

3. TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY AND THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The path from the experience of the first followers of Jesus and Trinitarian theology of the fourth century is a long and complex one, often traced by historians of doctrine.¹ The Gospel According to John played an important role in the shaping of that path. This essay will not attempt to retrace that



1. In general, see Cilliers Breytenbach and Henning Paulsen, eds., *Anfänge der Christologie: Festschrift für Ferdinand Hahn zum 65. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1991); Joel B. Green and M. Turner, eds., *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ; Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Hurst and Wright, *Glory of Christ in the New Testament*; and Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1995). For discussion of Johannine Christology, see, e.g., T. E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*; Jerome Neyrey, *An Ideology of Revolt: John's Christology in Social-Science Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), English translation of *Antidoketische Christologie im Johannevangelium*, *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testament* 144 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1987); Maarten J. J. Menken, "The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: A Survey of Recent Research," in *From Jesus to John: Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honour of Marinus de Jonge*, ed. Martinus de Boer, *Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism* 84 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993): 292–320; William R. G. Loader, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Structure and Issues*, 2nd ed., *Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie* 23 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1992); C. K. Barrett, "The Father is Greater Than I" (John 14:28): Subordinationist Christology in the New Testament," in *Neues Testament und Kirche, für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, ed. J. Gnllka (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna: Herder, 1974), 144–59; repr. in Barrett, *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 19–36; M. E. Boismard, *Moses or Jesus: An Essay in Johannine Christology* (Minneapolis: Fortress; Leuven: Peeters, 1993); Paul Anderson, *Christology of the Fourth Gospel*; and Hans Weder, "Deus Incarnatus: On the Hermeneutics of Christology in the Johannine Writings," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996), 327–45.

history, but will simply outline what I take to be the critical elements of the Fourth Gospel that might contribute to current reflection on the Trinity.

Before I lay out those elements, it might be useful to sketch the main lines of my own approach to the gospel. Like many Johannine scholars of recent years, I have been less concerned with the process by which the gospel came to be, its literary prehistory, than with the shape of the text in more or less its canonical form.² It may at some point be of interest to reflect on the possible trajectory that produced the text, but that has not been the major focus of my work and will not be my focus of this essay.³

Second, while I am intrigued by what we might say about the social history of the Johannine community—that is, with the possible historical background to the gospel and especially its polemics⁴—I am more concerned with the ways in which the narrative works to engage and challenge its possible readers. Particularly relevant to our task is what I take to be a fundamental literary and conceptual characteristic of the gospel: its regular use of tensive symbols and unexpected twists of plot or character to engage and provoke. We shall no doubt return to that feature of the work.

The basic building blocks of a Trinitarian theology are, sure enough, in the text. The Father and the Son figure throughout the work, and the relationship between them is obviously of great concern to the evangelist. The Holy Spirit plays more of a cameo role as the promised Paraclete,⁵ the Spirit of Truth. How

2. For examples of my approach, see Harold W. Attridge, *Essays on John and Hebrews*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 264 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

3. For a recent commentary dedicated to the issue, see Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Earliest Version of John's Gospel: Recovering the Gospel of Signs* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1989), and his recent commentary, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3 vols., *Eerdmans Critical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010).

4. See J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), and, with different methodological tools, Neyrey, *Ideology of Revolt*, and Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans 2009).

5. The literature on the Spirit/Paraclete is vast. Among important earlier treatments, see Hans Windsich, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel*, trans. James W. Cox, *Facet Books Biblical Series* 20 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968); Raymond E. Brown, "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 13 (1967): 113–32; Otto Betz, *Der Paraklet: Fürsprecher Im Häretischen Spätjudentum, Im Johannes-Evangelium und in Neugefundenen Gnostischen Schriften*, *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Spätjudentums und Urchristentums* 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1963). More recently, see Anthony Casarella, *The Johannine Paraclete in the Church Fathers: A Study in the History of Exegesis*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese* 25 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983); Eskil Franck, *Revelation Taught: The Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, *Coniectanea Biblica, New Testament Series* 14 (Lund: Gleerup, 1985); Christian Dietzfelbinger, "Paraklet und theologischer Anspruch im Johannesevangelium," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 82,

that Spirit relates to Father and Son is not a question addressed with anything like the detailed passion that surrounds the Father-Son relationship, but there is some effort to delineate the relationship, as we shall see in due course.

It would first be useful to review what the gospel says about Father and Son. The prologue is an appropriate place to begin, since it functions much like the hypothesis of a Greek drama, giving the audience a clue about what to expect in the story that follows.⁶ But given the complexity of the prologue and its relationship to the subsequent narrative, it is best to hold it in abeyance and turn initially to the narrative. That story has two well-known and tense foci. One is the affirmation that there is a unity between Father and Son. Jesus says so explicitly when he claims that the “Father and I are one” (Jn 10:30). That unity can, of course, be understood in several ways, as an ontological unity, or as a unity of will, purpose, or mission. The other focal point is the affirmation that “the Father is greater than I” (Jn 14:28), but exactly how that difference is to be understood remains an open question. Does the difference point to the simple fact of relationship between source and offspring who are on the same ontological level, or does it point to a difference in kind between creator and creature?

The tension and the ambiguity will remain, despite all our best efforts to resolve them, but in various subtle ways, the gospel seems to push in a direc-

no. 4 (1985): 389–408; Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987); M. P. Wilson, “St. John, the Trinity and the Language of the Spirit,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 41, no. 4 (1988): 471–83; John Breck, *Spirit of Truth: The Holy Spirit in Johannine Tradition*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Johannine Pneumatology* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1991); Thomas B. Slater, “The Paraclete as Advocate in the Community of the Fourth Gospel,” *Ashland Theological Journal* 20 (1991): 101–8; James Swetnam, SJ, “Bestowal of the Spirit in the Fourth Gospel,” *Biblica* 74, no. 4 (1993): 556–76; Stephen S. Smalley, “‘The Paraclete’: Pneumatology in the Johannine Gospel and Apocalypse,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 289–300; Benedict Viviano, OP, “The Spirit in John’s Gospel: A Hegelian Perspective,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 43 (1996): 368–87; Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 2, no. 148 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002); Bennema, “The Giving of the Spirit in John’s Gospel: A New Proposal?” *Biblical Quarterly* 74 (2002): 195–214; Lochlan Shelfer, “The Legal Precision of the Term *παράκλητος*,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32, no. 2 (2009): 131–50; Gitte Buch-Hansen, “*It Is the Spirit That Gives Life*: A Stoic Understanding of *Pneuma* in John’s Gospel,” *Beihfte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 173 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010).

6. On dramatic elements in the gospel, see most recently George Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 258 (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2010).

tion that defines the unity of Father and Son as much more than the unity of a prophet with the will of the deity who speaks through him.⁷

Two examples of this tendency are the defensive dialogue between Jesus and his interlocutors in chapter 5 and the appropriation by Jesus of the self-identification by God found in the Old Testament.

Consider first chapter 5, where the healing of the cripple at the Pool of Bethesda, or Bethzatha, in Jerusalem occasions a challenge to Jesus. Here a redaction of some earlier source seems likely, since there are two issues that trouble Jesus' opponents. One is that he healed on the Sabbath, a type of complaint that we find several times in the Synoptic Gospels. The other issue is that he is making a claim to be "equal to God." It thus seems likely that a traditional controversy story has been reworked into a discussion about a theological point, although the remnants of the original remain, displaced to chapter 7.⁸

The defense by Jesus is interesting and interestingly ironic. Readers might be initially tempted to say that the charge against him, that he makes himself equal to God and is therefore a blasphemer, is erroneous. If one understands Jesus to be a very special prophet, one with God in will and mission, but nothing else, one might react to the charge in this way and start rooting for Jesus to show those opponents why they are wrong. And some of what Jesus says in his defense could be construed as an argument in that direction. He is simply like an apprentice, the child of the Father, doing what the Father authorizes. He is, that is, like Elijah and Elisha, who can heal and raise the dead back to life because they are endowed with divine power and authorized from on high to use it.

But the image of the childlike apprentice learning from the Father is a two-edged sword. It suggests subordination, to be sure, and therefore a refutation of the charge that Jesus makes himself equal to the Father. At the same time it suggests a relationship between Son and Father that is more than that of prophet and authorizing God. The way Jesus frames his "apprenticeship,"

7. That elements of a "prophetic" Christology underlie the gospel is undeniable; see Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1967); M. Eugene Boring, "The Influence of Christian Prophecy on the Johannine Portrayal of the Paraclete and Jesus," *New Testament Studies* 25 (1978–79): 113–23; Adele Reinhartz, "Jesus as Prophet: Predictive Prolepses in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 36 (1989): 3–16.

8. On this point, see Attridge, "Thematic Development and Source Elaboration in John 7," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980): 160–70.

that he simply has done what he has always seen the Father doing, not only healing but raising the dead to life, suggests that the apprenticeship has a transcendent, eternal quality. These are not ordinary, mundane relationships or experiences. For Jesus to have had the experience he claims, he must share the world of the Father and must see things from the Father's perspective. He is, it would seem, to use language that John does not use, on the other side of the boundary that marks the Creator from the created.

Hence, the defense that Jesus mounts against the charge that he makes himself equal to God ironically affirms the substance of the charge, but not its corollary, that the claim implies blasphemy. To claim that Jesus is one with the Father precisely as eternal Son is not blasphemy, says the evangelist, but simply the Truth.⁹

A second element of the gospel that makes a strong claim about the relationship of Father and Son is the set of predicateless "I am" statements that surface at critical moments. Jesus' discourse in the gospel is peppered with two kinds of "I am" predications. Some claim "I am X," where X is some image or symbol that reveals an aspect of the reality that is Jesus: Light, Way, Truth, Life, Resurrection.¹⁰ The multiplicity of ways of imaging Jesus may have its own significance for defining his relationship to ultimate reality, but the second type of "I am" predication is even clearer. The phrase *ego eimi*, in and of itself, is not a pointer to a theological claim. It can simply be an expression, like "c'est moi" or "it is I," or, more colloquially, "it's me," in a situation where the speaker is identifying himself.¹¹ But when Jesus, in the midst of a heated debate with his opponents in chapter 8, says that "before Abraham was, I am," more is at stake than an ordinary speech act of self-identification. How to characterize the claim is debatable. Jesus is at least claiming a transtemporal or transhistorical existence. And he is doing so with the language that the God of Israel used to reveal himself to Moses on Mt. Horeb (Ex 3:13).

Using the language of being to define the reality of God has precedents in philosophically informed circles of the day, in the writings of Philo and

9. For further discussion of the complexities of chapter 5, see Attridge, "Argumentation in John 5," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference*, ed. Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter Übelacker, *Emory Studies in Early Christianity* 8 (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2002), 188–99.

10. Of the many studies of these sayings, see Craig Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*, 2nd ed. (1995; repr. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

11. See Mk 6:50.

Plutarch, especially the latter's *On the E at Delphi*, which finally interprets the mysterious glyph on Apollo's temple as an instruction to the worshipper about what he should say to God in prayer, the simple affirmation that "Thou art."¹²

Jesus' argumentative claim in chapter 8 to divine status parallels and re-emphasizes the claim made more subtly in chapter 5. Jesus is part of the reality of God's very self.

The allusion to the divine name in Jesus' locution of chapter 8 in turn evokes one of the reverential ways in which pious Jews referred to God without pronouncing his holy name. He is simply *haShem*, the Name. A further play on that motif occurs at the end of the Last Supper discourses, where Jesus offers a final prayer in which he tells the Father that he has revealed his name to the disciples and prays that they may be one. That pericope has a riddling quality to it,¹³ since it does not define what the revealed name is. This is one of those texts in the gospel that challenge the reader to return to the story, to re-read it and answer the question, "So, what is that name?" Various answers are possible, from "I am" to "Jesus" to "love one another as I have loved you" to simply "love." However we answer the question, we find our way to the Father, through the One who is one with him.¹⁴

It is not clear how much the evangelist himself is playing on the conceit of Jesus as, in some sense, the name of the Father, but it is clear that at least one perceptive reader of the Fourth Gospel in the second century did precisely that and did so in a way that gets the point of John's general Christological affirmation. I refer to the *Gospel of Truth*, a meditation on the truth of Christian proclamation from a Valentinian point of view, composed sometime in the mid- to late second century. That homily offers an interpretation of the claim that the Son is the name of the Father that builds on early Jewish-Christian name theology filtered through a philosophical lens. That lens, combining elements of Plato and Aristotle, suggests that there is a natural relationship between the name or the signifier and the named or signified when the name accurately conveys

12. Plutarch, *On the E at Delphi* 20, ed., trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, LCL 306.

13. For others who have worried about the "riddling" character of the gospel, see Tom Thatcher, *The Riddles of Jesus in John: A Study in Tradition and Folklore*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 53 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

14. For an argument that the name is the key to Johannine Christology, see Jarl Fossum, "In the Beginning Was the Name: Onomatology as the Key to Johannine Christology," in *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag and Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1995), 117–33.

the “essence” or “ousia” of the signified. The homily claims that that is just what Jesus, the name of the Father, does.

The *Gospel of Truth* obviously extends and deepens the name theology hinted at in the Fourth Gospel, but it does so in a way that conforms to the fundamental thrust of the gospel. The Jesus who reveals the name of the Father to his disciples can affect them profoundly because of his intimate knowledge of who the Father is.


A claim about that intimacy between Father and Son concludes the prologue, and that now deserves our attention. Enormous amounts of ink have been spilled on the prologue’s eighteen verses, and it is not necessary to review the extensive scholarship in detail here,¹⁵ but a few points are worth recalling as we explore possible Trinitarian theology in John.

The prologue, which, as noted, functions as a kind of literary hypothesis before the beginning of the Johannine drama, gives the reader or hearer of gospel clues essential to understanding the story that follows. The central affirmation is that what we encounter in the man of flesh and blood, Jesus, is nothing less than the very word of God, which is itself divine (Jn 1:1). But surrounding that affirmation are multiple ambiguities, which fueled the Trinitarian and Christological controversies of later centuries.

Efforts to trace the background of the affirmations of the prologue tend to mitigate, but never eliminate, some of these ambiguities. Hellenistic Jewish speculation, like that found in Philo of Alexandria and the Wisdom of Solomon, provides the closest parallels. There older sapiential traditions were combined with Greek philosophical notions, which themselves had a complex heritage, to describe the relationship of God to the world in general and to a particular part of it, Israel and its scriptures. Philo’s Logos, which could be named a “Second God,”¹⁶ bridged the gap between Creator and creation

15. For some treatments particularly relevant to this essay, see Robert Kysar, “Christology and Controversy: The Contributions of the Prologue of the Gospel of John to New Testament Christology and Their Historical Setting,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 5, no. 6 (1978): 348–64; Craig A. Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John’s Prologue*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 89 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); William S. Kurz, “The Johannine Word as Revealing the Father: A Christian Credal Actualization,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 28 (2001): 67–84; and Siegert, “Der Logos, ‘älterer Sohn’ des Schöpfers und ‘zweiter Gott’: Philons Logos und der Johannesprolog,” in *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: Das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditionsgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, ed. Jörg Frey and Udo Schnelle, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 175 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 277–94.

16. For a general religio-historical perspective, see Ernst Käsemann, “The Structure and Purpose

by combining a Platonic world of ideas with a Stoic immanent rational force. That Logos was made available to humankind not only through the rational principles embedded in nature, but through their expression in Torah, which the Jewish sapiential tradition had long affirmed was where wisdom had pitched her tent. Much of what Philo says about the Logos can be transferred to the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, who is contrasted at the end of the prologue to Moses and the grace and truth of Torah  the Torah brought.

The final designation of Jesus in the prologue may neatly encapsulate the claim, whatever the original reading of v. 18. If the text calls Jesus the “Unique (or ‘only begotten’) God,” the implications for the status of Jesus are clear, but the claim to divine status of the Logos was already made in the first verse of the prologue. If “God” is not the original reading, but is merely an “orthodox corruption” of scripture,¹⁷ importing a later theological judgment into the text, the analysis suggested here is not substantially affected. In fact, the language of Sonship is just as suitable for the kind of affirmation that the prologue is making and, by the way, is paralleled in Philo’s reflections on his Logos. The language of Sonship, based upon a divine “begetting” involving a primordial divine principle, preserves both the sense of intimate relationship guaranteeing reliable revelation and a sense of subordination. This combination matches the tensive foci of the gospel’s reflection on the relationship of Son and Father.

In summary thus far, although it may be building on earlier formulations that frame the significance of Jesus primarily in prophetic terms, the Fourth Gospel clearly attributes to him a much higher status, intimately bound up with God the Father. If not “Trinitarian,” the gospel is at least decidedly “bina-

of the Prologue to John’s Gospel,” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), 138–67; Carsten Colpe, “Von der Logoslehre des Philo zu der des Clemens von Alexandrien,” in *Kerygma und Logos: Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum; FS für Carl Andresen zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. A. M. Ritter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1979), 89–107; reprinted in Colpe, *Der Siegel der Propheten: Historische Beziehungen zwischen Judentum, Judenchristentum, Heidentum und frühen Islam* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990), 141–64; for a comparison of John and Philo, see John Painter, “Rereading Genesis in the Prologue of John,” in *Neotestamentica et Philonica: Studies in Honor of Peder Borgen*, ed. David E. Aune, Torrey Selander, and Jarl Henning Ulrichsen, Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 106 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 179–201; Attridge, “Philo and John: Two Riffs on one Logos,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 17 (2005): 103–17; and Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer, “Der Logos und die Schöpfung: Streiflichter bei Philo (Op 20–25) und im Johannesprolog (John 1:1–18),” in Frey and Schnelle, *Kontexte*, 295–320.

17. On the text critical issue, see D. A. Fennema, “John 1:18: ‘God the Only Son,’” *New Testament Studies* 31, no. 1 (1985–86): 124–35; Gerard Pendrick, “Monogenes,” *New Testament Studies* 41, no. 4 (1995): 587–600; and Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*.

tarian.” While this stance has its roots in Judaism, its insistent articulation by the evangelist and his community may well have been involved in the “expulsion from the Synagogue” often “prophesied” in the gospel, whatever lies behind that language.¹⁸

But what of the third person of the Trinity? Are there any grounds for seeing this gospel according equal status to someone or something else? The crucial texts for answering that question are the passages on the Paraclete in the Last Supper discourses. These are a set of parallel comments in chapters 14 and 16, which overlap considerably, though each has some distinctive elements. This is one point at which theories of the compositional development of the gospel might be invoked, since many scholars have suggested that chapters 15–17 are a secondary layer, perhaps coming from the same hand or workshop. The major reason for maintaining this possibility is the fact that these chapters seem to break the smooth transition between the end of the postprandial discourse in chapter 14 and the movement to the garden where Jesus is arrested in chapter 18. George Parsenius, however, has suggested that the chapters instead exemplify a common device of ancient drama, the “delayed exit,” a move that enables a protagonist on the point of death to deliver a final set of remarks before moving offstage.¹⁹ Whatever the overall relationship between chapters 15–17 and their literary context, we should treat the two passages on the Paraclete, first for what they each affirm about the figure, and then for the possible relationship between them. There are tensions within each of these chapters that merit attention and may be significant for our inquiry.

The first appearance of the Paraclete is at John 14:16, where Jesus, in return for the disciples’ obedience to his commandments, promises to ask the Father for “another Paraclete” to be with the disciples forever. The identity of the “other” promised Paraclete is given two verses later when Jesus says that he will not leave his disciples orphans but would come to them himself. So

18. See Wayne A. Meeks, “The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91, no. 1 (1972): 44–72, reprinted in *Interpretations of the Fourth Gospel*, ed. John Ashton (London: SPCK; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 141–73; Meeks, “Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity’s Separation from the Jewish Communities,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, “Others” in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1985), 93–115. For a recent alternative analysis of the relationship between the gospel and “the Jews,” see Raimo Hakola, *John, the Jews and Jewishness* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

19. See Parsenius, *Departure and Consolation: The Johannine Farewell Discourses in Light of Greco-Roman Literature*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 117 (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

the Paraclete is another Jesus, and Jesus is what a Paraclete should be, one who advises and advocates for those to whose side he is called. Before the promise not to abandon the disciples, Jesus also offers a hint about the character of the Paraclete, saying (v. 17) that he is the “spirit of truth.”

The end of this pericope on the Paraclete, vv. 25–26, providing a kind of bookend to the whole discussion, continues in a similar vein. The Paraclete is now defined as “The Holy Spirit” (v. 26). Sent by the Father, he will teach and remind the disciples about what Jesus said, an allusion to the theme of “remembrance” prominent in the gospel.²⁰

Most of what is said about the Paraclete in John 14:15–26 comports with what would be familiar from the other accounts in the New Testament about the Holy Spirit, although those accounts add other interesting details about the Spirit’s activity. It is he who speaks through the words of scripture (Heb 3:7), inspires hope (Gal 5:5), dwells within disciples individually and collectively (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19), giving expression to their deepest fears and longings (Rom 8:26), makes itself known in ecstatic worship phenomena (1 Cor 12 and 14), and provides the fruits of a virtuous life (Gal 5:22). These affirmations about the Holy Spirit are clearly rooted in ancient biblical expressions about the Spirit of Yahweh manifest in the life of Israel, as Luke reminds us in his account of Pentecost (Acts 2:4, 17–18). They may also reflect understandings of the divine spirit at home in the eschatological writings of Jewish sectarians, but those roots and antecedents do not quite prepare us for the connection made in these verses between Jesus and the Spirit.

Another point, however, is remarkable. Although vv. 16–18 are not completely explicit, they seem to suggest very strongly that the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, while other than Jesus, is in some sense Jesus himself. That suggestion is supported by what follows, the material framed by the somewhat conventional affirmations about the Paraclete/Spirit at the beginning and end of the pericope.

Verses 20–24 are quite explicit on the complexity of the spiritual presence that will abide in the disciples who keep the commands of Jesus. After promising his return, Jesus further promises (v. 20) that “in that day” the disciples would know that he is in his Father and they are in Jesus and Jesus in them. If Jesus is in the Father and they are in him, logic suggests that they are in the Fa-

20. Compare Jn 2:17, 22; 12:16; 15:20; 16:4.

ther, as well. That point is made explicit several verses later (v. 23), where Jesus reiterates his promise. If anyone loves him and keeps his word, the Father will love him and Jesus and the Father will come and make their abode (*monén*) with them. This verse, providing a realized interpretation of the eschatological promise of a heavenly *moné* (14:2–4), is hardly surprising in light of the affirmation of intimate union between Father and Son already explored. What is significant for our purpose is the way in which the affirmation seems to reinforce and interpret the promise of the presence of the Paraclete. That promise ultimately consists of the presence of Jesus and his Father with the disciples.

The second passage on the Paraclete, 16:7–15, begins on the positive note that Jesus' departure, a cause for sadness, is necessary for the coming of the Paraclete, now to be sent by Jesus himself and not, as in chapter 14, by the Father at the request of Jesus (v. 17). A new set of functions is attributed to the Paraclete, focusing on the theme of examination (*elegxei*) of the world for "sin, righteousness, and judgment" (v. 8). Jesus promises that the Paraclete, again defined as the "Spirit of Truth," will have a second function, "to lead you in all truth," telling the disciples things that they could not bear while Jesus was with them (v. 12). In doing so, it will simply convey what it hears from Jesus, to whom the Father has entrusted all things (vv. 13–15).

The description of the first function of the Paraclete sounds a note not present in chapter 14. It might also have its roots in traditional affirmations about how the divine spirit can examine the depths of human and divine reality (1 Cor 2:10), but it also ties in with the theme of judgment that pervades the gospel. The passage may, in fact, resolve a tension in the theme of judgment, between the affirmations that Jesus came to judge and those that he does not himself judge.²¹ One way of resolving that tension is to think of judgment as something that happens as each individual chooses to react to the claims of Jesus. But how will that work when Jesus himself is gone? The Paraclete provides an answer; it will happen as individuals after Jesus' departure confront the Spirit in the community of his disciples.

The description of the second function accorded to the Paraclete in chap-

21. The significance of forensic motifs in the gospel has long been noted; see, e.g., Josef Blank, *Krisis: Untersuchungen zur johanneischen Christologie und Eschatologie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus Verlag, 1964); A. E. Harvey, *Jesus on Trial* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1976); and, most recently, Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* series 1, vol. 258 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

ter 16 recalls the promise in chapter 14 that it would “teach and remind.” Also, in its insistence that the Spirit simply conveys what Jesus teaches and that teaching simply consists in what Jesus learned from the Father, this promise reinforces the sense of intimate unity between Father, Son, and Spirit that was at the heart of the earlier passage. There is, however, something new added in the description of this promised teacher. The emphasis in the previous chapter was on remembrance. Teaching consisted in remembrance of the past. Here the view is prospective. The Spirit will teach what Jesus did not because the disciples could not bear it. The presence of the Spirit can introduce genuine novelty, but that novelty will always cohere with what Jesus taught at the Father’s command.

The passages on the Paraclete, therefore, make complex theological claims. These claims go beyond what other early Christians were wont to say about the Spirit of God active in their lives. The Paraclete/Spirit is the presence of Jesus and the Father in the life of the community; it extends and reinforces the ministry of Jesus, but it also expands it, in total conformity, of course, with the will of Father and Son.

The attention of Christian theologians for the first several centuries was on the relationship of Father and Son, particularly as they explored the implications of the Logos metaphor for defining the Son. Theologians who were also serious readers of the Fourth Gospel, such as Origen, could treat the spirit as at best an instrument of Father and Son, a creature, perhaps the first of all creatures, but a creature nonetheless.²² Such a reading of the gospel’s account of the Paraclete cannot be easily disproven. Yet those theologians of the fourth century who developed the framework of what came to be orthodox Trinitarian theology were not introducing totally new perspectives into a discussion begun by the Fourth Gospel. In its insistence, especially in John 14, on the intimacy of the relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit, the gospel moves beyond, even while it systematizes traditional early Christians affirmations about the Spirit. In its insistence on the subordination of Son and Spirit to the Father, especially in chapter 16, it may compromise that intimacy, but no more so than does its recognition that the Father, the one who “sent” the Son, is

22. See Attridge, “Heraclion and John: Reassessment of an Early Christian Hermeneutical Debate,” in *Biblical Interpretation, History, Context, and Reality*, ed. Christine Helmer and Taylor G. Petrey, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium 26 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 57–72.

greater than the Son. In the gospel's insistence that the Spirit, though subordinate, functions both to reinforce what Jesus taught and to teach what Jesus could not, it establishes the presence of the Spirit as a distinct element in the divine economy.

The Gospel of John, in other words, has all the makings of a Trinitarian theology, even if it remains implicit.