

THE WORDS OF JESUS ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN¹

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WHEN I came up to Manchester to read theology thirty years ago, T. W. Manson had just entered upon his long and distinguished tenure of the Rylands Chair of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis. The first lecture I attended in the Faculty of Theology was the first in a year's course on the exegesis of the Gospel of John. The lecturer was T. W. Manson. I came to know him well, first in the relation of student to teacher, and then as a personal friend to whom I owe many acts of kindness. To have known and studied under a scholar of his eminence was a privilege I shall always cherish with gratitude and pride. To be invited to give this memorial lecture in the University he served with such distinction I regard as a signal honour. The topic I have chosen would, I feel sure, have won his approval, for the Fourth Gospel was one of his major interests. I venture to hope that my treatment of it will not be judged entirely unworthy of the occasion.

I

Near the beginning of his Rylands lecture on the Fourth Gospel (1947) in the series entitled *The Life of Jesus : A Study of the Available Materials*,² Manson quoted some words of Kirsopp Lake : " John may contain a few remnants of true tradition, but in the main it is fiction." His lecture is a rebuttal of this view. The same negative attitude, however, that in research into the life of Jesus the Fourth Gospel can safely be more or less ignored, is still much in evidence, and is a feature of the post-Bultmann new quest of the historical Jesus.

¹ The Manson Memorial Lecture delivered in the University of Manchester on the 14th of November 1966.

² Reprinted in *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles*, ed. M. Black (Manchester, 1962).

Bultmann himself in *Jesus and the Word*¹ has said categorically, "The Gospel of John cannot be taken into account at all as a source for the teaching of Jesus, and it is not referred to in this book". He outlines the differences of the Fourth Gospel from the synoptics in support of this view in the opening pages of the second volume of his *Theology of the New Testament* (1955). His followers adopt the same general line. Thus E. Fuchs says that "for the question of the historical Jesus our first source can only be the Synoptic Gospels". The Fourth Gospel, although containing some "historically interesting details", must be placed in a class by itself.² Turning more especially to the teaching of Jesus, we find E. Käsemann expressing the opinion that even in the synoptic tradition there is little authentic information. "The preaching about him has almost entirely supplanted his own preaching, as can be seen most clearly of all in the completely un-historical Gospel of John"³ Professor G. Bornkamm does not appear to be quite as radical. Although he says that the Fourth Gospel can be treated as only a secondary source⁴ because of its highly developed theological reflection, and that the Johannine Jesus speaks differently from the historical Jesus in the synoptics, and "is seen entirely with the eyes of post-Easter faith",⁵ he does refer to a few of the Johannine words of Jesus in describing aspects of his teaching.⁶ But he does this in a way which suggests that he uses them not as authentic sayings, but as illustrations of the tradition.

The verdict that the new quest does not take the Fourth Gospel seriously is fully justified. I quote from the American scholar Father R. E. Brown. "The post-Bultmannians take for

¹ Fontana edn. (London, 1958), p. 17.

² *Studies of the Historical Jesus* (London, 1964), p. 19.

³ *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London, 1964), p. 60.

⁴ *Jesus of Nazareth* (London, 1960), p. 14.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 68. Cf. Bornkamm's remarks on p. 283 of his essay "Glaube und Geschichte in den Evangelien" in *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus*, ed. H. Ristow and K. Matthiae (Berlin, 1961), pp. 281-8, on the comparative unimportance of Jesus' earthly life in John and its fusion with the testimony of faith.

⁶ John iii. 3 (p. 84); iv. 48 (p. 132); v. 23 (p. 189); vi. 67 (p. 191); viii. 31 f. (p. 145); viii. 50 (p. 189); ix. 1 ff. (p. 80); xiv. 26; xvi. 13 (p. 191); xix. 26 f., 28, 30 (p. 167); xx. 29 (p. 132).

granted that in Jn we have the kerygma so superimposed upon Jesus that very little of what Jesus says or does can be taken as historical."¹ Despite the undisputed fact that the Johannine sayings tradition has been subjected to a much greater degree of theological interpretation than the synoptic tradition, there is another side to the question. I would endorse Father Brown's conviction that in the Johannine discourses there appears "a sapiential character seen only incidentally in the Synoptics, and a tendency to use some of the abstract theological language witnessed among Jewish sectarians like the Qumran Essenes. A reintroduction of some of this Johannine material into the new quest would perhaps give body to its sketch of the historical Jesus."²

The most thorough recent investigation of the sayings in John was undertaken by Professor C. H. Dodd in Part II of his monumental book *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (1963). He has demonstrated the probability that the fourth evangelist, despite his particular method of composition, has drawn independently on primitive tradition and has preserved elements in it neglected by the synoptists.

The purpose of this lecture is, firstly, to present some considerations on the language of Jesus, with special reference to the Fourth Gospel, and then to attempt to pursue the search for possibly genuine sayings in it a little further.

II

It has come to be regarded as axiomatic that the common speech of Palestine in the time of Jesus was Aramaic, and therefore that Jesus taught his disciples and the people in that language. It is also the common belief that not only the synoptic gospels, but also the Fourth Gospel contain Greek translations of a number of Aramaic sayings of Jesus transmitted orally or in writing. Consequently, no saying attributed to Jesus is likely to be his unless it bears traces of its original semitic form and content. By "semitic" Aramaic is usually meant. But it is

¹ R. E. Brown, "After Bultmann, What?—an Introduction to the post-Bultmannians", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* xxvi. (1964), 28. ² *Ibid.* p. 29.

probable that a form of Hebrew was also spoken in the Palestine of his day.

According to M. H. Segal¹ the inhabitants of Judaea were largely bilingual, speaking not only Aramaic, but also and primarily vernacular, that is, in his view, Mishnaic Hebrew, while in Galilee the normal speech was Aramaic, although even there Hebrew was used by the educated classes.

Manson suggested that Jesus, while delivering the bulk of his teaching to the disciples or the people in colloquial Aramaic, may well have used rabbinic Hebrew in his discussions with the Jewish scholars.²

I now turn to two important discussions of this question of the language spoken by Jesus.

The first is a study of forty pages by H. Birkeland entitled "The Language of Jesus", published in Oslo in 1954.³ Birkeland questions the conclusion drawn by western scholars from the spread of Aramaic, that by the time of Jesus it had replaced Hebrew as the common spoken language of Palestine. Of the study of the Aramaic background of the gospels he writes: "As a rule it must be said that the indisputable results of most investigations in this direction consist in ascertaining the general Semitic or Hebrew foundation of the preaching of Jesus. The Greek words and expressions necessarily claiming a specific Aramaic foundation are very few."⁴ What then, it may be asked, was the need of Aramaic Targums if, as Birkeland maintains, most Jews spoke dialectic Hebrew? The first part of his answer to this question is that the only possible language for Targums was literary Aramaic. A Hebrew dialect was impossible. "For interpretation of the Holy texts only a dignified language of high repute could be considered, not a simple dialect."⁵ The second part is the view that the Targums arose in the Diaspora. But even if this is wrong, Birkeland urges, and

¹ *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 1-20.

² *The Teaching of Jesus*² (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 46 ff. On Jesus' possible use of Hebrew at the Last Supper, see J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*³ (1966), pp. 196-8.

³ *Avhandlingar utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo : II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse, 1954. No. 1, pp. 1-40.*

⁴ *Op. cit.* p. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 32.

Targums were first made for *Palestinian* Jews, this does not mean that Hebrew was displaced by Aramaic.¹

The implication drawn from this argument is that, since Aramaic was spoken by the more educated upper classes, but a Hebrew dialect akin to but not identical with the Mishnaic Hebrew of the rabbis by the lower classes, Jesus as a member of the latter spoke Hebrew. The oral tradition of his teaching was translated directly from Hebrew into Greek. Birkeland does not think, however, that these findings are of much direct importance for understanding Jesus' words in general, because of the close relationship of Aramaic and Hebrew.

J. A. Emerton² has examined Birkeland's thesis and rejected it, although he admits that Jesus, besides normally speaking Aramaic, may sometimes have used Hebrew.

The second study of this matter is an article by J. M. Grintz entitled "Hebrew as the spoken and written language in the last days of the Second Temple" in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* for 1960.³ As predecessors in the attempt to disprove the prevalent assumption that Aramaic, not Hebrew, was the popular language of Palestine in New Testament times, he names Segal and E. Ben-Yehuda.⁴ More than half of this article is concerned to demonstrate, by an examination of its words and expressions, that the gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew, and that this is the meaning of the familiar statement of Papias reported by Eusebius,⁵ that Matthew recorded the "oracles" of the Lord 'Εβραϊδι διαλέκτω. Turning to Josephus, Grintz expresses the opinion that the idea that Josephus originally composed his *Jewish War* in Aramaic, and that that was the only Semitic language spoken in Palestine, is due to misunderstanding, and undertakes to prove that whenever he "mentions γλωττα 'Εβραίων, 'Εβραίων διάλεκτον, etc., he always means 'Hebrew' and no other language".⁶ Grintz argues similarly that the word "Hebrew" in the Talmud means Hebrew, and that this

¹ Op. cit. p. 36.

² "Did Jesus speak Hebrew?" *J.T.S.*, n.s. xii (1961), 189-202.

³ *J.B.L.* lxxix (1960), 32-47.

⁴ *Dictionary of the Hebrew Language* (New York, 1939).

⁵ *H.E.*, III. 39. 16.

⁶ Op. cit. p. 42.

was the vernacular. According to Emerton, in a long note appended to his discussion of Birkeland's study, Grintz does not succeed in establishing that Aramaic was not the popular speech of Palestine in the period in question.

An interesting possibility is suggested by Professor Matthew Black. After mentioning with approval Manson's idea that Jesus may have spoken Hebrew in disputation with the Pharisees, he calls attention to *Mischsprache* in the Palestinian Talmud, where there occur sentences half Hebrew and half Aramaic, "and this artificial language, rabbinical in origin, may well have been in use before as after the Fall of Jerusalem".¹ In any case it is usually impossible to be sure whether a Greek semitism is Hebrew or Aramaic.²

As regards the Fourth Gospel, the recent findings of Dr. Klaus Beyer seem to be important. So far there has appeared only the first part of his study of semitic syntax in the New Testament, and this, dealing with sentence structure, comprises one fifth of the projected work.³ While, therefore, a certain caution is perhaps desirable until more of the material is available, it is unlikely that the picture will be radically altered. Beyer finds unambiguous semitic sentence structure only in the synoptic gospels, in the Johannine writings (the Fourth Gospel, epistles, and Revelation), and in the epistle of James.⁴

Beyer regards as the most significant result of his investigations the presence of more definite Hebraisms than Aramaisms in the Johannine gospel and epistles. These writings are under predominantly Hebrew influence.⁵ This invalidates the prevalent view that the Fourth Gospel is dependent, wholly or partly, on Aramaic sources alone.⁶ Moreover, this applies especially to the non-narrative sections of John. Taken as a

¹ *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*² (Oxford, 1954), p. 14.

² Cf. M. Black, *E.T.*, lxxvii (1965), 21.

³ *Semitische Syntax im Neuen Testament I: Satzlehre I* (Göttingen, 1962).

⁴ *Op. cit.* pp. 17 f.

⁵ Revelation is entirely Hebraic; but C. C. Torrey tried to show that it is translated from Aramaic (*The Apocalypse of John*, New Haven, 1958).

⁶ Beyer, p. 17: "Damit ist die bisher allgemein vertretene Theorie, das Johev gehe, ganz oder teilweise, ausschliesslich auf aramäische Quellen zurück, unhaltbar geworden".

whole, Beyer's conclusions agree excellently, as he points out, with the fact that most of the Qumran documents, which are closely related in thought to the Fourth Gospel, are written in Hebrew. It is not suggested, however, that this gospel is simply a translation of a semitic book. Like the other Johannine writings, it is written in semitic Greek,¹ but allowance is made for possible inclusion of Greek translations of semitic sources.

In all this Beyer is not suggesting that his findings support the view that Jesus delivered most of his teaching in Hebrew. On the contrary, he subscribes to the prevalent opinion that Jesus and his disciples spoke the popular language of their day, Aramaic, and therefore that everything in the New Testament which goes back to them must originally have been formulated in that language.² The implication, perhaps, is that the material going back to Jesus is virtually confined to the synoptics, while the Johannine gospel and epistles, as more precisely theological works, have as their linguistic background the Hebrew of learned discussion and debate. The analogy of the Qumran literature has already been mentioned.

To the protagonists of the view that Hebrew was the dominant language of Judaea in New Testament times must be added the name of J. T. Milik. "The copper scrolls", he writes, "and the documents from the Second Revolt prove beyond reasonable doubt that Mishnaic was the normal language of the Judaeans population in the Roman period."³ He also points to the presence of Hebrew (besides Aramaic and Greek) on ossuaries as evidence that this was the middle-class language, "and not merely a religious use of the classical Holy Tongue".⁴

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¹ Cf. N. Turner, "The Language of the New Testament", *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (Edinburgh, 1962), pp. 659-62, and in vol. 3 (Edinburgh, 1963) of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* by J. H. Moulton, pp. 1-9; M. Black, "The Semitic Element in the New Testament", *E.T.*, lxxvii (1965), 20-23.

² *Op. cit.* p. 7.

³ *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea* (London, 1959), p. 130; cf. p. 95: the copper scroll is written not in literary Hebrew, but in Mishnaic, "which was at that time the spoken dialect of the inhabitants of Judaea".

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 131.

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Aramaic oral or written tradition of Jesus' words underlies the Fourth Gospel as well as the synoptics.¹

If the Fourth Gospel may be supposed to contain both Aramaic and Hebrew semitisms in sayings attributed to Jesus, it is not inconceivable that it may preserve traces of the *Mischsprache* which Jesus may have known and used. And if we may hazard a further guess, did Jesus customarily speak Aramaic in Galilee, but both Aramaic and vernacular Hebrew in Judaea,² as well as the Hebrew of scholarly debate in discussions with his religious opponents? Would this help to explain the prevalence of Hebraic over Aramaic syntactical features in John, according to Beyer? For this gospel has far more to say than the others about the Judaeian ministry. All this is admittedly speculative. But my purpose so far has been to underline the possibility that Jesus may have taught in Hebrew as well as in Aramaic, and to suggest that any attempt to pursue the matter further should begin with the Fourth Gospel, in view of its resemblances in thought and expression to the Qumran literature, which is mostly in Hebrew. At any rate, this factor is worth keeping in mind as we turn more particularly to the Fourth Gospel.³

III

In the second part of his book *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (1963), Professor Dodd, as I have already recalled, has made a contribution of permanent value to the study of the Johannine sayings tradition. To my mind, he has greatly

¹ *E.T.*, lxxvii (1965), 21.

² Following Segal's geographical theory of the languages.

³ Regarding Birkeland's thesis that Hebrew was still spoken among the lower classes in Palestine in the time of Jesus, N. Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh, 1965), p. 180, remarks that it "may well be sound as far as isolated country districts or communities, like Qumran, are concerned, . . . and probably in Judaea rather than in Galilee". For what it may be worth, there is the evidence of an Arabic manuscript written in the tenth century by the Muslim author Abd al-Jabbar, and recently discovered in Istanbul (*The Observer*, 26 June, 1966, p. 5). The author, who may have received his information directly, states that the still surviving Jewish Christian sect claimed that Jesus' language was not Aramaic but Hebrew.

strengthened the case for the view that the fourth evangelist utilized an independent tradition, which may preserve some historical elements neglected by the synoptists. Dodd, however, makes very little reference to the Qumran literature, because he is not persuaded of the existence of the close affinities with the Fourth Gospel claimed by a number of other scholars.¹ These affinities, it must be admitted, can be and have been exaggerated. On the other hand, not all of them can be dismissed as merely "more of the same" which we knew already from other sources. Be that as it may, I shall offer some tentative suggestions for the attempt to recover more *ipsissima verba* of Jesus in John.

But first I should like to take this opportunity of reopening briefly the question of the double amen ("verily, verily", or "truly, truly"), which is a prominent characteristic of Jesus' sayings in this gospel.

It is generally agreed that the prefatory use of the word "amen", confined to Jesus' utterances in the synoptics, has no real parallel in Jewish usage, where it is a corroborative response to the words of someone else,² and that it was a characteristic of Jesus' actual speech.³ In the Fourth Gospel it is always in the double form, occurs only in sayings attributed to Jesus and, like the synoptic single form, always precedes the words "I say to you" (*λέγω ὑμῖν*, twenty times; *λέγω σοι*, five times). J. Jeremias has pointed to the tendency in the synoptics to remove, to translate, or to introduce substitutes for "amen" in Jesus' words, and attributes the double form in John to liturgical usage. According to B. Noack the synoptic introductory "amen" is more probably of Christian liturgical origin than derived from Jesus' own speech. The same is true of the double "amen",

¹ Op. cit. p. 15, n. 3. See F. M. Braun, "L'arrière-fond judaïque du Quatrième Évangile et la Communauté de l'Alliance", *R.B.*, lxii (1955), 5-44; R. E. Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles", *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. K. Stendahl (London, 1958), pp. 183-207 (reprinted in his *New Testament Essays* (London-Dublin, 1965), pp. 102-31).

² Cf., however, D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, 1956), pp. 388-93, for suggestions on the transition from this original use.

³ J. Jeremias, "Kennzeichen der ipsissima vox Jesu", *Synoptische Studien [Festschrift A. Wikenhauser]* (Munich, 1953), pp. 89-93, reprinted in *Abba* (Göttingen, 1966), pp. 148-51.

Aramaism, " unless one should regard as Aramaism the use of asyndeton and parataxis, and the somewhat excessive use of personal pronouns ", which, in his view, are explicable as imitation of the style of the gospel. Referring to the matter later, in his commentary on the Johannine epistles, he speaks in more general terms of the lack of " definable *Semitism* " (italics mine) and of the absence of clear traces of semitism.¹

Quite contrary to this assessment is the work of Beyer, according to whom the Johannine epistles, as well as the gospel, have many semitisms. The numbers of these in Beyer's index are: fifty-two in 1 John, six in 2 John, and three in 3 John. Many of them are the same as those in the gospel.

Manson utilized the same results as those mentioned by Dodd, as part of the evidence which seemed to show that " some of the most striking differences between the Gospel and the Epistle turn out on closer examination to be differences between the Aramaizing half of the Gospel and the Epistle ".² He strengthened his case by showing that, of the key words in the gospel whose absence from the epistle formed part of Dodd's argument for separate authorship,³ some occur only in the Aramaizing part of the gospel,⁴ while others, occurring in both parts, are generally much less frequent in the non-Aramaizing part.

While, as I have said, the division of the gospel into Aramaizing and non-Aramaizing sections seems to be confirmed by Beyer's results, Manson's contention that it is in the former that the differences from the epistle are most marked, although true in regard to vocabulary, appears to be contradicted by the presence of semitisms in the epistle. Whether these differences of vocabulary are due merely to separate authorship of gospel and epistle, or more probably to the incorporation by the evangelist of traditional material, it is in the sections of the gospel bearing clear traces of semitic background that we have to look for possible words of Jesus.

It has been maintained, however, by R. H. Gundry that " the

¹ *The Johannine Epistles* (London, 1946), pp. 1, lii.

² Op. cit. pp. 116 f.

³ *B.J.R.L.* xxi (1937), 139 f. (offprint, pp. 13 f.).

⁴ σώζειν, σωτηρία, χάρις, ἀγιάζειν, προσκυνεῖν, κρίνειν, κρίσις, ὑψοῦν, θέλημα, ἐξουσία, τιμᾶν, καρπός.

absence of Aramaisms (or more broadly, Semitisms) does not militate against authenticity", because Jesus probably spoke Greek as well as Aramaic and Hebrew, and the gospel traditions may preserve, in a more or less accurate form, dominical sayings originally spoken in Greek.¹ Whether Jesus was such an accomplished linguist is open to question. It seems to me a very hazardous proposition, and especially in regard to the Fourth Gospel.

Nevertheless, something more needs to be said. It is well known that the influence of Hellenism and of the Greek language was widespread in first-century Palestine.² Gundry mentions a number of protagonists of Greek as the dominical language,³ as well as adducing some more recent evidence of the use of Greek in Palestine alongside Aramaic and Hebrew. This use of Greek is recognized as a fact, and it would therefore be rash to deny that Jesus on occasion may have spoken Greek. But it does not necessarily follow that he did so customarily. Gundry refers to two kinds of Greek, non-semitic and semitic, and apparently is of the opinion that sayings of Jesus in the former category recorded in the gospels may include some which are just as likely to be authentic as some of those in the latter category. But is not this to dispense with an important criterion of authenticity?

I cannot leave this aspect of the question of language without some reference to Dr. Nigel Turner's chapter on "The Language of Jesus and his Disciples" in his recent book *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (1965). He believes not only that the evangelists spoke and wrote in a dialect of Jewish Greek,⁴ but also that Jesus employed this kind of Greek. He goes on to give some examples in support of this view.⁵ Among them are "the clever juxtaposition" of *λιμοί* and *λοιμοί* ("famines and

¹ "The Language Milieu of First-Century Palestine", *J.B.L.*, lxxxiii (1964), 400-8. The quoted words are on p. 404.

² Cf. e.g. G. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua* (London, 1929), pp. 1-7; S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1942).

³ Including A. Roberts and T. K. Abbott in the nineteenth century, on whom see W. C. Allen's essay, "The Aramaic Background of the Gospels", *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, ed. W. Sanday (Oxford, 1911), p. 289; and R. O. P. Taylor, *The Groundwork of the Gospels* (Oxford, 1946), especially pp. 96-105 (also pp. 91-95 by G. A. Smith).

⁴ Cf. also the references on p. 369, n. 1 above.

⁵ *Op. cit.* pp. 181 f.

plagues ") in Luke xxi. 11, " which is less likely to be the creation of a translator than to be original " ; and *Πετρός* and *πετρά* (Peter and rock) in Matthew xvi. 18 are said to be " too ingenious for the ordinary translator ". What then, it may be asked, about *ἐκκλησία* four words later? Are we to believe that this Greek word, found nowhere else in the gospels except in Matthew xviii. 17, was also used by Jesus? An example from the Fourth Gospel cited as telling against translation from Aramaic is culled from Jesus' discourse with Nicodemus. " Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God " (John iii. 3, cf. 7). The Greek word for " again " (*ἄνωθεν*) used here also means " from above ", but there is no Hebrew or Aramaic equivalent with this double meaning. Turner urges us to overcome our reluctance to believe that Jesus would speak to a rabbi in Greek, by suggesting that Nicodemus (a thoroughly Greek name) may have been a liberal rabbi and a Hellenist like Stephen. My own reluctance is concerned rather with the strong possibility that the discussion with Nicodemus, while very probably based on a real incident, has been moulded by the evangelist (or perhaps by a " Johannine " predecessor) to fit the Hellenistic notion of rebirth. Turner's conclusion¹ is that the *normal* language of Jesus, at least in Galilee, was a dialect of biblical Jewish Greek, both written and spoken, and distinct from the Koine. It seems to me that this is more difficult to establish than the existence of this variety of Greek. Among the difficulties would be Jesus' characteristic use of the expression " Son of man ". He can hardly be supposed to have employed it in its Greek form *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, which is usually taken to be an almost meaningless attempt to render the Aramaic *bar nasha*.

To resume the main argument. Very significant is the following fact. Of 69 phrases in the gospel expressing identical or closely similar ideas to those in the epistle, no fewer than 63 occur in Manson's Aramaizing sections of the gospel, and only 6 (ii. 25 ; xi. 55, 57 ; xiii. 34, 36, 37) in the non-Aramaizing sections.² Consequently, as regards both semitisms and com-

¹ Op. cit. p. 183.

² I have used the list in A. E. Brooke, *The Johannine Epistles* (Edinburgh, 1912), pp. ii-iv.

munity of ideas and expressions, the Aramaizing sections of the gospel, and the epistle, so far from being different, are closely similar.

TABLE 1
SEMITIC SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION
Fourth Gospel

In Aramaizing sections	In non-Aramaizing sections	Total	<i>1 John</i>
104 (82 in words of Jesus)	10	114	52

TABLE 2
" JOHANNINE " PHRASEOLOGY AND IDEAS

In Aramaizing sections	In non-Aramaizing sections	Total
63	6	69

It would exceed the scope of this lecture to discuss fully the whole question of the relationship between the gospel and the epistle in these two respects. I confine myself to the possible bearing of the facts on sayings of Jesus in the gospel, and the following selected sayings are taken from its Aramaizing sections.

John iii. 15 : " that whoever believes in him may have eternal life " (*ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον*) or perhaps, " that whoever believes may in him have eternal life ", because elsewhere in John the verb *πιστεύειν* does not take the preposition *ἐν*.

1 John v. 13 : " I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."

The expression " eternal life " occurs in the Qumran Manual of Discipline (1 QS 4. 7), but also in rabbinic and Hellenistic Judaism. The idea does not, of course, possess the importance it has in Johannine theology.¹

John iii. 21 : " he who does the truth " (*ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν*).

1 John i. 6 : " we do not do the truth " (*οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν*).

¹ Cf. H. Braun, " Qumran und das Neue Testament : ein Bericht über 10 Jahre Forschung (1950-1959)", *Theologische Rundschau*, N.F., xxviii (1962), 207 f.

The expression "to do the truth" is found in the Manual of Discipline (1 QS 1. 5; 5. 3; 8. 2).¹ But *ποιεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν* is also Hellenistic Jewish Greek,² e.g. Isaiah xxvi. 10; Tobit iv. 6; xiii. 6; Test. Reuben vi. 9; Test. Benjamin x. 3, and was therefore not necessarily taken over by the evangelist from Qumran Hebrew usage and rendered into Greek. Probably "doing the truth" was a current Jewish expression and idea present in the Palestinian semitic tradition utilized in the Fourth Gospel.

John viii. 12: "he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (*ὁ ἀκολουθῶν μοι οὐ μὴ περιπατήσει ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς*).

John xii. 35: "he who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going" (*ὁ περιπατῶν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ οὐκ οἶδεν ποῦ ὑπάγει*).

1 John ii. 11: "But he who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going" (*οὐκ οἶδεν ποῦ ὑπάγει*).

This dualism of light and darkness is also found in the Qumran literature, and in 1 QS 3. 20 f. in connection with walking "in the ways of light" and "in the ways of darkness".³ Parallel interpretation of the same basic conception is to be assumed, rather than derivation of the Johannine usage from Qumran. The related expression "the light of life" appears in 1 QS 3. 7.

John viii. 34 and 1 John iii. 4 (cf. 8, 9) have identically *πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν* ("everyone who does sin"). Johannine though this is, it is nevertheless Aramaic.⁴

The mixed character of this material is evident. On the one hand, Jesus speaks like a member of the Johannine theological school. Words appear to have been attributed to him which

¹ Cf. A. R. C. Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and Its Meaning* (London, 1966), p. 119.

² Braun, *op. cit.* p. 209.

³ Cf. Braun, *op. cit.* pp. 218-20. H. M. Teeple, "Qumran and the Origin of the Fourth Gospel", *Novum Testamentum*, iv (1960), 14, thinks Old Testament examples, without mention of "the ways", are nearer.

⁴ M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*² (Oxford, 1954), p. 128.

belong to the stock of Johannine thought and phraseology. On the other hand are features which, although in an identical or a similar form in the epistle, are semitic and perhaps in some cases of Hebrew origin. The ultimate source of sayings of this kind may, therefore, be different from and more primitive than the apparently non-semitic Johannine characteristics of other sayings put into the mouth of Jesus, in which the Johannine school expresses its own theology. Such are the following.

Fourth Gospel

iii. 16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

v. 24: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but *has passed from death to life*."

vi. 56: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood *abides in me*, and I in him."

xiv. 15: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

xv. 7: "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you."

Returning to the other category of sayings, we may say that the epistle has adapted for homiletical purposes parts of the sayings tradition used in the gospel, including some of the semitic elements of that tradition.

We may now leave the epistle on one side, with the observation that, according to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus employs ideas and expressions current in the Palestine of his day: "eternal life"¹, "to do the truth", "to walk in the darkness", "the light of life", "to do sin".

¹ ἔχειν ζωὴν αἰώνιον occurs in Jesus' words in John iii. 15 f., 36; v. 24, 39; vi. 40, 47, but not in the synoptics (on the lips of others Matt. xix. 16 (parr. Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18 κληρονομεῖν; also Luke x. 25); in Matt. xix. 29 the verb is κληρονομεῖν, but λαμβάνειν in parr. Mark x. 30; Luke xviii. 30).

1 John

iv. 9: "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him."

iii. 14: "We know that *we have passed from death to life*, because we love the brethren."

ii. 28: "abide in him."

ii. 3: "And by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

ii. 24: "Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father."

In John v. 33 Jesus says that John the Baptist has borne witness to the truth, and in xviii. 37 he tells Pilate that he himself has come into the world "to bear witness to the truth". In the Manual of Discipline (1 QS 8. 6) the members of the community are called "witnesses to truth". This is a specially significant resemblance, because these expressions are not found elsewhere in the literature of dualism, such as the Hermetic and Mandaean writings.¹ The idea of "witnessing to the truth" may, therefore, belong to the thought-background common to the Fourth Gospel and the Qumran literature.

In John vi. 28 the people ask Jesus, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God (τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ)?" Jesus replies, "This is the work of God (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ), that you believe in him whom he has sent". In the Manual of Discipline (1 QS 4. 4) there is a reference to *trust* in "all the deeds of God" which the religious man must cherish.² As is often the case, therefore, there is a subtle difference of meaning in an identical expression common to Qumran and the Fourth Gospel. Yet there is a basic resemblance. In John vi. 28 f. God's work(s)³ which men must do because it is his will, consist(s) in *belief*—in the one he has sent.

In John xii. 36 Jesus says, "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light". The expression "sons of light" is familiar in the Qumran texts as a name for the sectarians.⁴ The expression in John, *υἱοὶ φωτός*, occurs in 1 Thessalonians v. 5⁵ and in Luke xvi. 8b in words attributed to Jesus. The fact that Luke xvi. 8b is a later appendage to the parable of the unrighteous steward does not exclude the possibility that the phrase "sons of light" may have been used by Jesus on various occasions. Perhaps the Christians (like the men of Qumran) came to call themselves the sons of light because Jesus had himself applied the expression to his disciples.

If we add these further examples to the others the case is

¹ Cf. Braun, *op. cit.* pp. 214 f.

² Cf. John ix. 3, where τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ are also *God's* activities.

³ On the frequency of the expression in the Old Testament, cf. Teeple, *op. cit.* p. 19.

⁴ 1 QS 1. 9; 2. 16; 3. 13, 24 f.; 1 QM 1. 1, 3, 9, 11, 13.

⁵ Eph. v. 8, τέκνα φωτός.

strengthened for the probability that the Johannine sayings tradition preserves expressions and ideas which are not only paralleled in contemporary Palestinian Judaism, and more particularly in the sectarian Judaism of the Qumran texts, but which may even have been used by Jesus himself. For if the kind of language and concept found on the lips of the Johannine Jesus is known to have been current in his day, it is just as reasonable to suppose that the Jesus of history could have known and used it, as it is to suppose that any other first-century Jew could have done so. Professor G. R. Driver has recently asked the pertinent question, whether the echoes of the gospels in the Qumran documents reflect the *ipsissima verba* of the speaker or the words of the evangelist in reporting them.¹ As he observes, every case must be examined on its merits. I have endeavoured to do this for some passages in the Fourth Gospel, for I do not believe that, for all its divergences from the synoptics, it should be ignored in the quest for words of the historical Jesus.

The evidence presented above may be supplemented by several other considerations.

Jesus was baptized by John. It is therefore probable that the movements initiated by them were associated in some way,² as is also suggested by the reference in John i. 35 ff. to Andrew and another unnamed person as having been disciples of John. It is also thought that some adherents of the Baptist became followers of Jesus after their master's death, and further, that a number of the Qumran sectarians may have entered the church after the destruction of their religious centre by the Romans in A.D. 68. Moreover, it is almost inconceivable that John the Baptist was completely ignorant of the Dead Sea sect, whose headquarters at Qumran were situated only about forty miles from Aenon near Salim, where he baptized (John iii. 23). And if John knew something of the beliefs and practices of the men of Qumran, it is not unlikely that Jesus also was not unacquainted with them. But what is the evidence?

¹ *The Judaean Scrolls* (Oxford, 1965), p. 525.

² Cf. C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 300 f.; C. H. H. Scobie, *John the Baptist* (London, 1964), pp. 142 ff.

Two examples of possibly indirect acquaintance of Jesus with the tenets of the sectarians have been suggested by G. R. Driver.¹ Jesus' declaration that the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath (Mark ii. 27), may be directed against their excessive regard for the sabbath, far transcending the customary Jewish attitude. Again, Jesus says, "you have heard that it was said, 'you shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy'" (Matt. v. 43). The command to hate enemies is found, Driver points out, neither in the Old Testament nor in Jewish literature, "and is indeed repugnant to the Jewish spirit". But in the Manual of Discipline (1 QS 1. 10) the men of Qumran are instructed to "hate all the sons of darkness", and in 9. 21 f. to harbour "eternal hatred for the men of destruction", that is, those who are sinners because they reject their teaching. W. D. Davies has also interpreted the Matthaean saying as a rejection by Jesus of the Qumran spirit of hatred.²

Both the Qumran sect and the early church regarded their communities as constituting a spiritual temple. Professor Bertil Gärtner has recently investigated in detail temple symbolism in the Qumran texts and in the New Testament.³ But caution is needed. The Qumran community differed fundamentally from the early church in its priestly origin and organization. Gärtner's suggestion is that the ultimate origin of the idea of the church as the new temple in Pauline and other epistles (Heb. xii ; 1 Pet. ii) may be traceable to Jesus' acquaintance with the Qumran sect's repudiation of the Jerusalem temple and priesthood as defiled, and its claim to be the true temple of God. In Jesus' thought he, as Messiah, along with his followers, would replace the temple.⁴ Opinions may differ on the plausibility of

1890 1000

¹ Op. cit. pp. 572 f.

² *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 245-8. Leaney, however (op. cit. p. 121), rejecting the identification of the tradition in Matt. v. 43 with the Qumran references, thinks that the sect was to hate the sons of darkness "because they are God's enemies, rather than because they are their own personal enemies".

³ *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament* (Cambridge, 1965).

⁴ Cf. the genuine saying, "Something greater than the temple is here", Matt. xii. 6 ; cf. my book *Jesus and the Son of Man* (London, 1964), p. 137, n. 1.

this suggestion, but at least it is possible, although scarcely necessary.

Jesus both opposed and criticized misuse of the temple by cleansing it, and foretold its destruction (Mark xiii. 2 ; xiv. 58 ; xv. 29). But only the Fourth Gospel associates the cleansing of the temple and Jesus' reference to its destruction and restoration. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 19). The evangelist interprets this as an allusion to Jesus' death and resurrection. The "temple of his body" will replace the Jerusalem temple as the centre of worship. But if John ii. 19 echoes an authentic utterance, it would express the idea of rejection of the temple and its replacement more directly than anything in the synoptics, and would therefore more closely resemble the Qumran attitude to the temple.

It has been maintained by Professor W. D. Davies that in the Matthaean Sermon on the Mount there is material pointing "to an original *Sitz im Leben* in the relationships between Jesus himself and the Essenes". He speaks of a "confrontation" or "encounter" of Jesus and the sectarians. This traditional material, however, has been adapted by the evangelist to the situation in his own day, and applied to the relationship between the church and Pharisaic Judaism after A.D. 70.¹ "There is every reason", he writes, "to believe that Jesus offered an interpretation of the Law which was set over against this [the interpretation given by the Teacher of Righteousness], his radicalism standing over against that of Qumran". Thus, for example, it is possible that the naming of the disciples as the light of the world (Matt. v. 14 f.) is a deliberate contrast by Jesus between his followers and the sectarians who, although calling themselves the sons of light, hid their light, as it were, under a bushel by, as a withdrawn community, confining it to their own numbers. If this suggestion is accepted, as I am inclined to think that it should, it increases the probability, already mentioned, that the Fourth Gospel is historically correct in reporting that Jesus called his followers sons of light.²

¹ Op. cit. pp. 252-6.

² Davies, op. cit. pp. 250, 457, also suggests that the saying about salt (Matt. v. 13 ; Luke xiv. 34 f. ; Mark ix. 50a) may originally have been a criticism by

I have not been concerned with the wider question of the resemblances between the scrolls and the Fourth Gospel. My answer to that would be that it is not a matter of direct dependence of the gospel on Qumran thought, but of two plants growing from the same soil.¹ I have confined myself to the more limited and very difficult problem of Jesus' words according to John. The upshot is, I venture to suggest, firstly, that there is a certain amount of evidence that Jesus did not only speak as the synoptics report him to have done, but also used "Johannine" phraseology and ideas.² These features, even when paralleled elsewhere, are more likely signs of kinship, in the first instance, with Qumran than with any other branch of Judaism.³ Secondly, probable acquaintance on the part of Jesus with specific Qumran beliefs may explain certain phenomena of his teaching not only in John, but in the synoptics. Perhaps, then, the gap between Jesus' words in John and in the synoptics is not everywhere as wide as has been thought.

Nevertheless, the gap remains. One possible way of viewing the divergences between the Johannine and the synoptic trad-

Jesus of the "salt" of the Dead Sea sect as inferior to that of the new community. For the possibility of Jesus' acquaintance with Qumran beliefs, cf. also F. M. Braun, "L'arrière-fond judaïque du Quatrième Évangile et la Communauté de l'Alliance", *R.B.*, lxii (1955), 38-41; B. Hjerl-Hansen, "Did Christ know the Qumran sect?" *Revue de Qumran*, 1 (1959), 495-508: Matt. xxiv. 26-28 as possible evidence of Jesus' criticism of Qumran expectation of the Messiah in the wilderness.

¹ Cf. Driver, *op. cit.* p. 549.

² R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John, i-xii* (New York, 1966), p. lxiv, asks whether certain elements of sectarian and other thought, present in Jesus' mind and teaching, have been partially lost in the synoptic records, but have been preserved in the Johannine tradition. His opinion expressed in the following words deserves careful consideration. "It is time to liberate ourselves from the assumption that Jesus' own thought and expression were always simple and always in one style, and that anything that smacks of theological sophistication must come from the (implicitly more intelligent) evangelists."

³ Teeple, *op. cit.* questions the contemporary Palestinian provenance of Johannine ideas and expressions parallel to those in the Qumran texts on the grounds that most of them are found in the Old Testament and other Jewish writings, that there are about as many parallels in other New Testament writings as there are in the Fourth Gospel, and that nearly all of them could have been suggested to the evangelist by the Septuagint. But this point of view does not take into account other considerations brought forward here.

itions of the words of Jesus is to draw an analogy with the divergences of *narrative* material. If there is good reason for reliance upon the Johannine tradition that, for example, some of Jesus' disciples had been followers of John the Baptist, and that Jesus made several visits to Jerusalem and delivered much more of his teaching in Judaea than we would assume from the synoptics, and if the names of persons and places in John are an integral part of the tradition,¹ that tradition may well preserve also some authentic features of Jesus' teaching, both in form and content, different though these commonly are from the synoptic records. *Prima facie* it would be equally unjustifiable to dismiss certain sayings as merely Johannine, as it would be to reject out of hand items of narrative simply because they are absent from or differ from synoptic narratives. I have tried to show that this is in fact the case.

The Fourth Gospel is indebted to a stratum of tradition independent of the synoptics. In his famous Oxford lecture on *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*,² Professor Harald Riesenfeld suggested that the Johannine tradition, like the synoptic one, originated in Jesus' teaching as "holy word" faithfully transmitted by the disciples to their successors. But he finds the particular starting point of the Johannine tradition "in the discourses and 'meditations' of Jesus in the circle of his disciples, such as certainly took place side by side with the instruction of the disciples proper, with its more rigid forms".³ On the other hand, Dr. Aileen Guilding believes that a primary motive of the fourth evangelist was "to preserve a tradition of Jesus' discourses and synagogue sermons in a form suitable for liturgical use in the churches".⁴ We stand on firmer ground if, in the quest for Jesus' words in John, we do not emphasize, in the interests of a preconceived theory, either his private instructions to his more intimate disciples, or his public utterances, to the

¹ Cf. my book *The Historicity of the Fourth Gospel* (London, 1960), pp. 53-60, 78-82.

² London, 1957; also in *Studia Evangelica (Texte und Untersuchungen 73, 1959)* and in *The Gospels Reconsidered* (Oxford, 1960).

³ Riesenfeld, p. 28.

⁴ *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* (Oxford, 1960), p. 54.

neglect of one or the other. Now that we know rather more of Palestinian language and thought contemporary with Jesus, the attempt to extricate possibly genuine sayings from the Fourth Gospel, although always likely to be a more hazardous undertaking than in the case of the synoptics, may be not wholly unfruitful of results.