

# THE STRUCTURE AND MESSAGE OF JOHN 13:1-38\*

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## I—Introduction

There is no need for me to labour the issue of the internal tensions which undoubtedly exist within the so-called last discourse of the Fourth Gospel (John 13:1-17:26). The most immediately recognised of these is the apparent decision to finish the discourse and to leave the setting of the upper room in 14:30-31, a passage which links beautifully with the first verse of the passion narrative in 18:1, but which inexplicably leads to the allegory on the true vine (15:1-11)—and much else—without any indication of a time, place or situation for the material which runs from 15:1-16:33. In fact, a similar ending can be found in 16:32-33:

The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone; yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

These words could also serve as a stirring, and profoundly Johannine introduction to the passion narrative, but they inexplicably lead into the prayer of Jesus' hour.<sup>1</sup>

These are only the more outstanding difficulties,<sup>2</sup> but they are an indication of why, most recently, Fernando Segovia could write: "Nowadays hardly any exegete would vigorously maintain that John 13:31-18:1 constitutes a literary unity as it stands".<sup>3</sup> The words just cited from Segovia indicate another widely held position as regards the last discourse: that it begins with 13:31.

If there are difficulties in reading the whole of the discourse as a unit, similar difficulties are found within John 13 alone. Again, I can only indicate the main problems. There appears to be a double interpretation of the foot-washing scene. The first of these (down as far as v. 11) is connected with the participation in the death of Jesus, with possible baptismal contacts, while the second (running from vv. 12-20) is often read as a later addition, a more exhortative passage written in terms of the imitation of Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Then, as I have just mentioned, vv. 31-38 are generally detached from the footwashing, and understood as the opening verses of the last discourse proper, either as an introduction to the original discourse,<sup>5</sup> or as an introduction to the whole of the discourse, as we now have it.<sup>6</sup>

For the sake of some sort of completeness to these introductory remarks, it is important to know that there is a growing list of scholars who attempt to

rediscover various “strata” within the discourse itself, linking these strata to various stages of the community’s development. The Australian scholar, John Painter, has made a significant contribution to this ongoing discussion.<sup>7</sup> There is no suggestion among these scholars of a return to Bultmann’s reordering of the text.<sup>8</sup> They are attempting to rediscover the *Sitz im Leben* of the Johannine community which may have occasioned a variety of original, and sometimes conflicting, strata of the discourse, before it was finally put together in the order in which it eventually made its way into the finished Gospel.<sup>9</sup>

The study which follows in no way intends to play down the significance of all this research, but it is asking a different question of the material in John 13:1-38: is it possible to rediscover the internal structure and logic of the passage as it now stands? I have no doubt whatsoever that the last discourse in the Fourth Gospel had a long and complicated literary history, and that it is possible to rediscover some of that history through a careful analysis of the language and themes of its various parts. However, I am of the persuasion that whoever may have been responsible for the shape of the Fourth Gospel as we now have it was a person of great skill. No doubt there has been a laying of various traditions side by side, a reworking of them—in some cases over and over again until they have become thoroughly “Johannine”<sup>10</sup>—resulting in a unified whole which, despite the much publicised “aporien im vierten Evangelium”,<sup>11</sup> is most satisfying from both a literary and theological point of view.<sup>12</sup>

Necessarily, we all approach texts with our presuppositions. I make no secret of mine. C.H. Dodd has expressed one aspect of them well:

I conceive it to be the duty of an interpreter at least to see what can be done with the document as it has come down to us before attempting to improve upon it. . . . I shall assume as a provisional working hypothesis that the present order is not fortuitous, but deliberately devised by somebody—even if he were only a scribe doing his best—and that the person in question (whether the author or another) had some design in mind, and was not necessarily irresponsible or unintelligent.<sup>13</sup>

But my presuppositions go further. Our scribe was certainly doing his best, and it appears to me that there is sufficient evidence throughout the rest of the Gospel to show that his best was very good indeed! I would now like to test these presuppositions a little further through an analysis, with the help of the work of Y. Simoens, of John 13:1-38.<sup>14</sup>

#### I—The determination of internal units and subunits

I have already mentioned that it is nowadays widely accepted that vv. 31-38 are to be separated from the narrative of vv. 1-30. However, there may well be a parallel between the betrayal of Judas and the denials of Peter. This should not be discounted, and it is made even more possible by the fact that the second reference to the betrayal of Judas (v. 21) opens with a typically Johannine redactional expression: “Amen, amen, I say to you”, while the prophecy of the denials of Peter closes with the same expression (v. 38).<sup>15</sup> In fact, a careful control of the use of the double “amen” in chapter 13 shows that it appears in

this chapter more than in any other single chapter in the Gospel. It appears in vv. 16, 20, 21 and 38. This could well be an indication of the Evangelist's internal structure, as the expression is so uniquely his.

A close scrutiny of the Old Testament parallels (see, for example, Num 5:22; Neh 8:6; Pss 41:14; 72:19) and the Johannine texts themselves shows that this solemn use of the double "amen", "never introduces a new saying unrelated to what precedes".<sup>16</sup> More attention should be given to this fact, as in the passage under our scrutiny, a double "amen" opens the second prophecy of the betrayal of Judas, in v. 21 and rounds off the prophecy of Peter's denials in v. 38. The whole section of vv. 21-38, I will suggest, serves as a conclusion to 13:1-38, and thus vv. 31-38 should not be taken as an introduction to 14:1-31. I would therefore like to suggest the following major internal division of the material, using the deliberate positioning of the uniquely Johannine feature of the double "amen" as the major criterion for such a division:

– vv. 1-17: closing with a double "amen" in vv. 16-17.

– vv. 18-20: closing with the double "amen" in v. 20.

– vv. 21-38: opening and closing with the double "amen" in vv. 21 and 38.

Having established this much, we can begin to suggest some hint of an internal structure, along the following lines:

13, 1-2

Traitor

13, 16-17

Amen, amen

13, 18-20

Traitor

Amen, amen

13, 21

Amen, amen

Traitor

13, 38

Amen, amen.

Once we have seen the structural importance of this double "amen", I must then argue that v. 17 is intimately linked to v. 16, where the double "amen" is found. Can it be shown that v. 17 forms part of a conclusion to vv. 1-17? A careful look at the passage shows that it is a beautifully constructed concluding sentence, playing upon "knowing" and "doing":

ei TAUTA *oidate*

makarioi este

ean *poiēte* AUTA

If you *know* THESE THINGS

blessed are you

if you *do* THESE THINGS

We can see that v. 17 forms an inclusion with vv. 1 and 3: "When Jesus KNEW that his hour had come" (v. 1) and "Jesus, KNOWING that the Father had

given all things into his hands” (v. 3). In both cases an active—“doing”—response to the “knowing” is indicated: loving (v. 1) and washing the feet of the disciples (vv. 3-5). The “knowing” and “doing” of Jesus opens the section, while a consequent blessing of the “knowing” and “doing” of the disciple closes it.

Given this careful and beautiful construction of vv. 1-17, we can rightfully look for something similar in the central section of the material. We again find the use of the verb “to know” in v. 18: “I know whom I have chosen”, but there is a further dimension added here—the choosing. This is complemented in v. 20, where the idea of being “chosen” is developed into the theme of being “sent”.

We have already pointed out the use of the double “amen” to form the extremities of my third proposed division (vv. 21-38). I would thus like to suggest the possibility that John 13:1-38 should be divided into three major units: (1) vv. 1-17; (2) vv. 18-20; (3) vv. 21-38.

In my search so far, I have been able to use the Johannine rhetorical formula “Amen, amen, I say to you” as a major criterion in my determination of literary units. This type of rhetorical formula can be described as an “in discourse” formula, for the obvious reason that it is only found in the reported speech of the discourse itself. I would now like to turn to a second rhetorical formula, which can be accurately described as an “out of discourse” formula.<sup>17</sup> This is the common “out of discourse” introduction to the discourse proper, and there are sixteen such formulae in John 13:1-38:

- v. 6: Peter said to him.
- v. 7: Jesus answered him.
- v. 8a: Peter said to him.
- v. 8b: Jesus answered him.
- v. 9: Simon Peter said to him.
- v. 10: Jesus said to him.
- v. 12: He (Jesus) said to them.
- v. 21: Jesus said.
- v. 25: (that one—the Beloved Disciple) says to him.
- v. 26a: Jesus answered.
- v. 27b: Jesus said to him (Judas)
- v. 31: Jesus said.
- v. 36a: Simon Peter said to him.
- v. 36b: Jesus answered.
- v. 37: Peter said to him.
- v. 38: Jesus answered.

Reading through the text with an eye to these rhetorical formulae, it becomes obvious that there is a first discussion which runs from vv. 6-11, as in v. 11 a further type of rhetorical formula is introduced to indicate the close of the discussion:

*That was why he said, “You are not all clean”*

Turning now to see a further sub-division of our first major division (vv. 1-17), now using these “out of discourse” rhetorical formulae as our criterion, we find the following:

- vv. 1-5: An *introduction* to the passion and the footwashing; no formula found here.
- vv. 6-11: A first *dialogue* marked, necessarily, by rhetorical formula.
- vv. 12-17: *Explanation* by Jesus, introduced by a formula (v. 12), but from there on completely without dialogue.

Leaving to one side, for the moment, a more detailed formal study of the central major section (vv. 18-20), we must see if there are literary indications of any further sub-divisions in the third unit (vv. 21-38). Without recourse to the rhetorical formulae, it is immediately obvious that there is an inclusion between vv. 26b-27a and v. 30:

- vv. 26b-27a: So when he had dipped the morsel he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him.
- v. 30: So after receiving the morsel, he immediately went out; and it was night.

We can thus justifiably start our consideration of vv. 21-38 by claiming that we have a sub-unit in vv. 26b-30.

Returning now to our rhetorical formulae “out of discourse”, it is possible to identify two further sub-sections. From v. 21 to v. 26a there is a gathering of the formulae around the question of the giving of the morsel to Judas. The unity of this section is further enhanced by the use of yet another type of rhetorical formulae in v. 22 (“uncertain of whom he spoke”) and v. 24 (“tell us who it is of whom he speaks”).

The final sub-section is immediately obvious. The list of the formulae given shows words of Jesus himself, and then a dialogue between Jesus and Simon Peter. Therefore, I would now suggest that the final major section can be further sub-divided as follows:

- vv. 21-26a: *Introduction* to the gift of the morsel to Judas.
- vv. 26b-30: The gift of the morsel and the *words of Jesus* to Judas.
- vv. 31-38: The *interpretation* of Jesus. A second dialogue between Simon Peter and Jesus.

I am, therefore, suggesting that the whole of John 13:1-38 is made up of three major units, and that the two flanking units are further formed by three sub-units. But it appears that there is more to be said about these two sub-units which flank vv. 18-20. As I have already hinted, there may be some close parallels between them. Hopefully, without forcing the case, I would like to draw out some of these interesting contacts between vv. 1-17 and vv. 21-38. At this stage of the discussion, I am well aware that I am moving well beyond the objective criteria which I have attempted to use so far. Here some of the links are thematic and theological, and necessarily more subjective than my so-called rhetorical formulae. However, they will point the way towards the few theological conclusions which I will draw at the end of this paper. It appears to me that it is possible to argue that the two flanking units of 13:1-38 can be described in the following parallel fashion:

I – *The footwashing seen in the light  
of the betrayal*  
(13, 1-17)

- (1) The love of Jesus for his own to  
its perfection (v. 1).  
Allusion to the betrayal (v. 2)
- (2) Simon Peter – Jesus  
(vv. 6-10ab).  
Allusion to the betrayal  
(vv. 10c-11).
- (3) The gift of example  
(vv. 12-17).

II – *The gift of the morsel as the con-  
tinuation of the footwashing*  
(13, 21-38)

- (1) Jesus troubled in spirit and his  
witness (v. 21a).  
Allusion to the betrayal  
(vv. 21b-25).
- (2) Judas – Jesus  
(vv. 26b-27).  
Anticipation of the betrayal  
(vv. 28-30).
- (3) The gift of love  
(vv. 31-38).

Structurally, we must now turn to a more detailed examination of the possibilities of the central unit (vv. 18-20). This section of our passage is dominated by the notions of “knowledge”, the traitor, and the choosing and the sending of his disciples. These themes are unfolded around v. 19. In fact, this verse, I would suggest, forms the very centre of the 38 verses which we are considering – both materially and theologically. This arrangement of the argument around the central v. 19 is again best seen through a structured presentation of the text:

- (18) I am not speaking to you all.  
I know whom I have chosen.  
It is that the scripture may be  
fulfilled.  
“He who *ate my bread*  
has lifted his heel against me”
- (19) I tell you this now  
before it takes place  
that you may believe  
when it does take place  
that I AM HE.

(20) Amen, amen I say to you,  
    he who receives any one whom I  
        sent receives me.  
    and he who *receives me* receives  
        him who sent me.

As can be seen from this structured presentation of the text, at the very centre of a chapter which deals largely with betrayal and denial on the part of the chosen disciples of Jesus himself, we find the careful presentation of a remarkable argument. Jesus knows whom he has chosen—and these very ones, those whose feet he has washed and those who have received the morsel—will turn against him. However, that alters nothing. In fact, precisely in the abject failure of Judas *and* Peter does Jesus' uniqueness and oneness with God as his unique revealer shine forth. Indeed, it is in these very events . . . when these things “take place” that the disciples may then know and believe that Jesus is the I AM HE.<sup>18</sup>

This interpretation, flowing from the structure which I am suggesting, leads us into another discussion which has plagued interpreters at least since the time of Augustine.<sup>19</sup> Given the tradition that this meal was a “Eucharistic” meal, did Judas receive the morsel? If he did, then can such a “tradition” be correct? Would John have intended this passage to be read as a Eucharistic passage if it meant that the betrayer received the Eucharistic morsel? Given the argument which, it appears to me, the Evangelist is pursuing here, the “morsel” is to be read as Eucharistic. The overall impression of the text is that Jesus is glorified—i.e., he shines forth as the revelation of God (*egō eimi*)—in his unconditional love for those who do not love him in the same way. However, one can do better than simply argue that such a case is to be gleaned from an “overall impression of the text”. There is *clear evidence* that the Evangelist wants the reader to see it in this way.

In v. 18 the Evangelist cites Ps 40:10b. The LXX translation of the Psalm reads: *ho esthiōn artous mou*. But this has been rendered, with an explicit indication that it is the fulfilment of a scriptural text, as *ho trōgōn mou ton arton*.

There has been a deliberate replacement of the usual, more “proper” word for “eating” (*esthiein*), which is in fact found in the LXX original of the Psalm. It has been replaced by a more physical, less delicate term (*trōgein*), which means “to munch”, “to crunch with the teeth”.<sup>20</sup> It is most important to notice that only on three other occasions has John used this strongly physical verb. On each occasion he has clearly used it to indicate unequivocally that he is referring to a physical eating. All these passages are found in the Eucharistic passage of 6:51-58:<sup>21</sup>

- 6:54: He who eats (*ho trōgōn*) my flesh and drinks my blood.
- 6:56: He who eats (*ho trōgōn*) my flesh and drinks my blood.
- 6:57: He who eats (*ho trōgōn*) me will live because of me.

The Fourth Evangelist has deliberately changed the verb in his citation of the Greek of the Psalm to indicate that Jesus shows the absoluteness of his love in

choosing, forming, sending out and nourishing his disciples of all times.<sup>22</sup> They always have, and always will, fail him, deny him, betray him, but it is precisely in the immensity of his never-failing love for *such* disciples that he shows that he is the unique revelation of a unique God among us. I realise that I have already begun to draw my theological conclusions, but it appeared to me an essential step to take at this stage of my argument.

### III – Towards an overall structure of the passage

We have now gathered together all the elements which may form this section of the last discourse, and so we are in a position to suggest an overall structure to 13:1-38. Although this will be further spelt out in my few theological considerations which will close this paper, it is important – at the structural level – to see the interplay between two themes which run through this section of the discourse. There is an insistence upon the knowledge which Jesus has of his destiny and the future performance of his own, i.e. their betrayals and denials. This theme is matched by the non-knowledge of the disciples. In the light of these two themes only Jesus merits the beatitude of v. 17:

If you KNOW these things  
blessed are you  
if you DO these things.

His knowledge has led him into action: the washing of the feet and the gift of the morsel. The non-knowledge of the disciples will likewise lead them into action: the betrayal of Judas and the denials of Peter. However, strange as all this may appear to one who judges in terms of human and historical criteria, it is precisely in his choosing and in his sending of those who fail him, in his loving of them and in his exhortation that they should repeat such love, despite their abject failure and betrayal, that Jesus shines forth in the darkness as the fulfilment of scripture, I AM HE. Suddenly the prophecy of 8:28 begins to make more sense:

When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM HE.

This message has been conveyed, I would suggest, through a passage which can be structured along the following lines:

#### THE STRUCTURE OF JOHN 13

vv. 1-17

The perfection of  
love (1)

The betrayal (2)

vv. 1-5    The knowledge of  
Jesus (3)

The footwashing  
(vv. 4-5)

- vv. 6-11 Simon and Jesus  
(6-10)  
The betrayal (11)
- vv. 12-17 Conclusion to the  
footwashing (12abc)  
The gift of example  
(12d-16)  
The blessedness of  
putting into practice  
such knowledge  
(17)
- vv. 18-20  
Jesus' knowledge  
of his chosen ones  
and his sending them  
(betrayers and  
deniers as they are)  
as the fulfilment of  
Scripture and the  
revelation of Jesus as  
I AM HE
- vv. 21-38  
Jesus troubled—  
witness (21a)  
The betrayal (21b)
- vv. 21-26 The ignorance of the  
disciples (22-25)  
The gift of the morsel  
(26a)
- vv. 27-30 Jesus and Judas  
(26b-27)  
The betrayal (28-30)
- vv. 31-38 Exit of Judas and the  
glorification (31-32)  
The gift of mutual  
love (33-35)  
The non-putting into practice  
this knowledge, in the  
denials of Peter  
(36-38)

Although I prefer to leave the structure in that form, because it best captures the theological thrust which I have been attempting to catch it is also obvious that what we have here is a form of a chiasmic structure, widely recognised as one of the ways in which the Fourth Evangelist presents some of his arguments.

*13: 1-5*

Perfected love,  
linked to betrayal. A.

*13: 6-11*

What Jesus does.  
The ignorance of Peter. B.  
The knowledge of Jesus  
about the traitor.

*13: 12-17*

Amen, amen.  
Blessedness. C.

*13: 31-38*

Gift of love,  
A1. at the exit  
of the betrayer.

*13: 26b-30*

What Judas does.  
The ignorance of  
B1. the disciples.  
The exit of Judas.

*13: 21-26a*

Amen, amen.  
C1. Betrayal.

D.

*13: 18-20*

The knowledge of Jesus  
about his chosen ones  
(including the betrayer)  
Amen, amen.  
Mission.

Given the possibilities of this structure, it now remains important to see whether the message highlighted by the structure is coherent in itself, and within the overall theology of the Fourth Gospel.

#### IV—Some theological conclusions

As I am very aware that my adoption of Simoens' suggestions have cut across the general accepted approach to John 13 through this analysis,<sup>23</sup> I would now like to briefly reflect on some theological consequences of my analysis. I will limit my considerations to the areas of Christology and ecclesiology.

##### (a) *Christology.*

As always in the Johannine Gospel, this aspect must come first. We have seen a quite extraordinary presentation of Jesus in this chapter, but there is little here which does not fit into the overall Johannine vision of Jesus.

One of the features which we have noticed is the accentuation of the knowledge of Jesus. Here we are touching one of the Christological elements in the Fourth Gospel which has led Ernst Käsemann to argue that the Johannine Jesus is "a God going about on earth".<sup>24</sup> Yet, if our analysis of the theme of Jesus' knowledge is correct, it is not primarily presented as a divine attribute. It is a typically Johannine perspective used in contrast to the disciples (Peter in vv. 6-10, Judas in vv. 26b-27 and the rest of the disciples in vv. 22-25). He *knows* of their betrayals and of the denials, but he nevertheless gives himself to them without reserve. Although presented in the Fourth Gospel by means of the Evangelist's point of view and technique, this is in no way a uniquely Johannine theme, introduced for the first time by the naive docetism of the Johannine tradition. It has been at the heart of the presentation of the relationship that existed between failing disciples and a Jesus who never failed them that stands at the heart of the Marcan Gospel.<sup>25</sup>

Of course, the theme has now been thoroughly reworked in terms of the sacramental experience and growing theological maturity of the Johannine Church. He promises them a share in his life and death through Baptism (clearly implied in vv. 6-10, especially in vv. 8-10), and he gives them the morsel—clearly Eucharistic—in v. 26. What is being shown here is a consummate demonstration of love. The "knowledge" theme, set against the "ignorance" of the disciples is a valuable means the Evangelist uses to throw this act of love into greater light.<sup>26</sup>

Our section opens with an indication that Jesus is about to commit himself to a consummate act of love (v. 1), and as it draws to a close, Jesus proclaims that he is about to be glorified (vv. 31-32). These two themes become one in the central section (vv. 18-20). Jesus loves his own so much that he chooses them (v. 18a) and sends them out as his very own presence (v. 20). Yet, these very loved ones are the ones responsible for his death on a cross, where he definitively reveals himself as I AM HE (18b-19). According to the Johannine version of things, the death of Jesus is his "lifting up" (see 3:14; 8:28; 12:32

especially as it is further clarified in v. 33) and his “glorification”.<sup>27</sup> For this reason, the intimate connection that the Evangelist makes in v. 31 between the exit of the betrayer (“When he had gone out”) and Jesus’ proclamation of his glorification (“Jesus said, ‘Now is the Son of Man glorified’”) makes excellent sense, as does the intimate link made at the beginning of the section between Jesus’ loving “to the end” (v. 1) and the first indication of the betrayal of Judas (v. 2). Thus, as far as the Christology of this section of the Last Discourse is concerned, we can see a powerful gathering of the two themes of:

- (i) Jesus’ laying down his life because of his consummate love.
- (ii) This selfless laying down of life in a context of betrayal and lack of understanding is, enigmatically, the “glorification” of Jesus, the EGO EIMI.

Because this is the case, the very centre of the discourse finds Jesus indicating that the whole process leading to that glorification, as presented throughout John 13, is both the fulfilment of scripture and the revelation of Jesus as I AM HE (vv. 18b-19). But it is more than that. It is also the fulfilment of prophecies which are found within the Fourth Gospel itself:

“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM HE” (8:28).

And again another scripture says,

“They shall look on him whom they have pierced” (19:37).

#### (b) *Ecclesiology*

We have already made large mention of this feature of John 13 in our brief analysis of the Christology of the chapter. The ecclesiology is the reverse side of the profoundly positive presentation of Jesus who reveals God through the total gift of self in unselfish love. John 13 is marked by a relentless presentation of the disciples of Jesus, “his own”, whom “he loved to the end” (13:1) as:

- betrayer (Judas)
- denier (Peter)
- ignorant (all the others).

Not even the Beloved Disciple, who is presented in most intimate terms in 13:23 and who also does so well throughout the Gospel (see 19:25-27; 20:2-10, and especially 21:20-24) is saved from the condemnation of “not understanding”. No doubt he has a position of love and closeness (v. 23), but I would suggest that here, as always throughout the Fourth Gospel, the Beloved Disciple is a model of what all disciples *should* be: in this case, folded against the breast of Jesus. However, after the gift of the morsel, the Evangelist eliminates all trace of knowledge on the part of *any* of the disciples . . . the Beloved Disciple included:

Now *no one* (*oudeis*) at the table knew why he said this to him (v. 28).

It is important to see this portrait of *total failure* on the part of the disciples, and to appreciate its significance for the Johannine theology.<sup>28</sup> It is not only a

Johannine technique to show the overpowering splendour of the love of Jesus for his own. It is that, of course, as I have mentioned above, but it is more than that. It also reflects the Evangelist's realistic understanding of the Church.

The centre of the passage presents Jesus speaking clearly of the disciples as his "chosen ones" (v. 18) and as his "sent ones" (v. 20). They are what we would call "Church", chosen and sent in the name of Jesus. The "two-level drama" of the Johannine story of Jesus speaks to those chosen and sent for the ongoing telling of that same story.<sup>29</sup> In the Johannine story of the *then*, and in the Gospel's proclamation of it in the *now*, disciples are, more often than not, marked by lack of understanding, denials and betrayals . . . but they remain disciples, they remain "Church".

Again, Mark has said this well in his earlier version of the same basic message:

And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed (*hoi akolouthountes*) were afraid (Mark 10:32).

The more "the Church" recognises its Lord and God (see John 20:28, where the same theme is present) as the only one who really loves, and as the one who keeps on loving in the face of our lack of understanding, betrayals and denials, the better "the Church" will be. Or, as the Johannine Jesus has put it:

If you know these things  
blessed are you  
if you do these things (13:17).

## Notes

\* The following paper was originally given as the Presidential Address to the Fellowship for Biblical Studies in Melbourne on 11th July, 1985. I lay no claim to great originality in the suggestions which follow. I am almost entirely dependent upon the work of Y. Simoens, *La gloire d'aimer. Structures stylistiques et interprétatives dans la Discours de la Cène*, (Analecta Biblica 90; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981) pp. 81-104. For another similar type of work, which I have found helpful in preparing this case, see D. Cancian, *Nuovo comandamento nuova alleanza eucaristia nell'interpretazione del capitolo 13 del Vangelo di Giovanni*, (Collevalenza: Edizione "L'Amore Misericordioso", 1978). His analysis of the structure of John 13 is found on pp. 63-72.

<sup>1</sup> For this title, and a short explanation of John 17, see F.J. Moloney, "John 17: The Prayer of Jesus' Hour", *The Clergy Review*, 67 (1982), pp. 79-83.

<sup>2</sup> For a more comprehensive survey, see R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John xiii-xxi*, (The Anchor Bible 29a; New York: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 582-583.

<sup>3</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition*, (SBL Dissertation Series 58; Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> For a survey of positions, see F.J. Moloney, *The Johannine Son of Man*, (Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose 14; Rome: LAS, 1978), pp. 186-194.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, R.E. Brown, *John*, pp. 605-616.

- <sup>6</sup> See, in particular, J. Schneider, "Die Abschiedsreden Jesu. Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Komposition von Joh 13:31-17:26", *Gott und die Götter, Festgabe für Erich Fascher zum 60. Geburtstag*, (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1958), pp. 105-106. The article runs from pp. 103-112.
- <sup>7</sup> See J. Painter, "The Farewell Discourses and the History of Johannine Christianity", *New Testament Studies*, 27 (1980-81), pp. 525-543. It is impossible to list all the works of such important scholars as R. Borig, J. Becker, G. Richter, H. Thyen etc. who are contributing to this overall discussion. For a good survey, including his own valuable considerations, see R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, (New York: Crossroad, 1982), pp. 6-15. For a recent thoroughgoing classification of the whole of the Gospel into various strata (Gnostic, dualistic Grundschrift, anti-Gnostic redaction and further ecclesial redaction), see W. Langbrandtner, *Weltferner Gott oder Gott der Liebe*, (Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie 6; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1977). On the Last Discourse, see pp. 50-69.
- <sup>8</sup> An exception to this is the work of M. Lattke, *Einheit im Wort: Die spezifische Bedeutung von agapē/agapein und philein in Johannesevangelium*, (Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 41; München: Kösel Verlag, 1975), pp. 132-245. In discussion with Bultmann, he also proposes a reordered text (see especially pp. 132-138).
- <sup>9</sup> If, indeed, it is "finished". See, on this, D.M. Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel. Bultmann's Literary Theory*, (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 238-249.
- <sup>10</sup> It is this feature of the material in the Fourth Gospel which makes the task of rediscovering pre-Johannine material such a risky business.
- <sup>11</sup> This expression is taken from a series of famous articles by Eduard Schwarz, published in the *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* in 1907-1908.
- <sup>12</sup> For some more detailed analysis of the Gospel itself where I attempt to show that this is the case, see F.J. Moloney, "From Cana to Cana (John 2:1-4:54) and the Fourth Evangelist's Concept of Correct (and Incorrect) Faith", *Salesianum*, 40 (1978), pp. 817-843 and Idem, "John 20: A Journey Completed", *The Australasian Catholic Record*, 59 (1982), pp. 417-432. See further the development and refinement of my argument in B. Byrne, "The Faith of the Beloved Disciple and the Community in John 20", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 23 (1985), pp. 83-97.
- <sup>13</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), p. 309.
- <sup>14</sup> See above, footnote \*.
- <sup>15</sup> The double "amen" is found *only* in the Fourth Gospel. It appears 24 times, and four times in chapter 13.
- <sup>16</sup> J.H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St John*, (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), Vol. I, p. 67.
- <sup>17</sup> On this, see Y. Simoens, *La gloire d'aimer*, p. 87.
- <sup>18</sup> I have already mentioned, in my introductory remarks (see especially note 7) that I have no intention of questioning the value of the scholarship which attempts to rediscover the various "strata" which stand behind the Last Discourse. However, many scholars simply ignore the importance of the structure and message of the text as we now have it. It is particularly interesting to find that E. Haenchen, *John 2. A Commentary on the Gospel of John Chapters 7-21*, (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 109-110 regards vv. 18-20 (central in my structure) as "a later addition . . . a redactional insertion" (p. 109), and that v. 20 "does not belong to this context at all" (p. 110). Even if that is so: why was it inserted, and what does it mean in the text as we now have it? For his final overview of the significance of 13:1-30, see pp. 110-114, where the love theme is rightly stressed, but the role of the chosen but failing disciples is completely missed.

- <sup>19</sup> *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Tractate LXII. [See P. Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978. Reprint of the 1888 edition), Vol. VII, pp. 312-314]. Augustine asks the question, but escapes from the problem by reading the Fourth Gospel with the chronology of Luke 23:19-21.
- <sup>20</sup> See, on this C. Spicq, “*Trōgein*: Est-il synonyme de *phagein* et d’*esthiein* dans le Nouveau Testament?”, *New Testament Studies*, 26 (1979-1980), pp. 414-419. Spicq, as one would expect, provides us with a thorough analysis of all the relevant literature, both biblical and non-biblical. He concludes: “Jamais, jusqu’à saint Jean, *trōgein* n’a été utilisé dans un texte religieux. L’Évangéliste l’emploie pour insister sur le réalisme de la manducation, tout en indiquant qu’il ne s’agit pas d’une impossible ‘anthropophagie’ ” (p. 419).
- <sup>21</sup> Naturally, there has been a great amount of discussion over the sapiential or Eucharistic nature of John 6. However, even those who would prefer to argue that the Fourth Gospel is a purely “word” Gospel, without reference to the sacraments, find it impossible to explain away the clearly Eucharistic themes of 6:51-58. As such, they would generally relegate this passage to the hand of a later redactor. For a full discussion, with bibliographical references, see F.J. Moloney, *The Johannine Son of Man*, pp. 87-107.
- <sup>22</sup> Interestingly, D. Cancian, *Nuovo Comandamento*, who is particularly interested in the sacramental dimension of John 13 does not notice this shift in the Greek verbs. He studies 13:21-30 in some detail (pp. 140-149) and devotes a further section of his book to the Eucharist in John (pp. 304-323). His study is dominated by a search for covenant language and theology, and this makes it a trifle myopic. For my understanding of the Fourth Evangelist’s use of sacramental material, see F.J. Moloney, “When is John Talking about Sacraments?”, *Australian Biblical Review*, 30 (1982), pp. 10-33.
- <sup>23</sup> Including, of course, my own earlier discussion of the structure and message of John 13, as found in *The Johannine Son of Man*, pp. 186-194.
- <sup>24</sup> See E. Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus. A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17*, (London: SCM Press, 1968), pp. 8-9. See his list of such features on p. 9: “He cannot be deceived by men, because he knows their innermost thoughts even before they speak. He debates with them from the advantage point of the infinite difference between heaven and earth”.
- <sup>25</sup> See, on this, F.J. Moloney, *Disciples and Prophets. A Biblical Model for the Religious Life*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980), pp. 133-154, and especially E. Best, *Following Jesus. Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, (JSNT Supplement Series 4; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981).
- <sup>26</sup> It should be noted that the theme of the lack of understanding and the failure of the disciples is intimately linked with the Marcan version of the last supper. In Mark 14:22-25 the meal is described. However, in a typical Marcan “frame” around the passage, we have the prediction of the betrayal of Judas in vv. 17-21, and the prediction of the denials of Peter and the failure of all the disciples in vv. 26-31. See, on this, D. Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*, (The Passion Series 2; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1984), pp. 47-67. John 13 is not far away!
- <sup>27</sup> For a complete study of the intimate relationship that exists between these two themes in the Fourth Gospel, see W. Thusing, *Die Erhöhung und Verherrlichung Jesu im Johannesevangelium*, (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen XXI. Band—1/2 Heft; Münster: Verlag Aschendorf, 1970).
- <sup>28</sup> Generally speaking, studies of the disciples in the Fourth Gospel fail to notice the importance of this issue. See, for example, M. de Jonge, “The Fourth Gospel: The Book of the Disciples”, in *Jesus: Stranger from Heaven and Son of God*, (SBL Sources for Biblical Study 11; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 1-27. Better, although still not

sufficiently critical, is R.A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel. A Study in Literary Design*, (New Testament Foundations and Facets; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 115-119.

<sup>29</sup> For this important notion of a “two-level drama”, see J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979). Martyn applies this brilliantly to the Fourth Gospel (especially to John 9 on pp. 24-62), but, of course, the same principle would apply to all the Gospel stories, as an Evangelist looks back to the story of Jesus to say something to his/her contemporary Church.