too, seems inappropriate. John and his school do not conceive deliverance within the horizon of indictment. Hence, one might understand this conviction of the world in what might be called an existential sense (existential not in the sense of existentialist philosophy, but rather, in the sense of the existence and activity of the Paraclete). Proof of the untruth of the world exhibits the character of an existential confrontation with the truth. Existentially, the Paraclete represents what is true; he causes what is true to come to the world, and only in this form does he convict that world of untruth. One might also say that the Paraclete makes it possible for the world to encounter what is true, and only in this way does it prompt the world to recognize its own untruth.

If one were to characterize the Paraclete in a single sentence, one might say that he is the advocate of Christ among human beings.<sup>33</sup> The Paraclete is the intercessor who recalls the significance of the Christ, the intercessor who prompts human beings to come to a realization of just what they encountered in Christ. The exact counterpart to this notion is found in 1 John 2:1–2, where the Paraclete functions as the advocate for human beings before God. This is a logical development. To the same extent that Christ represented God among human beings, the Paraclete (in the Gospel) represents the departed Christ among human beings. To the same extent that this Christ was the incarnation of the turning of divine love toward human beings, the Paraclete (in 1 John) now becomes in his own turn an intercessor for human beings before God. The turning of that love finds its fulfillment where the divine Spirit itself puts in a good word for human beings before God.

#### CHRISTOLOGICAL THEOLOGY (1 JOHN)

First John represents the fourth stage in the process of the development of Johannine Christology. Here a noteworthy shift in the direction of theology takes place.<sup>34</sup> Whereas in the Gospel it is clearly Christ who is the light of the world, this statement is now made again—but this time it refers to God, and it is made at a prominent juncture, immediately after the letter's prologue: "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (1:5). Of course, this fundamental theological thesis represents something akin to religious common sense. It is a universal truth, like the truths of wisdom taken up in the prologue to the Gospel. What is interesting here, however, is its grounding. This message was heard from Christ. The statement that God is light has its foundation in that which Jesus embodied. This theological statement is based on the christological insight that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of light.<sup>35</sup> The connection with Christ does not consist in the fact that the statement, "God is light," might have been heard in one of Jesus' own statements. Rather, the Johannine school itself perceived its own experience with the Christ as an experience of light, and *that* gives them the right to trace this theological

statement back to Christ.<sup>36</sup> It is qualified christologically in the sense that it now brings to pointed theological expression the fundamental experience that occurs with Christ. Christology does not stand for information about God; it stands, rather, for an experience with the Logos,<sup>37</sup> an experience that in its own turn enables one to make statements about God from within one's own experience. The theological statement of 1 John merely draws the logical conclusion from the christological point of departure in the Gospel. If Jesus Christ stands in God's stead, if he embodies God's reality in the world, then precisely his efficacious presence also reveals something about God.<sup>38</sup> The efficacious presence of the Christ as light consisted in the fact that he placed human beings in the light and gave them the light of life. Taking this efficacious presence as its point of departure, 1 John now asserts that the reality of God is light.

In a unique way, the Christology of the Gospel made Jesus unequivocal. That is, it conceptualized his activity and ministry as creating and delivering. He embodied not an admixture of grace and disfavor, but only grace. There is in him not an admixture of truth and untruth, but only truth. He brought into the world not light and darkness, but only light. He did not come both to deliver and to condemn; he came, rather, only for deliverance. First John repeats this christological unambiguity inasmuch as it designates God absolutely as light and expressly holds fast to the assertion that there is no darkness in him at all. God's unambiguous nature emerges through the fact that he is completely perceived in the coming of the Christ. Of course, this unambiguity does all the more urgently pose the question concerning whence darkness then comes. It comes from wherever it comes, in any case not from God. It comes probably from the ethical and existential opposition to the light: it is dark where one does not allow the light to shine.

Analogous to the statement that God is light, yet another theological statement is made in 1 John: "God is love" (1 John 4:8b). This statement too must be understood as ripe fruit on the tree of christological reflection. The Gospel understands the sending of the Son as an expression of God's love for the world (John 3:16). First John 4:9–10 picks up this idea. God's love was made manifest in the sending of the Son (v. 9). And again, the term "manifest" (ἐφανερώθη) refers not to a mere showing, or some sort of information about love, but rather, to its emergence as an event. It became an event in the sending of the *μωϋσεως υἱός*, of the only-begotten and to that extent unique Son. It is a sending in which God comes completely and with no reservations. We must understand this statement as the reverse side of incarnation Christology. It was not merely a portion of God that was embodied here, not merely one of his characteristics or actions; rather, the divine fullness itself became completely efficacious as love. And from this event of love—an event that took place in the foreground of the world and that proves itself in the sending of the only-begotten Son—it follows that God must be understood completely and exclusively as love. This unambiguous nature of

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God is comparable to the unambiguous nature of the being of light in 1 John 1:5. The *christological* statement, according to which the divine fullness came into the world in the one who became a human being, corresponds to that *theological* statement that this God is now to be understood completely as that which he became in the Christ. The Christology of the incarnation corresponds precisely to this christological theology, whose understanding of God derives completely from the perception of the Christ.

In this connection the christological interest of 1 John also acquires clear contours. The christological arguments in 1 John are concentrated essentially in the assertion that Jesus Christ really did come in the flesh. The earthly reality of the Christ is thereby maintained, because it is a matter of the reference to reality, attached to the claims concerning God. The direction of the argument is the reverse of that taken by the Gospel. Whereas the latter was concerned with understanding the human being Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, as God in person, it is now a matter of maintaining the divine Christ as a real human being.<sup>39</sup> What is at stake is the dimension of reality of Johannine theology. And a decision is made regarding the dimension of reality of Johannine theology by holding fast to the worldly reality of the one who came.<sup>40</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The point of our reflections has been to observe the process of understanding undertaken by Christology over several stages, with the goal of making a contribution to hermeneutics in the canonical context. The Christology of the Johannine writings is of great hermeneutical interest because it combines in a consistent manner the highest majesty of the Son of God with the deepest humanity of Jesus of Nazareth. The pre-Johannine Logos Christology exploits the hermeneutical potential of wisdom theology in order to comprehend the coming of the human being Jesus as a turning of God's love toward the world. The experience of the graciously bestowed Son, which one had with Jesus Christ, was evaluated and acknowledged in its full import by being traced back to the primal Logos. The one who became a human being becomes conceivable as the reality of God in the world, and God is himself no longer conceivable apart from this turning of his love toward that world. The Gospel reflects further on this pre-Johannine Logos Christology, especially with regard to the concrete form assumed by the Logos that became a human being. He not only gives grace and truth; he *is* grace and truth. The I-Am sayings combine the heavenly truth of the Logos with the earthly reality of Jesus, and they identify Jesus himself as the gift bestowed in the miracles of the *semeia* narratives. The Paraclete represents yet a further stage of reflection. This figure allows us to conceive at the same time the temporality of the Incarnate and his eternal presence in the world. The Paraclete is the fruit of the fact that Jesus' time was finite. He is the advocate of Christ (and, to that extent,

of the God who sent him) among human beings, inasmuch as he maintains the recollection of the  $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$  of Jesus Christ; he is the creative power of the substance that calls itself into recollection. The christological theology of 1 John draws the logical conclusion within the process of reflection undertaken by Johannine Christology. Predications about Christ (such as light and love) are now, as it were, given back to God himself. With regard to hermeneutics in the canonical context, this means that the process can be perceived as a whole. If the position of 1 John were taken on its own, its theology might be problematic. To the extent, however, that the reality of God was embodied undiminished in the Logos, it is only logical that one perceive this reality, in its own turn, completely christologically. The Christology of the incarnation corresponds precisely to a christological theology whose understanding of God derives completely from the perception of the Christ.

## NOTES

1. D. Moody Smith correctly observes that "the christological content and emphasis" is "dominant in the Gospel of John" (*Johannine Christianity: Essays on its Setting, Sources, and Theology* [Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1984], 178).
2. Most recently this view has been supported by Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Die Person Jesu Christi im Spiegel der vier Evangelien*, HTKNTSup (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna: Herder, 1993), 251–54 (ET, *Jesus in the Gospels* [Louisville, Ky.: Westminster, 1995]).
3. Hypotheses have recently resurfaced, according to which the Johannine letters represent the oldest documents within the Johannine writings (e.g., Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John: An Investigation of the Place of the Fourth Gospel in the Johannine School* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], 235–36). Such hypotheses, however, create more problems than they solve. Thus, for instance, Schnelle must interpret the prologue of the Gospel as an antidocetic response to the docetic Christology of the adversaries in 1 John (this, a criticism of Schnelle's otherwise impressive interpretation of the prologue: *ibid.*, 211–27). The prologue is better understood, however, as a move away from wisdom Christology toward an incarnation statement, as a step that could later serve as the foundation of docetism rather than as a response to it. One can doubt that Christ has come in the flesh only when the incarnation statement has already been made.
4. Marianne Meye Thompson (*The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988], 121–22) justifiably criticizes the view of "naïve docetism," inaugurated by Käsemann. Yet it is no less false to understand the Gospel as antidocetic (*ibid.*, 122), for in fact it does presuppose that Jesus was a man of flesh and blood. Rather, its interest is christological: "On this assumption [namely, of the true humanity of Jesus] it builds its argument that the one who became flesh was indeed God's Word" (*ibid.*, 122).
5. Smith, *Johannine Christianity*, 175.
6. This is the accomplishment of the prologue over against other, possibly earlier, drafts, such as the one that specifies the baptism by John as the beginning of the

Gospel. Michael Theobald (*Die Fleischwerdung des Logos: Studien zum Verhältnis des Johanneprologs zum Corpus des Evangeliums und zu 1 Joh.*, NTAbh., NF 20 [Münster: Aschendorff, 1988], 477) speaks, in this context, of a "transcending of the question of the *arche* [beginning] of Jesus as the revealer of God out of its historical dimension into that of eternity." It is questionable whether one should speak here of this sort of transcending. In my opinion, the dimension of history is not transcended but, rather, recognized for the first time in its true significance. The origin of that which happened in the concreteness of historical reality resides in the creative origin of the universe.

7. Following Theobald, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos*, 491: "One the one hand, the Logos is so profoundly bound up with all that has been created that, as the one who became flesh, it belongs *completely* on the side of human beings. On the other hand, it has always been with God and is of his essence ( $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ ), so that it also belongs *completely* on the side of God."

8. Although the assertion is indeed made that there was wisdom before all that is created, it is expressly designated as God's first creation: Prov. 8:22 (in MT as  $\text{חָכְמָה}$ , the first creation of his ways; in LXX as  $\epsilon\lambda\gamma\chi\eta$ , the beginning of his ways to his works); similarly, Sir. 24:3 ("I came forth from the mouth of the Most High").

9. This is the confession of the "identity of Jesus as the revealer of God" (Theobald, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos*, 493). According to the prologue, "Jesus . . . is not some accidental, contingent 'expression' of God but, rather, his most essential and only word . . . his self-expression" (*ibid.*, 492). Insofar as one understands all these statements not in the sense of information but, rather, in the sense of the specific form of an event, in the sense of reality, they do express an important christological dimension of the prologue.

10. "In short, the prologue (1:1–18) claims that God can be known only in Jesus Christ" (Thompson, *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 51). This assertion fails to consider that the universal dimension of the Logos (1:1–5, 9–12, based on wisdom theology) is not suspended through the notion of incarnation. One must, rather, reverse this statement: Wherever a person has recognized God, this recognition comes through that particular, experiential reality perfectly embodied in Christ.

11. Theobald addresses this issue (*Die Fleischwerdung des Logos*, 481–83). Even if one assumes a kinship between this notion — one with Gnostic inclinations — and the wisdom theology of Judaism, one must distinguish carefully between the emergence of wisdom out of the mouth of God, on the one hand, and the emergence of the Logos from silence on the other (contra Theobald, *ibid.*, 483).

12. Theobald addresses this issue (*Die Fleischwerdung des Logos*, 486–88).

13. Hence it is inappropriate to assert that "gnostic thinking, though neutralized in the prologue, has nonetheless covertly influenced it" (contra Theobald, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos*, 486). All of the passages adduced by Theobald (*ibid.*: John 1:1–2, 5, 18) can be explained effortlessly from the perspective of Hellenistic-Jewish wisdom theology.

14. The incarnation statement and the statement concerning the  $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$  ("glory") of the only-begotten son (in v. 14) are grounded (in v. 16) in the experience of having received grace and truth from him in abundance.

15. Thompson justifiably argues that the prologue presupposes the humanity of Jesus (*The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 51–52). Its whole thrust is the statement that in this concrete humanity God himself has become reality.

16. Jesus' humanity is absolutely fundamental for the Gospel (thus, Thompson, *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, esp. 117–22).
17. Thus, Schnackenburg, *Die Person Jesu Christi im Spiegel der vier Evangelien*, 277–315.
18. Similarly, Boy Hinrichs, "Ich bin": *Die Konsistenz des Johannes-Evangeliums in der Konzentration auf das Wort Jesu*, SBS 133 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988), 95: "The evangelist succeeds in adequately . . . grounding and mediating theology as Christology" by concentrating on the Word (as it comes to expression in the I-am sayings).
19. Smith, *Johannine Christianity*, 177; see also 179.
20. Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, 164.
21. Following Schnelle, *ibid.*: "It [the miracle] is not only an indication of the *doxa*, but an expression of the *doxa* itself. Certainly, Jesus' *doxa* is more than his miracle working, but at the same time, the *doxa* is fully present in each miracle."
22. Thompson, *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 120.
23. Following Schnelle (*Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, 168), who refers to the important motif of the unity of Father and Son in the Johannine interpretation of the *semeia* narratives.
24. "At the same time the miracles with their materiality, which is bound up with the earthly and subject to verification in space and time, point to Jesus' humanity" (Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, 166).
25. One should bear in mind that the Gospel intends to distinguish these events from mere mighty deeds; it is no accident that they are called σημεία ("signs") and not θαύματα ("mighty works"), following Thompson, *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 119). In this context it is significant that these events are not merely arbitrary signs whose concrete form has nothing to do with their semantic function (like "the signal," τὸ σήμα, of Mark 14:44: the kiss of Judas, a sign that means something quite different from that which it portrays).
26. Contra Schnelle, who ascribes an "antidocetic function" to the "powerful deeds of the λόγος ἐνσαρκος ["enfleshed Logos"]" (*Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, 175). A more persuasive view is the analysis of Thompson, which shows that the Gospel of John is to be interpreted neither docetically nor antidocetically (*The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 121–22).
27. Fundamental significance attaches not only to the "that" of the *semeia*, but also to the fact that Jesus performed precisely these and no other signs (following Thompson, *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 119–20).
28. Following Jürgen Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes: Kapitel 11–21*, ÖTK 4, 3d ed. (Gütersloh: Mohr, 1991), 2.564.
29. Thus, Becker, *ibid.*, 563–68.
30. Following Smith, *Johannine Christianity*, 185: "The Spirit or Paraclete as the mode of Jesus' abiding with his disciples seems to be a felt reality, a presence regarded as given rather than imagined."
31. William Loader views this as the "greater event," mentioned in the farewell discourses (*The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Structure and Issues*, BBET 23, 2d ed. [Frankfurt and New York: Lang, 1992], 125–26): "The greater event has accordingly a hermeneutical function." Concerning this hermeneutical function, see also Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, 231: "The Paraclete actualizes and makes present the witness of the Johannine tradition to Jesus Christ."

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32. See Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "δόξα, κ. τ. λ.," *TDNT* 2 (1964): 135–65, esp. 137.
33. So also Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 2472: "But the Spirit-Paraclete is not the intercessor before God, like the Exalted in 1 John 2:1 (and, in substance, also John 14:14), but is understood above all as the representative among the disciples of him who is now exalted."
34. See also R. Alan Culpepper, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, Knox Preaching Guides (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 15: "Whereas Christology dominates the Gospel of John, 1 John is theocentric: it explores the nature of God's character." One must be sure to distinguish, however, between a theocentrism untouched by Christology (on the one hand) and a theocentrism that, as it were, brings in the harvest of christological reflection (on the other). We are dealing with the latter type in 1 John.
35. Hans-Josef Klauck speaks of the "christological derivation" of this insight (*Der erste Johannesbrief*, EKKNT 23/1 [Zürich and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1991], 1.83).
36. "Jesus lived in an exemplary fashion the self-disclosure of God as light; he makes it accessible to experience; and, above all, he makes it accessible to reenactment" (Klauck, *Der erste Johannesbrief*, 1.83). One would have to ask, however, whether this statement is not composed with too much emphasis on theoretical information ("to live in an exemplary fashion"; "to make accessible to reenactment").
37. The fulcrum point is this accessibility to experience, the reality of the divine light in Christ; so also Klaus Wengst, *Der erste, zweite und dritte Brief des Johannes*, ÖTK 16 (Gütersloh: Mohr, 1978), 50, who emphasizes the element of the becoming of an event. It is unclear to me, however, why this statement might not be reversed (as Wengst postulates [*ibid.*, 51]).
38. Following Gerd Schnack, *Die Briefe des Johannes*, ZBK, NT 17 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1982), 24: "What in the Gospel of John is a (christological) predicate of the revealer, who in concurrence with the Father says, 'I am the light of the world' (8:12), is now similarly transferred and referred to God, such that in its encounter with the revealer faith has acquired insight into the essence, or at least the reality, of God." By "reality" one may—also in Schnack's sense—understand "efficacious presence."
39. Following Thompson, *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 122: "The Gospel declares that in the flesh of Jesus God is revealed; the Epistle, that God is revealed in the *flesh* of Jesus."
40. Following Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London and Philadelphia: SCM/Trinity Press International, 1990), 57–63. The Gnostic thesis that Christ did not come in the flesh turns the human being Jesus into a *quantité négligeable*, thereby annulling the notion of incarnation (esp. 59). See further *idem*, *Die Johanneseische Frage*, WUNT 67 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1993), 170–85, esp. 178.