

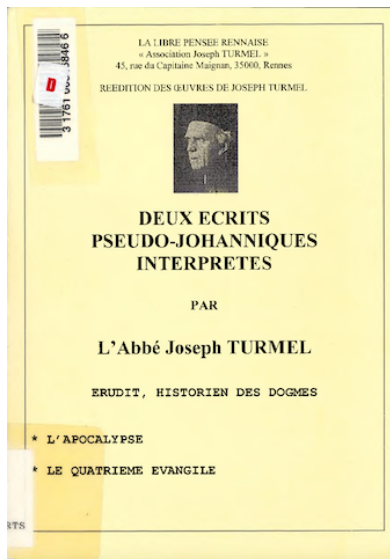
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Neil Godfrey - November 2023



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PART TWO

SECOND REDACTION OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

It makes him rich. The new owner of a house sees only the advantages at first. Then, little by little, defects, drawbacks and shortcomings come to light, requiring alterations and additions. With use, several weak points appeared in the Fourth Gospel. It was found that its highly inspired speeches and majestic narratives were not only poorly defended against the Marcionite heresy, but seemed here and there to be in its favour. This unfortunate situation had to be remedied. Hence the additions intended to explain the primitive text, to gloss it, to enlighten it, but which, in reality, have distorted it.

1 The carnal body of Christ.

The Johannine epistles denounce with horror men who refuse to believe in the flesh of Jesus. These people admit that Jesus possesses the divinity; but they claim that this divinity did not take on flesh to come among us. It is in this denial of the flesh that their crime consists. A monstrous crime: "Many deceivers have come into the world who do not confess that Jesus came in the flesh. This one (who thinks this way) is the deceiver and the antichrist" (II Jo., 7); "Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus (as having come in the flesh) is not of God; it is that of the antichrist of whom you have heard that he is coming and who is already now in the world" (I Jo., IV, 2, 3); "It is he, Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood; not in water alone but in water and blood", (I Jo., V, 1) (I Jo., V, 6); the guilty parties recognise that Jesus was baptized, but they do not admit that he really died; the water designates the baptism of Jesus by John, the blood designates his real death. So one is antichrist when one merely admits the divinity of Jesus and rejects his incarnation.

How could an author so concerned to highlight the human nature of Christ have left it in the shade elsewhere? It will be said that he was not required to repeat the same thing

over and over again. That's fine. But he had at least to watch his formulas and be careful not to provide weapons to the "antichrists", the "seducers" that he denounces so vehemently here. Now the following professions of faith, which we read in other places, could not but be welcome to the deniers of the incarnation, to all those who thought themselves in good standing with the faith, when they had proclaimed the divinity of Jesus: "He who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God" (I Jo., IV, 15); "He who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in himself... I have written these things to you so that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God. (I Jo., V, 10, 13). How could the apostle of the incarnation of Christ not see that he was borrowing here from his adversaries their own language? But it is precisely not he who speaks to us now, it is the spokesman of the "antichrists". He preaches the Marcionite Christ, the non-incarnate Christ; and the proponent of the incarnation is a Catholic who strives to neutralise this doctrine, whose formulae he dares not suppress.

I have just interrogated the Johannine epistles. I now turn to the Gospel. It tells us (XIX, 34) that a Roman soldier, seeing Jesus dead, pierced his side with a spear, and that blood and water came out. This natural fact seems commonplace to us. So we are surprised to hear the narrator solemnly guarantee its reality with this formula, the equivalent of which does not appear anywhere else except in the final note: "He who saw him testified to it, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may also believe. Why, then, does he attach so much importance to a detail which has none for us? The text of I Jo., V, 6, which we have just encountered, gives us a glimpse of the solution of the enigma. The blood and the water that the spear shot produced are the confirmation by history of the didactic teaching given by the epistle. The latter professes that Jesus came not only with water, but also with blood; that he not only received John's baptism, but also shed his blood, that he actually died for us. The Gospel explains what happened. When the Roman soldier approaches the cross, Jesus was already dead. However, it could be argued that he was dead as ghosts die, that he was dead in appearance. The blow of the spear dispels this suspicion. From the side of Jesus pierced by the lance, blood flowed with water. There was blood to flow: proof that Jesus had a fleshly body like ours, for an ethereal body would not have had blood. But perhaps this blood was artificial? No, because if it had been artificial, it would have had a ruddy colour. Now, with the blood there was water to flow: proof that the blood was decomposed by death; therefore proof that this blood was of the same quality as ours and that Jesus had a human nature in all respects similar to ours. The spear-throwing and what follows is therefore an apologetic story, a story intended to confirm the incarnation of Jesus the Son of God. But what does the witness have to do with the certificate of high probity that is issued to him? It is the expedient to which one resorts when one has prejudices to fight, defiance to uproot. The author is confronted

with Christians who have been preached the doctrine of the spiritual Christ and who, if they have not already given their adhesion to it, are about to do so. He said to them: 'There was blood flowing from the side of Christ pierced by the lance; blood mixed with water. This is quite certain, for the witness to the fact is above suspicion. Therefore, do not believe in the phantom Christ, and hasten to withdraw your faith from him if you have had the misfortune of granting it. Do not be seduced by this doctrine of lies. Remain faithful to the incarnate Christ. Return to him if you have left him. He wages war on Docetism.

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He is at war with him. So he could not favour him. It was not he who wanted to give Christ the attitude of a ghost. Now we know texts in which Christ speaks, acts as a being foreign to the laws of humanity: "What is there between me and you, woman?"; "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world"; "I have food to eat that you do not know"; "Father, the hour has come, glorify your son...". Between these texts and the story of the spear-throwing there is an abyss, the abyss that separates Marcionite Christology from Catholic Christology.

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2. - The Bread of Life.

Let us stop now at the discourse on the bread of life (in chapter VI), leaving aside the promises on the resurrection found there, which I will deal with in the notes.

Jesus, seeing the Jews in search of material bread, exhorts them to get "the food that endures for eternal life", the "true bread of heaven", of which the manna was only a shadow. The Jews cry out, "Lord, give us this bread always. Jesus replies, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... (40) My Father's will is that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life... (47) Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that whoever eats it will not die. (51) I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever... (58) This is the bread that came down from heaven... whoever eats this bread will live forever... (60) Many of his disciples, when they heard him, said, "This is a hard speech; who can hear it? Jesus, knowing in himself that his

disciples were murmuring about it, said to them, "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

This discourse proclaims the virtue of faith, as will later be the discourse at the Last Supper. Then Jesus will say (XVII, 3): "The eternal life is that they know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ". Today he says: "Whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst... My Father's will is that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life. Faith is "the food that endures for eternal life". And since this faith has as its object the Son of God (as well as the Father; but the Father is one with his Son, X, 30, and he who sees the Son sees the Father, XIV, 7, 9), it follows that the Son of God is 'the bread of life', the bread that must be eaten in order to live forever. But how do we eat the Son of God? He is eaten as soon as one believes in him, since, as soon as one believes in him, one has eternal life. And the word of Augustine is true (In Jo., XXV, 12). "Teeth and belly have nothing to do here. Believe and you have eaten. (XXVI, 1): "To believe in him is to eat the living bread. He who believes eats."

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There is, moreover, an explanation for this spiritual eating by faith which Augustine did not see, which his Catholic convictions prevented him from seeing, but which the Johannine Christ gives us with his usual discretion. "The flesh is of no use. It would be of no use to the Son of God in accomplishing his life-giving mission. It is not by the flesh that he must feed us; it is by the spirit. The Christ of the bread of life discourse is a spiritual Christ.

But I have left out a whole section of the bread of life discourse. And this section, which runs from 51b to 57, seems to nullify my conclusions. Let us judge. After saying that he is the bread that came down from heaven and that he who eats of this bread will live forever, Christ adds:

(51 b) "And the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world. At this the Jews disputed among themselves, saying, "How can he give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is indeed food and my blood is indeed drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. As the living Father has sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me lives. As the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me."

Here is the flesh in the foreground. But at the same time, the maxim "the flesh is useless" is forgotten. For between this and that there is an absolute antinomy. Not for theologians, of course. They are never short of explanations. In order to reconcile the dogma of hell with certain embarrassing texts, they have distinguished between a fire that burns and a fire that does not burn, between punishments that punish and punishments that do not punish. In the same way they distinguish between a carnal flesh to which the above-mentioned maxim applies and a non-carnal flesh, the object of the precept: "If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man...". Let us leave aside this childishness and conclude. It is obvious that if flesh is useless, we need not bother to eat the flesh of Christ. It is equally obvious that the flesh is of paramount importance if, in order to have eternal life, one must eat the flesh of Christ. The opposition between "if you do not eat" and "the flesh is of no use" is irreducible.

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To this first observation is added another. It is generally acknowledged that the statements concerning the eating of the flesh make a certain contrast with the rest of the discourse on the bread of life. But it is assured that this contrast is in the precision of the thoughts and not in their opposition. Let us look at this closely.

To believe in the divinity of Christ and to eat his flesh - whatever the meaning of the latter expression - express two different ideas. One can believe that Christ possesses divinity without eating his flesh; conversely, one can eat - in any sense one wishes - the flesh of Christ without believing in his divinity. Now each of these two acts is presented to us successively as necessary and sufficient. In one place in the discourse, eternal life is guaranteed to all those who accept the divinity of Christ. Then, a little further on, we learn that, in order to have eternal life, we must eat his flesh. If this last operation is indispensable, then faith in the Son of God is not enough. And if faith is sufficient, the eating of the flesh is superfluous. For the second time we are faced with an irreducible opposition.

The discourse on the bread of life is not homogeneous. Two authors have contributed to it. The first said: "The bread of life is the Son of God. This heavenly bread feeds the soul that believes in him; and the food he gives guarantees the soul immortality. But in this food there is nothing carnal; for Christ is spirit and the flesh is of no avail. The second said: "Christ gave eternal life to men by shedding his blood. It is his sacrificed flesh that is the bread of life, for it is his flesh that has given salvation to the world. Let us therefore believe in the flesh and blood of Christ; for if we believe in a phantom Christ, we shall not have the eternal life which Christ obtained for us by his flesh and blood. We

have before us two authors. And, as each puts his doctrine in the mouth of Christ, we have before us two Christs. Both agree in asking us for faith, in declaring that without faith we do not have eternal life (the second adds the resurrection). Only they differ on the object of faith. The one is concerned only with his divinity: he is the Marcionite Christ. The other thinks only of his incarnation: this is the Catholic Christ. If we believe in the Son of God, we will be in good standing with the first. To satisfy the second, we must believe that Christ took on flesh and is not a ghost.

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Here a question inevitably arises. If the Catholic Christ simply asks us to believe in the reality of his flesh, why does he tell us to eat it? We have seen that the Marcionite Christ systematically shunned too harsh a light and wrapped himself in an otherwise light veil for fear of frightening consciences. But the Catholic Christ does not have the same sensitivities to respect. Why then is he obscure?

He has been forced into obscurity by professional duty. What role does he claim here? He claims to be an interpreter. Interpreter of the words of the Marcionite Christ. In reality he suppresses them; but he suppresses them by way of commentary. An elegant process, but one that is not without imposing some servitude. The dissertation on the flesh had to fit the oracle it was supposed to explain; it had to give the illusion that it was prolonging it. Now the Marcionite Christ had presented faith under the symbol of the bread that feeds the soul and gives it eternal life. This symbol was used by the Catholic Christ, who threw his dissertation into it as if into a mould. The flesh became a bread of immortality: "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world". Transformed into bread, the flesh was the food of the soul that eats it. Then the blood, demanded by symmetry, intervened to play the role of beverage. This is how the necessity of faith in the incarnation of Christ was translated into the necessity of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. An artificial translation, certainly, but one imposed by the situation. The author was far from foreseeing the enormous mystery which his expedient would cause for posterity.

3. - The Word and the Light

The preamble of the fourth Gospel is composed with the help of the two symbols of the Word and the Light. The Word is in the foreground. The Word, we read, was in the beginning. He was near God; he was God. All things were made through him and nothing that was made was made without him. A little further on, in 10b, we learn again

that the world was made by him. Finally, in 14, we are told that the Word became flesh. The Light makes its entrance in verse 4 and brings with it its credentials: "The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not received it. There was a man sent from God; his name was John... He was not the Light, but his purpose was to bear witness to the Light. The true Light... was coming into the world. It was in the world."

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The Word and the Light fill the preamble. Let us now go through the Gospel. Along the way we encounter light here and there. In III, 19 we read: "The light has come into the world, and men preferred darkness to light, because their deeds were evil. Jesus himself declares on several occasions that he is the light of the world. He says it in Jerusalem before the assembled Jews (VIII, 12); he says it to his disciples when he is about to open the eyes of the born blind man (IX, 5). And the same assertion falls from his lips several times in another circumstance (XII, 35, 36, 46; see also XI, 9, as well as the first Johannine epistle which tells us, I, 5, that God is light). In short, the light whose brilliance the preamble recounts prepares us for the light which, in the body of the Gospel, shines before our eyes. And, since the role of a preamble is to be an introducer, the light is in its place in the preamble of the fourth Gospel.

Let us now come to the Word. He shows himself to us only in the first lines of the fourth Gospel; for, after the first lines, he disappears without a trace. This disappearance is astonishing. Seeing this character so proudly camped on the very threshold of the Johannine edifice, we think we are in front of the master of the house. One enters. Inside, no one knows him, no one has even heard of him. How can this contrast be explained? Why does the Johannine Christ never call himself the Word? Why does he never allude to his creative work? 1

1. In V. 17, he has in view only the thaumaturgical activity of which he has just given an example by healing the paralytic and which he says emanates from his Father; it is the same thought as in IX, 4.

And, since the Johannine Christ is an artificial creation, why did the author of this fiction so completely forget to agree the body of his book with the preamble? He begins by announcing in pompous and grandiloquent terms that the Word was, from the beginning, close to God, that he was God, that he created the world. Then he tells us about Christ's exploits and his speeches. And in these stories and speeches, which are the product of his imagination, the creative Word has no place!

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Will we try to explain this contradiction by the concern for verisimilitude? Will it be said that the author, who promulgated the doctrine of the creative Word, shrank from the thought of putting this theory into the mouth of Jesus himself? As if Christ, who taught his unity with the Father and other such astonishing things, could feel any embarrassment in claiming the title of Creator Word! The truth is that the author of the fourth Gospel is totally ignorant of the distinction between the plausible and the implausible. He who made Jesus say: "I am the light of the world"; "I and the Father are one", etc., could just as easily, if he were to take into account only historical verisimilitude, attribute to him statements like these: "I am the Word of God"; "I created the world". And he should have added these jewels to the crown of Christ, if the texts of the preamble which speak of the Word emanated from him. But precisely the contrast we see between the body of the Gospel and the Word of the preamble seems to indicate two different redactions. Yet before we come to a firm conclusion, let us study the preamble itself. The Word and the Light are the two occupants. First we see the Word appear, through whom all things were made. Then the Light takes the place of the Word, bringing with it John who, though not the Light, bears witness to the Light. The Light itself soon gives way to the Word, which once again imposes itself on our attention, and we end up learning that the Word has become flesh. Strange duality! An even stranger alternation! Why in the same lesson and almost in the same sentence have recourse to the two symbols of the Word and the Light, which are so different from each other! And, if one wanted to use both, why go back to the first after having left it?

But we are not at the end of our surprises. I said that the Word, after being expropriated by the Light, reappears on the scene and expels the Light in turn. When and how does the transition take place? Let us read the following verses: 9 "The true Light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. 10a He was in the world; 10 and the world was made through him." Verse 9 clearly speaks of the Light which is designated there in full; and the first part of 10 contains no trace of change. But the second part of the same verse 10 announces a thought which has no connection with the Light. It speaks of the author of the world, and this author is designated in the same terms as those applied to the author of all things in 3. Now the author of all things in 3 is the Word. The author of the world of which 10 speaks is therefore the Word - on this point, moreover, the agreement is universal - and it is in 10b that the transition from Light to Word is accomplished. Note that this transition is accomplished without our knowledge. We guess it, we see it. But we only get this result by comparing the texts and by using reasoning. We are not officially warned that in 10b the Word replaces the Light, which in 4 and 5 had replaced - but this time openly - the Word. The transition is sneaky.¹

1. There is no grammatical clue to it, for the Greek pronoun, *dī autou*, which designates the author of the world could, if only the form is taken into account, apply to the Light as well as to the Word.

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Is this hidden transition that we have managed to unmask in 10b the only one of its kind, or is it followed by one or more transitions of the same kind? Does the Word, which in 10b expels the Light, keep the place it has conquered, or is it in turn expelled by the Light, even if it means driving it out again? This is the question we have to resolve? Our present text allows no hesitation. According to it, the Word, once entered into the preamble, does not leave it any more, and it is about it that the whole piece that goes from 10b to 14, inclusively, speaks. 2 So this is the Word whom the world did not know (10e), who came to his own home and whom his own people did not receive (11), but who gave to all who received him the power to become children of God (12). We would not dare to take issue with the text if it did not incite us to do so. But it does so by its lack of cohesion. He reproaches the world for not having known the Word, he notes with pain that the Word was not received by his own. Yet it is only in verse 14 that he mentions the incarnation of the Word: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us". Until then, that is, in 10b to 13, the Word was not yet incarnate and had not yet dwelt among us. How could the world have known him at a time when no one had seen him? And how could "his own" refuse to receive him since he had not yet come "home"? All this is inconsistent, and we are entitled to seek another interpretation.

2. The character who, from 10b to 13, is referred to without being designated is put in the masculine form; now the Greek term which designates the light is neuter, whereas the term which designates the Word is masculine.

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Let us apply our verses to the Light from 9: "The true Light which enlightens every man came into the world, 10a . It was in the world, 10b and the world was made by it (i.e. by the Word), 10e and the world did not know it (i.e. the Light). 11 It came to its own home, and its own people did not receive it. 12a . But to all who received it, it gave power to become children of God 12b to those who believe in its name (that is, in the name of the Word) 13 and they were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14a And the Word became flesh 14b And it (the Light) dwelt among us... we have seen its glory, the glory as of an only begotten son of his Father."

Since the Light came into the world, we are not surprised to learn that it was in the world, and we also understand the reproach against the world because it did not know the Light. The world could have known the Light because the Light was in the world, and it was there because its coming into the world was previously reported to us. All this makes sense: 10e is related to 10a, which is related to 9. We understand without difficulty that if the Light came "home", "his own" were guilty of not receiving it. We then learn that this fault was not universal and that the Light was received by a certain number of "his". These were rewarded with a new birth, a divine birth.

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These again - for they are the same - saw that the Light dwelt among them (those of 'his' who refused to receive the Light saw nothing, needless to say, and the privilege of seeing the Light was reserved for those of 'his' who received it). They saw its glory; they saw that the Light that came into the world was to God what a son is to his father.

Again, it all adds up. And how can we believe that a key which opens the lock so well was not made for the lock? Let us say, therefore, without fear of being mistaken, that the Light, ousted for a moment by the Word in 10^b, immediately takes its place, and that we find it not only in 11, 12 and 13 but even in 14^b: "It dwelt among us..."

So the Light does not definitely leave the preamble from 10b onwards, as is said everywhere. This has two consequences. The first is that our present text, in verses 10c, 11, 12a, has been altered. According to him, in the form that it has today, it is the Word that the world did not know (10c); it is the Word again that came to him and that his own did not receive; finally it is the Word that transformed into children of God those who received him, and that procured for them a divine birth. Originally it was not so. Then the Light alone was involved, and the hand of an interpolator passed by who stripped the Light for the benefit of the Word¹. In the same way, in 14th it is no longer the Light that is presented to us as having dwelt among us and as having a glory that the children of God have contemplated. It is the Word that now occupies its place. But here (I am speaking of 14b) no interpolation was required; the substitution was made automatically by the introduction of the Word in 14a (the French requires the change of the feminine into the masculine; in the Greek it is not so).

1. The interpolation was limited to adding a letter to the pronoun which was originally auto. Whereas today we read auton.

The second consequence relates to the Word. We are now fixed on the character of his intermittent appearances. He intervenes in 10b as the author of the world between two

assertions which tell us that the Light was in the world and that the world did not know it. In 12b, where those who believe in his name are mentioned, he cuts a sentence in two sections in which the benefit granted by the Light to those who received it is described. In 14a the Word becomes incarnate when the Light has already given those who have received it a divine birth. Without the unfortunate interventions of the Word, the piece on the Light, which begins in verse 4, would develop regularly. It is chopped up three different times by the Word, and in the first three verses it is obscured by the same disruptive agent. We already knew that the Word, confined to the preamble of the fourth Gospel, was alien to the Gospel itself. We now have proof that its presence in the preamble is due to an artificial and violent operation. The Word comes there only as an overlay. Originally the preamble was devoted exclusively to the Light. How was it written? To tell, we would have to know what exactly the interpolator's alterations were. We do not know. The following attempt at reconstruction is therefore only a conjectural approximation:

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4. "God is the Life and the Life is the Light of men, 5. And the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not received it, 6. There was a man sent from God; his name was John. 7. This man came as a witness, to testify about the Light, that all might believe through him. 8. This man was not the Light, but his purpose was to bear witness to the Light. 9 The true Light that enlightens every man came into the world. 10a It was in the world; 10e and the world did not know it. 11. It came to her home and her own people did not receive it, 12a But to all who received her, 12b she gave them power to become children of God. 13 They were begotten, not by blood, nor by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but by God. 14b And she dwelt among us and we saw her glory, the glory of an only son from his father. He (this son) was full of grace and truth. 16 From his fullness we all received the benefits of his goodness. 17 For the law was given by Moses; the benefits and the truth are from Jesus Christ.

Before going any further, let us reread the beginning of the first Johannine epistle:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and our hands have touched, concerning the word of life; 2 and the life was manifested and we have seen and bear witness, and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us; 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you, that you also may have fellowship with us.

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One part of this sentence ("what our hands have touched") is a clear profession of faith in the incarnation of Christ. But the whole sentence is so defiant of the laws of syntax that only the hypothesis of retouching is capable of explaining its formation. Verse 1 is of secondary origin. Yet it is precisely this verse that proclaims the incarnation. The epistle, freed from this postictal piece, tells us about the divine life that has been manifested, and then teaches that God is Light:

"The news which we have learned from him, and which we proclaim to you, is that God is Light, and that in him there is no darkness." In short, the first Johannine epistle began more or less like the fourth Gospel. Then the same hand that disfigured the beginning of the Gospel also disguised the beginning of the epistle by placing the incarnation in it. Only, in the last case, it threw away its interpolation without taking the trouble to bring it into line with the syntax.

Let us now return to the preamble of the Gospel. The Word, which today occupies it in competition with the Light, was not there originally. It was introduced there by a hand foreign to the first redaction to accomplish a dogmatic mission. And it is easy to see what mission he was charged with. It is there to teach first that Christ, before coming to earth, created the world, and then to teach that this creator of the universe, in coming among us, clothed himself with a carnal body. Now, at the time when the Word entered the preamble, the school of Marcion presented to the adoration of the faithful a Christ who was the good God, who came in person to the earth clothed in an ethereal body to ruin the empire of the creator God. The Word was thus given the mandate to combat the spiritual Christ of the school of Marcion. In short, the Word is of Catholic origin. Let us put it aside and place ourselves in the presence of the Light which alone occupied the primitive writing. The Light did not have to create the world; it found the world in possession of the existence received from the Creator. Its concern was to illuminate the world. So it came into the world; but the world preferred to keep the darkness in which it was immersed. The world did not know the Light; it rejected it.

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We then learn that the Light has come 'home' and that 'his' people have not received it. What does this mean? The commentators explain that "his own" are the Jews who constituted the people of God, the chosen people, and that the Light, when it dwelt among the Jewish people, was "at home". This interpretation clashes with the most formal statements of the Johannine Christ who says to the Jews (VIII, 44-47): "You have the devil for a father... He who is of God listens to the words of God; you do not listen, because you are not of God. This invective, with which all the pagans of the world are necessarily associated, is peremptory. Men who have the Devil for a father and who are

not of God cannot belong to Christ, to him who called himself the light of the world. We must therefore look elsewhere for that "home" where the Light came and where it met "its own" who did not receive it.

Let us follow the Light on its journey. It came into the world and the world did not know it. But, all the same, Jesus was able to say to his Father (XVII, 6): "I have manifested your name to the men you have given me out of the world. They were yours and you gave them to me and they kept your word. The Light founded the Church, the society of the sons of God. The Church has been on earth the domain of the Light. In the Church the Light has been "at home" and the children of the Church have been "hers". This was the case until the day when Peter was led by James into Judaism¹ and was followed in his defection by the Twelve and by the mass of Christians. From that day on, the Light came "home" and "his own" did not receive it. Yet the defection was not universal, or at least it was only transitory. The beloved disciple worked and his work was not in vain. Some have received the Light. These have been begotten to the divine life. And these children of God saw the Light dwelling in their midst with its glory. They saw him who looked like a Son. This glorious light was called Jesus Christ who said over and over again, "I am the Light of the world.

1. See below.127

We have acquired the proof that the Word was introduced in the preamble to combat the spiritual Christ. Now let us say that this spiritual Christ, to whom the Word came to make war, is the Light. The Light is spiritual. So is its glory. And it is because it is spiritual that the world has not known it, that many of its own people have not received it. If she had entered the world surrounded by a material glory, the world itself could not have been unaware of her; all the more reason why her own people could not have seen her, could not have received her. But it is of a spiritual order, and as such it is seen only by the eyes of faith. To see it, one must first adhere to it and receive it by faith. Only those among his own people who had the eyes of faith saw the glory of the Light. The others have not seen it, and, not having seen it, have not received it. It is the spiritual Christ against whom vulgar Christianity has reacted by imposing the incarnate Word.

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4. - The conversation with Nicodemus.

Nicodemus addresses Jesus as someone with a divine mission. He presents himself as a docile and willing disciple. Immediately and without any preamble, Jesus tells him

about the kingdom of God, and explains that the condition for entering this kingdom is birth from above. Seeing Nicodemus confused by this statement, Jesus clarifies his thinking. He says that the birth required to enter the kingdom of God has two factors which are water and spirit. He adds that the birth which has its source in the flesh, ends in the flesh, but that the birth whose source is the spirit ends in the spirit.

Surely such statements could never have been made. They take us into the realm of the unreal. And if we had to refute the apologists who insist on attributing historical value to the fourth Gospel, we would have the right to oppose them, along with various other considerations, to the beginning of the interview with Nicodemus. But that is not the point. For more than a quarter of a century independent criticism has exposed the fictitious nature of the fourth Gospel. And here the results of the criticism are assumed. We do not have to show that Christ's maxims about being born from above are fabricated. It is simply a question of finding out what they mean. This problem is not insoluble.

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The "kingdom of God" is the heaven where the good God resides, the one who, in XVII, 3, is called "the only true God" as opposed to the Creator who is the "Evil One", I Jo., III, 12; V, 18, 19. This heaven of the "only true God" is situated above the heaven of the "Evil One", which is part of the world (I Jo., IV, 4; V, 19). The birth from above is the blessing by which man becomes the child of God (I Jo., III, 1). By becoming the child of God, man passes from death to life (V, 24; I Jo., III, 14), so that the birth from above is also a resurrection, a spiritual resurrection of which the camel resurrection imagined by the Jews is only a crude caricature.

One of the factors of the birth from above, the spirit, is "the seed of God" (I Jo., III, 9), that is to say a parcel of the divine substance which, like all spirits, is made of a very subtle and very pure ether. This particle enters the soul which acquires the knowledge of the true God; from which it follows that knowledge is the source of Life, since it is it which allows the divine seed, the spirit, to enter the soul¹. The other factor of birth from above, water, is baptism, of which we know from Tertullian that the Marcionites made use².

1. XVII, 3; knowledge is, as it were, the act by which the soul opens itself like a window and thus gives passage to the divine substance.

2. Adv. Mark, 1,14: "[Marcion's God] did not reject the water of the Creator with which he washes his own "; see also I, 23 and 24. Let us not ask them how they

reconciled the role of the spirit with the role of water. They did not bother with this problem, which, moreover, was of the same order as that with which the Fathers and, following them, the Scholastics found themselves grappling.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit. The child of God who is in the soul of the Christian is therefore spiritual, since he has been begotten by a parcel of the divine substance. This child of God, who is hidden today, will one day be manifested, and then the child of God will appear like God who begot him (1 Jo., III, 2).

All this is consistent, all this follows, and up to this point Christ's dissertation is well conducted. But from verse 10 onwards, the scene changes.

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To Nicodemus, who, increasingly confused, asks how this can be done, Christ replies sarcastically: "You are a doctor in Israel and you do not know this? He is persiflage. A strange persiflage, and one for which we were not prepared, for he had hitherto spoken with great elevation. Unfair persiflage. All the doctors in Israel were completely unaware of the mystery from above. And how could they have known it, since the birth from above was the work of a God whose existence Christ came to reveal to men for the first time (I, 18)?

But what can we say about the following apostrophe, for which it is not clear to whom it is addressed or even from whom it comes: "We know what we say and we have seen what we testify to, and you do not receive our testimony. Nicodemus has asked for explanations, but he does not refuse to believe; it is therefore not he who is targeted here. Moreover, a whole community is called into question and accused of unbelief. Only it is impossible for us to say when and how they became involved in the secret meeting that Nicodemus wanted to have with Jesus in the middle of the night. On the other hand, Jesus seems to have disappeared. In any case, if it is still him who is heard, he speaks as an interpreter for an anonymous group. He declares that he and his companions know what they are saying, have seen what they are witnessing. And the excessive modesty he shows in lowering himself to the level of mere mortals shocks rather than edifies. He returns immediately afterwards to the stage if he had left it, or, if he had simply taken the role of interpreter, he renounces it and takes to speaking for himself. The apostrophe we heard earlier was addressed to unbelievers. Now Christ is surprised that they did not understand him when he spoke of earthly things, and he asks what they will understand when he speaks of heavenly things.

The audience, which in verse 11 was incredulous, is no longer incredulous in verse 12, where they are only accused of unintelligence. And this sudden metamorphosis seems quite mysterious. Where have the wicked who refused to believe gone? Where did these new listeners come from, who understood nothing of the earthly things that Christ told them about? And what earthly things did he teach that were not understood? According to the context, these things consist in the doctrine of the generation above. When, then, is anything heavenly if the generation produced by the seed of God is not? We have the right to compare 10b-14 fairly with the words of a man in a state of delirium; we have the right to say, without the slightest exaggeration, that on both sides it is the same disjointedness, the same incoherence. And one wonders with amazement how an otherwise remarkable writer could have forgotten himself to this extent.

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Now, curiously enough, the painful spectacle we have just witnessed disappears as soon as we limit ourselves to retaining two fragments of the aforementioned piece and suppress the rest. Then Christ's answer is this: (11) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, (13) no man hath ascended into heaven but he that descended therefrom; (16) for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send his son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. This answer teaches Nicodemus that God sent his Son to save the world; it asks him to believe in the Son and, consequently, to rely on the Son as to how divine generation is produced in the Christian's soul. The enormous disorder which separates the interview. Is due to well determined and clearly circumscribed elements. Once these disruptive elements have been removed, the talk consists of two parts. One is devoted to the divine birth of the Christian. In the other, the Son of God is shown to us as giving the divine birth to those who have faith in him. These two parts complement each other, and the talk that moves from one to the other proceeds normally. What more do we need to agree that the interview with Nicodemus, as it is presented to us today, has fallen victim to an interpolation that profoundly alters its physiognomy?

5. - The resurrection of Christ.

Let us now turn to the accounts of the resurrection of Christ and study the problems they raise.

When Magdalene went to the tomb, she saw that it was empty and immediately went to tell the disciples. Two of them, Peter and the beloved disciple, were moved by this news, so they hurried to check it and ran to the tomb. Here the evangelist, anxious not to leave out any small detail, explains that the beloved disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first, but that Peter was still the first to enter.

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Note the distinction that is made between the order of arrival at the tomb and the order of entry into the tomb. If it were to be found in a historical account, it would not allow any suspicion of alteration. This is because there is nothing impossible or even implausible about this reversal of the order of arrival and entry, and we have no right to challenge the claims of historians when they are not manifestly false, still less when they do not even offend plausibility. But the pilgrimage of Peter and the beloved disciple to the tomb of Jesus does not contain the slightest bit of history; it is entirely fictional. Seen in this light, the story presented to us lacks the homogeneity or, if you like, the unity it should have. This is why. In a fictional account, the facts, which by definition have been invented, are necessarily put at the service of a thesis (we are concerned here only with fictions of an apologetic or doctrinal nature). This thesis must be supported, demonstrated and highlighted, since they were created for this purpose alone. In this case, however, the facts as they are narrated, instead of proving anything, confuse everything. When we see the beloved disciple arrive first at the tomb, we see that he prevails over Peter. But the speed with which he loses his primacy is disconcerting. Invented from scratch, the journey to the tomb should be intended to exalt one of the disciples it features, either Peter or the beloved disciple; but one or the other. Instead, he exalts and belittles them both in succession. This is not the way to build a case in a thesis story. And it is difficult to escape the impression that two authors have collaborated on the text as we have it.

Two authors, one of whom has exalted the beloved disciple at the expense of Peter, while the other has exalted Peter at the expense of the beloved disciple. Our piece does belong to the category of thesis narratives; but it supports two interlocking theses. The early narrative established the primacy of the beloved disciple. It is in the other that we must look for the alteration, an alteration which, in the following quotation, is placed in square brackets (XX, 3-10):

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"Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran together. But the other disciple ran faster than Peter. He was the first to arrive at the tomb, and

bending down, he saw the linen cloths lying there [but he did not enter. Simon Peter, who was following him, came and entered the tomb. He saw the linen cloths spread out] and the shroud which had been put on his head, not spread out with the linen cloths but folded in a separate place. [Then the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered, and he saw] and believed [for they did not yet know that, according to the Scripture, he was to rise from the dead]. And the disciples returned to their homes.

Two theses, two authors: this is what we have seen in the account of the two disciples' journey to the tomb. The first writer is, of course, a Marcionite, and the beloved disciple he glorifies is the fictitious representative of the Marcionite doctrine. This ideal Christian is far superior to the vulgar Christian whose interpreter Peter is. He was the first to arrive at the tomb. He "bent down" as Magdalene will soon (11) "bend down" over the linen cloths, he saw the folded shroud and he believed. He believed that the spiritual body of Jesus had risen. Peter and the other disciples did not believe until later, when Magdalene came to tell them of the apparition she had been favoured with and to fulfil her commission to them.

The Marcionite writer represented the tomb of Christ as a pit dug from top to bottom in the earth, a pit over which one bends to see what is there, but into which one does not enter. The Catholic interpolator has changed this. He has turned the pit into a rock crevice that can be entered on the same level. Both disciples entered the tomb of Jesus, but it was Peter who had the honour of entering first. He was the first to see the shroud. He was also the first to believe - this is not spelled out, but implied. - The other believed only after Peter, since he was the second to enter the tomb. They both believed in the resurrection of Christ. They believed only after they had entered the empty tomb, because they did not know the prophecies of the Old Testament in which this prodigious miracle had been announced for centuries.

The journey of Peter and the beloved disciple to the tomb is followed by the two appearances to the disciples gathered in a room.

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Let us stop in front of them, remembering that they are fictitious and that in fictitious stories the slightest details have their reason to be.

Jesus shows his disciples his hands and his side, to enable them to see the marks of the nails that pierced the hands, to see the hole that the lance made in the side. And the purpose of this observation is obviously to give them a certainty. But what is it? Is it to prove to them that the figure who appears to them, who speaks to them, is Jesus

himself and not a stranger? The following observations provide the answer to this question. Various clues, such as the timbre of the voice, the features of the face, the evocation of a common memory, the performance of a characteristic gesture, etc., could, without the exhibition of the stigmata on the hands and side, guarantee the disciples against any danger of error. Magdalene recognised Jesus by his voice, the disciples on the road to Emmaus recognised him by the breaking of the bread, the holy women in Matthew recognised him by the features of his face; and no one accuses or even suspects Magdalene, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, or the holy women of not having sufficiently guarded against the possibilities of illusion. Two friends who meet again after a long absence do not feel the need to undress in order to prove their identity to each other (note that Christ could not show his side without undressing at least in part). They don't even have the idea. On the other hand, a character who would have shown his pierced hands and side but who, on the other hand, would not have recalled anything of Jesus, would only have succeeded in provoking surprise. As we can see, the exhibition of the hands and side, without other clues, would have been incapable of proving the presence of Jesus; together with other clues, it would have been useless. It is therefore not to demonstrate the reality of this presence that it intervenes here. Its reason for being is elsewhere. It has another mission to fulfil. We must find out what that mission is.

A spiritual body is, according to ancient physics, an ethereal body. An ethereal body has the fluidity of air and water. A spear thrust into the air produces no tear in it. Drive a nail into water and then pull it out. As soon as it is out, the water closes and no trace remains of the nail's stay in the water. The body of Christ, if it had been spiritual, i.e. ethereal, would have been perforated with impunity by the nails and the spear of the Roman soldier; as soon as the spear and the nails were removed, it would have returned to its primitive form. But this was not the case. Christ's hands retained the marks of the nails that had been driven into them; his side retained the tear that the spear had made in it. These two facts are quite certain, for they were witnessed by the disciples to whom Christ showed himself after he came out of the tomb. So the body of Christ was carnal like ours. Let us add that the precautions taken by Thomas lead us to the same conclusion. They are not intended to guarantee the presence of Christ, which is sufficiently attested by the features of his face, the timbre of his voice, the whole of his person. What they do prove is the material and fleshly nature of Christ's body.

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Defence implies attack. If the materiality of Christ's body had been universally accepted, no one would have thought of advocating it, of making a case for it. It was only because the Marcionites had undertaken to classify Jesus as a spiritual being that their

opponents rose to fight them. This observation tells us the origin and date of Christ's display to his disciples and of Thomas' meticulous precautions. These two pieces are intended to discredit the spiritual Christ of the Marcionite school. Their author is the Catholic editor of about 170.

What exactly is the Catholic editor responsible for here? Was he the one who composed the entire account of the two apparitions to the disciples? Or, on the contrary, was his role limited to inserting into an earlier account what relates to the pierced hands and side? Let us look.

Verses 20* and 25 show us the disciples happy to have seen the Lord. What motivates their joy is not the favour they have been granted to see the hands and side, but the appearance of the Saviour. They say to Thomas, 'We have seen the Lord'; they do not say to him, 'We have seen his pierced hands and side'. In 29, Jesus notes that Thomas believed because he saw. And he gives this observation the meaning of a reproach, for he praises those who, unlike Thomas, believed without seeing. In reality Thomas did not only want to see before believing. He took the claim further. He wanted to feel. Of this last demand, which is more reprehensible than the Jesus makes no mention of this last requirement, which is more reprehensible than the other, and limits himself to saying: "Because you have seen, you have believed". The various parts of the text do not correspond to each other; and we have twice seen this lack of connection.

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And that is not all. Jesus made his first appearance to the disciples "the doors of the place where the disciples were, being shut". And eight days later he showed himself to his disciples again, "the doors being shut". No material body can enter a room whose doors are closed. Only spiritual substances, like Air or ether, are able to enter anyway. Jesus obviously had a body when he came to the midst of his gathered disciples, for they saw him and he spoke to them. But this body, which entered a room whose doors were closed, had the subtlety of air and ether; it had nothing in common with our carnal body. This conclusion is logical; it is inescapable; and in drawing it, we are only conforming to the intentions of the author who twice mentioned the closed doors. But it is contradicted by the texts which speak to us of the pierced hands and side. For the reasons we have seen above, the hands which keep the trace of the nails, the side whose tear remains open are of a carnal nature; the body to which these organs belong is a body in flesh and bone like ours. And here we have two Christs, one of whom is spiritual and the other carnal.

Two Christs; therefore two redactions. This is what happened. The Catholic editor, the one who invented the pierced hands and side, did not fabricate the two apparitions to the disciples, as we might have thought at first. He found them in circulation. He limited himself to enriching the text in which they were recorded. He enriched it by introducing the pierced hands and side that Christ shows, that Thomas wants to palpate, that he palpates, and which prove peremptorily the carnal character of Jesus' body. In the early text, the spiritual Christ came to greet his disciples who were happy to have seen the Lord. Thomas, who was absent and to whom his companions said, "We have seen the Lord," replied, "If I do not see, I will not believe. Eight days later the spiritual Christ greeted his disciples again and, addressing Thomas, said: "See, and do not be unbelieving, but believing."

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At the sight of the Lord, Thomas cried out, 'My Lord and my God'. Jesus added: "Because you have seen me you have believed; blessed are those who believe without having seen.

The early narrative was homogeneous. It tended to prove that Christ is spiritual, that he came out of the tomb in which the Jews had locked him up, that he showed himself to his disciples, but that the common Christian should not pretend to see him and that one should believe without having seen. The flaws in the present text were inevitable, given the undertaking of the Catholic editor.

It repeats the spectacle we witnessed in the journey of Peter and the beloved disciple to the tomb. It too serves two opposing theses. Here also Catholicism glorifies Peter and thus takes its revenge on Marcionism which had glorified the beloved disciple. Peter receives, by a triple investiture (15-17), the mission to guard the flock of Christ. But it is the beloved disciple who teaches him to recognise Jesus (7: "Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord'"); and a little later Peter is rebuked about the same disciple (22: "What do you care?"). The famous words: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep", with the dialogue that leads up to them, have been thrown in the middle of a narrative that immediately passes from 15a to 18: 15a: "After they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter: 18 "Truly, truly I say to you, when you were young you girded yourself and went wherever you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you and lead you wherever you do not wish.

These last words are quite mysterious.

But the Gospel is careful to explain them to us itself. Let us take the official explanation that it gives us. It is formulated in these terms, 19: "He said this to indicate by what death Peter would glorify God.

So Peter will have a glorious death. Glorious for God, since he will "glorify" God; glorious also for himself, because the glory he will bring to God will necessarily reflect on him. And the Christ who announces this memorable event exalts Peter.

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He exalts him. Why then does he belittle him in the very words in which he praises him? Why does he say to him: "You will be a hero in spite of yourself"? Compliments lose all their value, they even turn into irony when derogatory remarks are interwoven with them. It is derogatory to say to someone: "You will glorify God through martyrdom, but it will be against your will". And then, let us not forget that we are in the presence of a fictitious conversation, and that fiction, when it moves into the doctrinal domain, has no reason to exist if it does not prove a thesis. What, then, does this prophecy in which Peter is simultaneously praised and mocked want to prove? It is impossible to see; but it is clear enough that the sentence, interpreted as the gospel interprets it, is inconsistent.

This is not all. The question now is who is this "other" by whom Peter is to be led to martyrdom against his will. One would like it to be a community, either the Roman Empire or the synagogue, or at least a qualified representative of one of these powers, a representative of authority. The formula is opposed to this. "Another" cannot refer to a community, or even an official figure, but to an individual without authority. The executioner, although invested with a mandate, would fit the description quite well. But one recoils at the thought that this abject being is targeted by the oracle. In short, the interpretation of the prophecy as given in the gospel can only account for the formula, "another" by attributing to it a repugnant meaning.

But let us leave this detail and proceed to an overview. Let us compare the prophecy with the explanation offered by the Gospel, or, if you like, what Christ says with what the Gospel says he means. What Christ says is: "When you were young, you were free; one day you will no longer be free, but another will take you where you do not want to go. And, according to the Gospel, he means: "You will win the palm of martyrdom" (it is often conjectured that the crucifixion of Peter is announced). But who does not see between this and that an absolute lack of adaptation? If Christ wants to announce Peter's martyrdom (or even his crucifixion), why does he need to establish a contrast between the freedom his disciple will first enjoy and the slavery that will mark his last years?

Let it not be said that prophecy is presented in a symbolic form, and that a symbol is always shrouded in a certain obscurity. The symbol must have some connection with the thing symbolised. But there is no connection between slavery and martyrdom.

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The so-called explanation of the prophecy is, in reality, a distortion. Let us set it aside for the moment and study the oracle itself. It tells us that Peter eventually lost his freedom and was led by another against his will. We know from Paul (Galatians 2:11) the place and date of this accident. It happened in Antioch. Peter was eating with the Gentiles. Then emissaries of James came and, in the name of their master, ordered him to withdraw. Peter obeyed; he no longer ate with the Gentiles. From that day on he ceased to follow Christ who had said to him (XXI, 19): "Follow me". He stopped following the liberating truth (VIII, 32): "The truth will set you free. He was a slave, a slave of James, by whom he let himself be led where he did not want to go, where he did not go in the first place. It is the Marcionite Christ who says to Peter: "Another will gird you up and lead you where you do not want to go. He exploits the Antioch affair - which he knew, as we know it, only through Paul. - He exploits it for his own profit (we know from Tertullian, Adv. Mark, V, 3, that Marcion liked to play with this weapon), and this is the result he gets: "Peter was the first of the Twelve (this according to Luke, from whom the Marcionites received the Gospel). At first he followed the path I had laid out for him, he was faithful to the 'Follow Me'. Then, one day, he let himself be led by the Judaizer James. He followed him reluctantly, against his will, out of weakness; but finally he followed him. He led all my other disciples down this pernicious path. Do not listen to them, do not listen to the bishops who succeed them (we are in the middle of the second century). Come out of vulgar Christianity, which is only a religion of Judaizers. Follow my beloved disciple.

This is the meaning of "Another will gird you". This oracle is merely a melancholy statement of defection. Let us now return to the official gospel interpretation and see what this operation is. It is the Catholic response to the Marcionite offensive. Or rather, it is the clever manoeuvre that completes the rout of the already defeated enemy. For the enemy has already suffered a defeat. His attacks on vulgar Christianity have been peremptorily repulsed by the solemn investiture: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep" which Peter received, which the Twelve benefited from, which the whole episcopal body inherited. No, Christ did not disown Peter, did not disown the Twelve of whom Peter was the representative.

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And it is in the Church of the bishops who are successors of the apostles that his thought and his doctrine are preserved. - But did he not say to Peter: "Another will gird you"? Well! This declaration is a new jewel added to the crown of Peter. It announces and proclaims his martyrdom. For "He said this to indicate by what death Peter would glorify God. With this answer the Catholic interpolator fought the enemy with the weapon that the latter brandished. This is the most complete triumph that can be achieved over an opponent.

Without the additions 15-17 and 19a the appearance of the Lake of Tiberias is of Marcionite origin. And this is its content. The disciples - at least several of them - left Jerusalem and returned to Galilee to resume their former occupation. One day, while they were fishing, Jesus appeared to them. The little band came to him following Peter. But it was through the beloved disciple that Peter was informed. For he and his companions thought that Christ was a stranger. The beloved disciple was the first to recognise the Lord. He shared his knowledge with Peter, who believed. The meeting was strange. The disciples kept silent: Jesus made them eat but ate nothing. After the meal, while asking Peter to follow him, he predicted that this leader of the Twelve would come under a foreign influence. Finally, Peter, desiring to know the fate of the beloved disciple, was rebuked, "It is none of your business.

I have said that the scene of the miraculous catch in its primitive form belongs to the Marcionite redaction. Why, then, does it arrive when the book is finished? Because it is right at the door of the Gospel and it appears precisely after the author has taken leave of his readers (see XX, 30). It must be admitted, and everyone admits, that the scene of the miraculous catch is an appendix. An appendix whose content reveals its purpose. This appendix is intended to prove that the true religion of Christ is not to be sought in the school of Peter but in the school of the beloved disciple: let us read that, in order to belong to Jesus, it is necessary to depart from the episcopal body and go to Marcion. It was added when the need arose, and the need arose when the quarrel with the episcopate began to take an acute turn. This could not have happened before about 144. Marcion and his followers were being denounced by the bishops as dangerous men. Then the Marcionite Christ, who had bid his former companions a final farewell, who had left the earth with no spirit of return, changed his programme. He came down again from heaven to defend his beloved disciple, to pronounce the necessary words, the words which circumstances imperiously demanded, to announce the future defection of Peter, the defection of the Twelve of whom Peter was the representative, the defection of the episcopal body which was the heir of the Twelve. The appearance of the Lake of Tiberias and the conclusion which ends chapter XX do not fit together very well; but the difference in dates and situations justifies the disagreement.

6. - References to the Old Testament.

The spiritual Christ who despised the Old Testament could not have brought it as an authority; and, therefore, the references to Moses, the patriarchs, and the prophets which the fourth Gospel presents can only have come from the Catholic interpolator. These interpolations are usually recognisable by certain external clues. One should not be surprised if this is not always the case. It is easy, in fact, to understand that an interpolation could have been made without leaving any other trace than an opposition to the general spirit of the primitive redaction.

Let us note first the words which end the dissertation provoked by the healing of the paralytic (V, 45-47): "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father. There is someone who will accuse you, and that is Moses, in whom you have put your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would also believe me, because he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? Christ here declares that his coming was prophesied by Moses. But why is it that, precisely in this place where he refers to the Old Testament, he contradicts its other teachings? According to him, faith in the Son of God is rooted in faith in Moses. If the Jews believed in Moses, they would also believe in the Son of God; but not having faith in the former, they cannot have faith in the latter. So Moses is the indispensable step up to the Son of God and to God.

But this level is only mentioned here. Everywhere else the mechanism of faith is constituted in another way and, instead of Moses, the miracle intervenes; especially the miracle of a physical order, but also the miracle of an intellectual order, for example, the revelations made to the Samaritan woman (IV, 29: "Come and see a man who has told me all that I have done; is it not the Christ?" or the teachings given to the disciples (XVI, 30: "Now we know that you know all things"). It is the miracle that produces faith, which should always produce it, and which, more often than not, does not produce it because it comes up against bad dispositions: "This was the first of the miracles that Jesus performed in Cana in Galilee. He manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him. (II, 11); "When the Light came into the world, men preferred darkness to the Light because their works were evil" (II, 19).

1. Likewise: "We know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these miracles that you do unless God is with him" (III, 2); "Many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Jesus because of the woman's statement: He told me all that I have done" (IV, 39); "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe; for we have heard him ourselves and we know that he is truly the saviour of the world" (IV, 42); "These works which the Father has given me to do, these very works that I do, testify of me that it is the Father who has sent me" (V; 36); "If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me; but if I do them, even if you do not believe me, believe in them. (X, 37); "This sickness is not to death; but it is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it (XI, 4)"; "The chief priests deliberated to kill Lazarus also, because many of the Jews withdrew from them because of him (because they had witnessed his resurrection) and believed in Jesus" (XII, 11); "If I had not done works among them which no other did, they would have no sin." (XV, 24).

"Because their works were evil. No doubt other texts show us men as children of the Devil and condemned to imitate the conduct of their father unless God draws them. But this is the abyss of predestination, before which our author is confused, as the theologians of all centuries have been confused. centuries. Apart from this mystery, it remains that the Jews - with very few exceptions - were insensitive to the miracles of the Johannine Christ "because their deeds were evil", that is, because their hearts were not pure, because their conduct was at variance with the prescriptions of the moral law. Faith in Moses has nothing to do here. Verses 46-47 are from the Catholic interpolator, not from the original writing of the fourth Gospel.

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Verse 45 is, at first sight, disconcerting. The Christ who speaks here and tells the Jews that he will not accuse them to his Father is clearly the spiritual Christ, the one who does not judge. How then does He invoke the authority of Moses? To arrive at this point his language must have undergone a deformation. It is a question of discovering it.

Let us remember that the good God of dualist theology did not condemn the guilty, but abandoned them to the creator God who satisfied his instinct of cruelty on them. It is this wicked God that the spiritual Christ has in view here. He therefore means this: "I will not accuse you to my Father, for I and my Father are good. But we will drive you away from us, we will leave you in the power of the Evil One, the Creator, and that Being in whom you hope, who is your God, will draw up an indictment against you which will be followed by your condemnation. The Catholic writer took this oracle and introduced

Moses. By this small alteration he has achieved two results: first, he has removed all the venom from the words of the spiritual Christ; second, he has prepared the way for the interpolation of verses 46-47. Hearing that Moses will accuse ... the Jews to God himself, the puzzled reader asks how this accusation will be made. Verses 46-47 answer his question. The answer they give is certainly unexpected. But they finally solve a problem that the reader had been asking; they are intimately linked to 45.

Let us note again the observation which ends the accounts of miracles (XII, 37): "In spite of so many miracles which he had done before them, they did not believe in him, so that the word which the prophet Isaiah pronounced might be fulfilled: 'Lord, who has believed in our preaching? ... Isaiah said these things because he¹ saw his glory and spoke of him.'" It is very singular that the author, not content with quoting the prophecies of Isaiah, seeks the conditions which allowed Isaiah to prophesy.

1. It should read 'because' not 'when', but the reasoning retains its force with 'when'.

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He does this in order to discretely and without appearing to do so, to throw down various assertions of the Gospel, notably the oracle which we read in I, 18: "No one has ever seen God, it is the only Son residing in the bosom of the Father who has revealed him. According to this text, which is echoed in several others, God was completely unknown until the day Jesus came to reveal him to men. The reference to Isaiah, with its accompanying commentary (XII:38-41), explains that the prophet Isaiah saw the glory of God and spoke of his Son. It carefully corrects the theology spread here and there in the Gospel. It was superimposed on the first writing of the book. It is of Catholic origin.

7. - The Fourth Gospel and Justin.

We have read above (p. 44) a list of the coincidences that exist between Justin and the fourth Gospel. I add here that it is incomplete. It lacks, on the one hand, what relates to the Word and, on the other hand, the quotation from Zechariah.

Justin speaks of the Word architect or incarnate in the following texts, some of which cover entire pages or even extend over several pages: I Apology, V, 4; XII, 7; XXI, 1;

XXIII, 2; LVIII, 3; LXIII, 15; II Apol, VI, 3; VIII, 1, 3; X, 8; XIII, 3-5; Dialogue, LVI, 4, 11, 22; EX, 2, 4; LXI, 1; LXII, 1-4; CXIV, 3; CXXVII, 1-5; CXXVIII, 2-4; CXXIX, 1-4. We know that the preamble of the fourth Gospel also speaks of the Word.

Justin quotes the text of the prophet Zechariah, XII, 10, in I Apol, LU, 11; Dialog, XIV, 8; XXXII, 2; LXIV, 7. The Gospel makes the same quotation in XIX, 37. Let us examine these coincidences; and first those which concern the Word.

Justin believes in the Word, so does the Gospel. Justin's Word organises the world and carries out the orders of God, whose servant he is¹. The Word of the fourth Gospel builds the world; he is, from the beginning of time, close to God; he himself bears the name of God. In Justin, as in the Gospel, the Word becomes flesh.

1. See Louis Coulange, *Le Christ alexandrin*, in *Revue l'histoire et de littérature religieuses*, IV, [1913], 337.

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Whether we address Justin or the Gospel, we are served the same wine. The same in quality; but from the point of view of quantity the disproportion is enormous. Here a glass, there a barrel. And the barrel may have filled the glass; but it is absolutely impossible that the glass filled the barrel. Justin, who devotes pages and pages to the Word, is partly dependent on Plato and Philo; but he owes nothing to the Gospel. On the contrary, the few lines which the Gospel gives to the Word may well be Justin's condensed work. And this is probably their origin. In any case, it is difficult to see where they come from, except from Justin, whose books had been circulating for several years - the Apology for about fifteen years - when the Catholic edition of the Gospel was formed.

I turn to Zechariah. The Gospel quotes once (XIX, 37) a text of this prophet where it speaks of people looking at a pierced man. Justin quotes the same text four times. But the Gospel only reports the words: "They shall see him whom they have pierced", and its purpose is to prove that the piercing of Jesus' side by the spear was foretold. Justin has another aim. He wants to prove through Zechariah that, when the day of the parousia arrives, the Jews, seeing the Christ whom they pierced appear in the clouds, will be seized with sorrow and will regret, but too late, the crime they have committed. What he emphasises is not so much the above text as its surroundings, in which the prophet speaks of people lamenting. Here is what we read in the Apology, LU, 9-12: "They will repent, even though it will do them no good. What the Jews will say and do when they see him coming in his glory was prophesied by the prophet Zechariah: I will

command the four winds to gather the scattered children; I will command the north wind to carry them and the south wind not to hold them back. And then there will be a great wailing in Jerusalem, not a wailing of the mouth and lips, but a wailing of the heart, and they will tear not their clothes but their thoughts. They will wail from tribe to tribe. Then they shall see him whom they have pierced (opsontai eis hon exekentêsan), and they shall say:

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"Why, Lord, have you led us astray from your path?"

1. Here Joel is amalgamated with Zechariah; but the wailing from tribe to tribe is from Zechariah.

Justin gave himself over to personal meditations on the prophecy of Zechariah, the material for which was not provided by the Gospel. He seems, moreover, to have discovered the prophecy himself in the Bible and not to have taken it from the Gospel. In short, he would be completely independent of the Gospel, were it not for the transfixion he seems to borrow from it. Does he really borrow it? Let us try to clarify this question. To do this, let us see if he knows the story of the spear, if he knows that Christ's side was pierced.

In the Apology, XXXV, 5, Justin quotes the famous verse of Psalm XXII where it speaks of pierced hands and feet, and he adds: "This word meant that on the cross his hands and feet would be pierced with nails" (see also XXXVIII, 4). He mentions the piercing of the hands and feet; he proves it by the authority of the psalms; he does not mention the piercing of the side. Did he miss the opportunity? Let us judge. After speaking of the hands and feet pierced by nails, he adds (XXXV, 8): "When they had crucified Him, they cast lots for His robe and His executioners divided it among themselves. And he shows in this milk (5) the fulfilment of another prophecy of the same psalm. The same spectacle in the Dialogue, XCVII, 3, where the quotation of psalm XXII is followed by this comment: "when they crucified him, they pierced his hands and his feet by driving nails into them; then those who had crucified him divided his garments among themselves by casting lots...". Here too the piercing of the side by the spear is not mentioned. How can we believe that he would never have spoken of this story if he had known it, and that he, the great finder of prophetic texts, would not have attached the prophecy of Zechariah to the lance wound? Justin knows only the piercing of hands and feet. And when he proves through Zechariah that the Jews, on the day of the parousia, will look at the pierced Christ, he is thinking only of the hands and feet of Christ.

Let us conclude. Justin, who read the fourth Gospel, did not read there the story of the spear and the pierced side. This story was only inserted after him in the above-mentioned gospel¹. Justin probably discovered the prophecy of Zechariah himself, XII, 10 2; but he uses it only to prove that the Jews, on the day of the parousia, will be in desolation when they see, above the clouds and in a triumphal apparatus, the Christ whose hands and feet they have pierced. The Catholic editor of the fourth Gospel probably borrowed the text of Zechariah's prophecy from Justin's Apology, LII, 12. This conjecture has considerable support in the fact that the Gospel and the Apology give exactly the same text of the prophecy (opsontai eîs hon exehentêsan), which differs markedly from the text in the Greek Bible.

1. This confirms the result obtained by another route; see p. 49-5 E
2. The quotation from Rev. I, 7, does not seem to be able to reverse this conjecture.

8. - The Paraclete.

The Paraclete is mentioned four times in the fourth Gospel and once in the first Johannine epistle.

Here are the texts of the Gospel that mention him:

XIV, 16: "I will pray to the Father, and he will send you another Paraclete, that he may be with you always; 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see him or know him. You know him because he dwells among you and will be in you."

XIV. 25: "I have told you these things dwelling among you. 26 But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

XV. 26 "When the Paraclete comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will bear witness to me. 27 And you also will testify that you have been with me from the beginning."

XVI. 7: "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go away I will send him to you. 8 And when he has come, he will make the world clear about sin, about righteousness, and about condemnation. 9 About sin, because they do not believe in me. 10 About righteousness, because I am going to my Father and you will see me no more. 11. About condemnation, because the prince of this world is condemned. 12 I have yet many things to say to you; but you cannot bear them now. 13 But when this one, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will lead you into all truth; for he will not speak of himself, but will say all the things which he has heard, and will give you news of the things to come. 14 This one will glorify me, because he will receive from me what he will announce to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I have told you that he will receive from me what he will declare to you."

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The first characteristic of this character is that he is sent into the future. It is not that our texts present a perfect cohesion on this point. One of them (XIV, 17) says in full that the Paraclete remains among the disciples and that they know him. We will have to account for this oddity. But, subject to an indispensable explanation, the assertion we have just read is above all possible dispute. At the time when Christ is talking to his disciples, the Paraclete has not yet come because he has not yet been sent. It is later that Christ, or the Father responding to Christ's request, will give him a mandate to come among the Christians. His mission is postponed to a later time.

The second characteristic of the Paraclete, judging from the present state of the text, is that he is identical with the "Spirit of truth" or the "Holy Spirit". In the first three texts, no sooner is the Paraclete named than there is a note explaining that this Paraclete is the Spirit of truth or the Holy Spirit.

In the fourth text, the Paraclete (XVI, 7) is not at first the object of any determination. But a few lines later he is referred to again (13), and then we learn that he is the Spirit of truth. The identification was slow in coming, but it did come. In short, whenever Christ announces the mysterious co-worker who is to come, he first states his title, his function, and then adds an identification to this statement. He attaches equal importance to the title and the identity. He wants to name the Paraclete, as if this name were indispensable to the character's description; but he also wants to warn us that the Paraclete is the Spirit of truth, as if, without this information, we would be exposed to going astray.

So he has two equally great concerns. This is what is strange. Strange because these two concerns contradict each other. The "Spirit of Truth" arrives here to enlighten the reader who is supposed to be ignorant of the Paraclete.

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Let us now see what the "Paraclete" does. We will know when we have noticed that this term, which means defender, advocate, protector, designates the character in question by the function he fulfils. It designates him by his function: we might as well say that the Paraclete is a nickname, that is to say a manner of speaking analogous to that which we use when we speak of the Knight without fear or reproach, the Saint of the Fatherland, the Eagle of Meaux, the Patriarch of Ferney, the Little Corporal. When one resorts to periphrases of this kind, one is certain that they are known to everyone and that no reader will misunderstand them. Let us be sure that the nickname Paraclete, at the time and in the milieu in which it appeared, contained no obscurity. In short, the "Spirit of Truth" is an explanation given to readers who would otherwise be unable to identify the Paraclete, and the "Paraclete" or "Defender" is a misnomer which is perfectly understood by all readers or listeners for whom it is used. I was right in saying that these two terms are inspired by opposite concerns.

Even now we would be justified in concluding that the Paraclete and the Spirit of Truth - or the Holy Spirit - differ in date and origin. But we have another and more decisive proof of this difference, which is supplied to us by Montan. This visionary, around 160, preached to the people of Phrygia that he was at once the Father, the Son and the Paraclete. In what sense did he claim these titles? It is debated and it does not matter here: the fact alone interests us. It is certain that Montan claimed to cumulate, in one sense or another, the three functions of Father, Son and Paraclete. It is also certain that the elements of these extravagant reveries were supplied to him by the fourth Gospel which alone speaks of the Paraclete¹. But why did Montan not want to be the Spirit of truth or the Holy Spirit? When one is already the Father and the Son, it costs no more to be the Holy Spirit on top of it. At the point he had reached, Montan could occupy the place of the Holy Spirit. I would add that he had to. Noblesse oblige. He who was or represented the Father and the Son was bound to complete his work and be or represent the Holy Spirit. As he appears to us, Montan resembles a traveller who has not been able to complete his journey.

1. The mention in the first Johannine epistle was too fleeting to attract attention; moreover, the Paraclete of the epistle, being clearly identified with the Son, does not constitute a third character.

It will be said that Montan was called Paraclete and that this name is equivalent to that of the Holy Spirit. This answer forgets that the word Paraclete designates a function, that it is not, strictly speaking, the name of the character himself but his nickname. There is therefore no equivalence, from the protocol point of view, between the Paraclete and the Holy Spirit. Montan, who was already the Father and the Son, could not be satisfied with being the Paraclete, that is, the Defender. He had to take the name of the holder of this function: he had to be called the Holy Spirit or Spirit of truth. He did not take that name. He was called the Paraclete.

This is the fact: a strange, implausible fact, but one which alone corresponds to reality. This fact demands an explanation. And the only plausible explanation consists in saying that in the fourth Gospel, as Montan read it, Christ promised his disciples the Paraclete, but did not promise them the Spirit of truth or the Holy Spirit.

Here we have two different ways of arriving at the same result.

In the early writing of the Fourth Gospel, Christ mentioned only the Paraclete, announced only the Paraclete, and his readers and hearers understood very well of whom he was speaking half-heartedly. It was a second writer who, at a later date and for different circles, thought it necessary to provide the Paraclete with an identity document and to certify that this defender is the Spirit of truth.

What is his certificate worth? It may agree with the thought of the original writer. But the opposite is not impossible either, and the information he gives us may be spurious. Let us try to clarify the matter.

The Paraclete is, as his name indicates, an advocate, a lawyer: he pleads a cause. And the following texts make clear the cause he pleads (XV, 26): "He will testify to me"; (XVI, 14): "He will glorify me". The Paraclete is the defender of Christ and the cause he pleads is that of Christ. How does he plead it?

According to the commentators, his action is invisible; it is exercised directly on souls, which he enlightens and to whom he communicates a learned theology. It is certain that the divine Spirit can, without difficulty, put himself in contact with souls, speak with them without any intermediary, and give them all the clarity he deems useful. The commentators, for whom the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit, therefore have logic on their

side. All that remains is for them to have the texts for themselves. Unfortunately, they come up against an absolute opposition here. According to our texts (XVI, 8) the Paraclete, when he comes, will address the world; the world that does not accept Christ. To this unbelieving world he will administer the proof of the sin of which it has been guilty by refusing to believe. If the opinion of the commentators is correct, this proof would be made by means of interior illuminations, of imperious suggestions, in a word by a whole set of invisible and secret influences. But this hypothesis is necessarily inaccurate. Before allowing itself to be convinced of its sin, the world should first allow the invisible action of the Holy Spirit to penetrate to it. But since it has been able to defend itself against faith in Christ, it will also be able to reject the suggestions of the Holy Spirit and render them useless. No, it is not by silent and uncertain warnings that the world will be convinced of its guilt. To bring it to this conviction, loud polemics undertaken by word or pen will be indispensable, and to direct these polemics a man will be needed.

The Paraclete, the defender of Christ, is a man. And therefore, the identification that the Gospel proposes to us is artificial. It is supposed to want to enlighten us, to guide us. In reality it leads us astray. Let us leave this lie behind and try to identify the person who originally bore the title of "Defender", whom everyone, at a certain date and in a certain milieu, commonly called by this name. To deserve such an honour, he must have done some extraordinary apostolic work, but what was it? The Gospel tells us that he attacked the unbelieving world. But this information, which seems to put us on the way, tells us nothing, since Paul and all those who, after him, spread the Christian name, met on their way the unbelievers, either Jews or pagans. The embarrassment disappears when we remember whose house we are in. We are in the home of the spiritual Christ, and it is the master of the house who has the word.

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This man whose coming the spiritual Christ announces made his appearance about 130; his name was Marcion. He "testified" to his master; he "glorified" him; he "reminded" the disciples of all that the divine teacher had revealed; he "taught all things. And now we understand these formulas which, applied to an ordinary apostolate, would seem strange. The "Defender" was not exercising an ordinary apostolate. He was preaching Christ, not to Jews and Gentiles, but to disciples, or rather to the disciples of disciples, in accordance with the intention of the Master who had said, XVII, 20: "I do not pray for them alone, but for those who will believe in me through their word. He addressed only those who had already heard of Christ, who thought they knew him, who knew him, but had only a distorted image of him in their minds. U worked to correct their errors, "reminding" them of the teachings given by the master but forgotten. In this

way, he "testified" to Christ, the true Christ, the spiritual Christ; in this way, he "glorified" Christ. This good servant, we hasten to say, was not left to his own strength. His master supported him, inspired him, dictated his preaching (XVI, 13: "He shall not speak of himself, but shall say all that he hears... he will receive from me what he will announce to you"). However, despite such a powerful collaboration, the "Defender" obtained only incomplete results. No doubt he made conquests; but the great mass of the Christian people proved to be unyielding and refused to abandon their carnal Christ. The "Defender" had no other resource than to convince this unbelieving world of sin. This is what the spiritual Christ had predicted (XVI, 8): "He will convince the world of sin".

Marcion originally held the position of Paraclete. Then he was ousted and his job, after a diversion, eventually fell to the Spirit of Truth. I said: after a diversion. Indeed, the Spirit of Truth, who was the definitive heir of Marcion, was not his immediate heir. The office of Paraclete, after having escaped from Marcion, had an interim holder who exercised it for some years before handing it over to the Spirit. This holder was Montan who, from about 160, evangelised Phrygia.

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Montan was reading the fourth Gospel. He knew the places in this book which speak of the Father, the Son and the Paraclete whom the Father sends at the request of the Son. These three terms, on entering his imagination, produced the strangest resonances. At times he said: "I am the Father, I am also the Son and also the Paraclete".¹ At other times he said: "I am the Lord, the Almighty God dwelling in man". Or again: "I am not an angel, I am not a messenger; I am the Lord, God the Father; I am the one who has come. The last two formulas that we have just read, if we take them literally, are not susceptible to any other interpretation and give reason to Epiphanius. Let us not object that, if we were to take them literally, we would be attributing to their author an impossible extravagance. Nothing is impossible for visionaries and, for them, metaphysical difficulties do not count. Montan was able to believe and say that he was the Father, without wasting time in explaining this mystery to himself and to others. With the same ease he could take the first formula literally, and present himself as cumulating the functions of Father, Son and Paraclete at the same time.

1. Didymus, *On the Trinity*, III, 41,1. Pair, gr., XXXIX, 9~4; see also the *Controversy of an Orthodox with a Montanist*, published by Ficker in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*. XXVI, 446.

2. Epiphanius, *Peranation*, XL VIII, 11.

Nothing shocks the visionaries. But those who do not have visions, who do not live locked in a dream, recoil from certain enormities. If Montan believed, as is probable, that he was the Father and the Son, his followers - except perhaps for a few oddballs - found these two claims excessive and dropped them. On the other hand, the function of the Paraclete did not seem implausible to them. They attributed it to their master, at least for a while. We are informed on this point by Eusebius. He tells us (Hist. eccl, V, 14) of certain heretics who, towards the end of the second century, spread throughout the provinces of Asia and Phrygia and considered Montan as the Paraclete. Montan was considered by his first followers to be the Paraclete. This fact had an important consequence. The Paraclete was inseparable from the book that had announced his coming. In response to the opponents who stood before them, the Montanists used the testimonies of the fourth Gospel to the Paraclete. Their reasoning was as follows: "The great religious movement which started in Phrygia and is spreading throughout the Church is the work of the Lord himself. In four of his oracles, the Lord Jesus announces that he will send or ask his Father to send the Paraclete. Now it is our leader Montan who is the Paraclete. Montan was raised up by a nominative decree of God, a decree recorded in one of the Gospels.¹ "

1. The text of Irenaeus which we are about to read proves that the Montanists supported the divine mission of Montan on the fourth Gospel.

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The Montanists had ardent enemies. These, rather than believing in the mission of Montan, preferred to reject the book which was supposed to announce the coming of the new prophet. We are informed about their attitude by Irenaeus who tells us (Contra Haereses, III, 11,9): " Others (he has just spoken of Marcion), in order to cancel the gift of the Spirit which, in these last times, was poured out on the human race by the will of the Father, do not admit the gospel of John, in which the Lord promised to send the Paraclete; but they reject at the same time the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit. Wretched men who... keep prophetic grace away from the Church! The opponents of the Montanists denounced here by Irenaeus are known as aloges, a name given to them by Epiphanius. The care taken by Irenaeus to say that in the Gospel of John the Lord promises to send the Paraclete, shows that the aloges rejected the fourth Gospel precisely because of the mention of the Paraclete there. We have the explanation of their hostility against this character. When we know that the Paraclete of the Montanists was Montan. The fourth Gospel almost paid with a complete discredit the patronage which its Paraclete granted to the Montanists.

It was nevertheless saved, but the rescue required several operations. First, an important concession had to be made.

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The Paraclete had to break his ties with Montan and provide material proof of the break. We have this proof before our eyes. Whenever the Paraclete appears he brings a certificate of identity, and this certificate tells us that he is the Spirit of truth or the Holy Ghost. This proof, which made its appearance in the course of the Montanist controversy, cannot be earlier than about 170 1.

1. Irenaeus, who often speaks of the Holy Spirit, and who mentions the Paraclete three or four times, III, 11, 9 and III, 17, 1-4, does not quote any of the texts which occupy us here; however, he alludes to XVI, 17, but by naming only the Paraclete.

It is only at this date that the Spirit of truth or the Holy Spirit was inserted beside the Paraclete. The insertion was sometimes accompanied by some accessories 2.

2. It was then that the place in XIV:17 where the Paraclete, now the Spirit of truth, is present among the faithful was written.

In the metamorphosis that identified the Paraclete with the Holy Spirit there are two things. On the one hand, there is the goal or rather the goals pursued. On the other hand, there is the means of execution. There are two goals. The proximate goal is to separate the Paraclete from Montan; the distant goal is to save the fourth Gospel, which the union of the Paraclete with Montan has endangered. It is easy to grasp the importance of these two aims, the second of which completes the first. That a man should rise to the defence of the book attacked by the alogues, and that, in order to defend it, he should cut the links which attached the Paraclete to Montan, is easily understood. What is less understandable is that, in order to make the break, he imagined attaching the Paraclete to the Holy Spirit. Not that the effectiveness of the means can be questioned; for it is clear that, if the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit, we must renounce confusing him with Montan. But why, among various other possible expedients, did the defender of the fourth Gospel choose this one? An examination of Montanist practices allows us to answer this question.

Montan and the two women who accompanied him, and gradually several of his principal followers, experienced ecstatic transports during which they pronounced

oracles. Around them the Christians divided into two camps. On both sides it was agreed that behind these strange phenomena there was a spirit but what spirit? "A holy spirit," said the friends. "A spirit of error", "an impure spirit" said the enemies. A contemporary, an ardent opponent of the new oracles and their authors, informs us about this situation in an account of which here are some extracts (Eusebius, Hist. eccl, V, 16, 7):

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"Suddenly entering into a state of transport and false ecstasy, he spoke enthusiastically, uttered these strange words and prophesied in a manner contrary to the custom introduced into the Church by tradition... (8) Some, considering him an energetic person, a demoniac, a man under the influence of a spirit of error, a troublemaker, inveighed him and prevented him from speaking... But the others, as if moved by a holy spirit (ô^s aghiô pneumati) and a prophetic gift... encouraged the spirit of folly, of enjoyment, of seduction... (9) The spirit praised those who took pleasure in it, put their glory in it... (here the impure spirit that animated Montan's two companions is mentioned). Moreover, the arrogant spirit taught to blaspheme the Church spread over the whole face of the earth, because false prophecy found no honour or access in it.

It is an adversary who speaks. Let us reverse the terms; we shall hear a partisan. He will tell us that Montan and his followers were under the power of the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit. And his language will be exactly that which the Gospel holds today. The writer who, through his interpolations, identified the Paraclete of the fourth Gospel with the Spirit, venerated this book. But he was also a supporter of the Montanist movement. In his view, the explosion of religious enthusiasm which had swept from Phrygia to the Christian East was due to an abundant outpouring of the Spirit. Not the spirit of error, the impure spirit, as his opponents were fond of saying, but the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit. He admired the work, he adored the invisible worker who had done it. As for the human instrument which, in the depths of Phrygia, had given the necessary flick of the wrist to the first shaking of souls, our pious author did not concern himself with it, no doubt because he did not know it. Only the first cause attracted his attention. And we now see why, after having detached the Paraclete from Montan, he attached it to the Spirit. By doing this, while sacrificing Montan, he wanted to rehabilitate Montanism against the accusations of its detractors.

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It is the same writer who, in order to glorify the Spirit, wrote the text VII, 39. The spiritual Christ has just spoken of the rivers of living water that will give the believer water. Our

author sees two things here: first a scriptural quotation, then an allusion to the wonders (ecstasy, glossolalia) produced by the Spirit in souls who consent to receive him.

9. - The Gospel of St. John.

The fourth Gospel was written in a Marcionite spirit; then it was completed in a Catholic spirit. It is, if you like, the Catholic edition of a Marcionite book. The Johannine Christ is both a God who came down directly from heaven in an ethereal form, and a demi-god in a fleshly body. Like the character in the ancient fable, he has two faces. He also speaks two languages. He belittles and exalts the Mosaic law and the prophets. He rejects and teaches the resurrection. He declares that Mary is not his mother, that the flesh is useless; but this does not prevent him from affirming that one will not have eternal life if one does not believe in his flesh. He announces the defection of Peter, and he entrusts his Church to him. And tradition has had to do incredible feats of strength to harmonise these incoherent statements.

The Marcionite redaction took place in two stages. A first draft appeared around 135, while the other, including chapter XXI and most of the Lord's Supper discourse, came a few years later. Justin knew this edition. As for the Catholic redaction, it cannot be earlier than about 170 or even 175 for two reasons: first, because it knew and used Justin; second, because the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which is one of its characteristics, is a Montanist influence.

Now that we have arrived at the critical path of unravelling the origins of the Fourth Gospel, let us ask the book if it has any further information to offer us. 11 provides us with two. Firstly, it tells us that it is the work of the apostle John, and secondly, that it was written by the beloved disciple. The title gives us the first reference; we find the second in the text, XXI, 24.

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It is quite obvious that neither the apostle John nor a beloved disciple contemporary with Jesus wrote a book whose first edition was around 135. It is therefore not necessary to discuss the value of this information, which can have none. The question is only from what source they emanate.

Let us deal first with the attribution to the apostle John. It must be stated without hesitation that the Marcionite redaction is completely foreign to it. Marcion taught that

the Twelve, after Christ's return to heaven, had altered the doctrine of the Master under the influence of their Judaic preoccupations. It was added that Paul, interpreted according to Marcion's principles, had corrected their error and restored the truth. The Marcionite editor of the Fourth Gospel would have thought that he was staining his booklet with an apostolic label other than that of Paul; and he could not make Paul a companion of Jesus. Let us conclude that the Catholic editor alone is responsible for the attribution of our Gospel to the apostle John. We will soon be looking for the motive that inspired this fiction.

It was not the Marcionite editor who gave the fourth Gospel the patronage of the apostle John. But was it not he who launched it under the name of the beloved disciple? Before answering, let us stop for a moment in front of this mysterious character.

He appears for the first time in the farewell meal where he lies on Jesus' breast (XIII, 23). We find him again at Calvary where Jesus entrusts Mary to him (XIX, 26); then at the tomb where he arrives before Peter (XX, 4); then in the scene at the lake of Tiberias where he reveals the presence of the Lord to Peter. In these four places (we assume here that the Interpolations have been recognised and discarded, see pp. 46 and 53) his superiority over Peter is clearly established. It is he who rests on the heart of Jesus; it is to him that Jesus entrusts his putative mother; it is he who first understands the mystery of the empty tomb. He is the first to recognise Jesus. He occupies the first place in the affection of the Master, the first place in the order of faith. Peter comes only after him. Now Peter is a symbol here; he represents the body of the apostles, the episcopal body. The beloved disciple is above the bishops, above the apostles; he is the perfect Christian, the Christian who knows the spiritual Christ, who recognises him, whereas Peter - on the Lake of Tiberias - takes this Christ for a stranger.

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It is the Marcionite writer who created the beloved disciple. This being the case, is there not reason to conclude that it is also he who, in XXI:24, presents this fictitious character as the author of the Gospel? This conclusion would be plausible were it not for another text which I have passed over in silence, and which nevertheless deserves to draw our attention. It is XIX, 35. Here the beloved disciple intervenes again; but this time he acts as a witness. He testifies that he saw the spear thrown by the Roman soldier. He certifies that this spear blow produced an outpouring of blood and water. He, the intimate friend of the spiritual Christ, betrays his Master and puts himself at the service of the carnal Christ. He, who owes his existence to the Marcionite editor, is now taken over by the Catholic editor whose thesis he defends.

It remains to be seen whether this case is unique, or whether, on the contrary, the Catholic editor who, in XIX, 35, obliged the beloved disciple to work for him, did not put him elsewhere in the same situation. Let us notice the praise which, in XIX, 35, he gives to his employee. (His testimony is true, he tells us. He even insists and adds, vouching for himself: "And this one knows that he is telling the truth". (A strange construction whose only possible meaning is: "I, who write these lines, know that the witness who reported these things says true").

Now, in XXI, 24, we find ourselves faced with the same spectacle. There too the beloved disciple is called into question. He is presented to us as the author of the Gospel. Then his truthfulness is guaranteed to us by the following formula: "And we know that his testimony is true". In XXI:24, as in XIX:35, the same convoluted expedient is used to make the reader have absolute confidence in the beloved disciple. It is the same machine that is put before our eyes; let us conclude that behind it lies the same machinist. In XIX, 35, the beloved disciple works for the Catholic editor; in XXI, 24, he has not changed his boss. It is still the Catholic editor who makes him serve his purposes. It is he who assures us that the fourth Gospel is the work of the beloved disciple and who, having inscribed the name of the apostle John on the frontispiece of this book, has thereby identified the beloved disciple with the apostle.

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What was his motive in choosing the apostle John to be the author of the fourth Gospel? This brings us back to the operations required to rescue this book. I have described the first of these operations above. It remains for me to speak of the second. Since Montan had claimed to be the Paraclete, the Gospel of the Paraclete had been rejected by the whole of the Catholic world which rejected the Montanist movement. The transformation of the Paraclete into the Spirit of truth, while providing some remedy for the evil, was incapable of disarming the opponents, since the Spirit claimed authorship of the ecstatic transports honoured by the Montanists. The Gospel of the Paraclete or Gospel of the Spirit, the book dear to the Montanists, met with formidable opposition in the Catholic world. To silence it, powerful patronage was not too much to ask. Now, at that time, the Apocalypse enjoyed considerable prestige throughout Asia Minor; and the Apocalypse was considered to be the work of the apostle John (Justin, Dialogue, LXXXI, 4). The name of John was thus a useful shield. Perhaps the enemy's lines would break against him. In any case, the experiment was worthwhile.

The experiment succeeded. Protected by the Apocalypse, whose brother it was supposed to be, the Fourth Gospel, which became the Gospel of St. John, withstood the assaults that were made on it. It was not even a century old when its enemies, the

alogs, had already vanished. But here, where the formation of this book is to be explained, we do not have to describe its history. Let us limit ourselves to saying that the fourth Gospel, born around 135, waited until the years 170-175 to become, after having previously grown up, the Gospel of Saint John.

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In this translation of the Fourth Gospel we have followed the indications contained in the preceding introduction. The first, the most important, was printed in Roman characters; the second, interspersed with the text of the first, was printed in italics.