

RECONCILIATION AND HOPE

*New Testament Essays on
Atonement and Eschatology*

presented to

L. L. Morris on his 60th Birthday

edited by

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CHAPTER XII

THE FUNCTION OF THE SON OF MAN IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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RECONCILIATION AND HOPE, SOTERIOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGY, MAY perhaps be discussed separately as themes or motives within the New Testament's theology, but they are not distinctly separable realities. God's action which sets reconciliation in motion points to the hope of complete reconciliation in a renewed creation. This can be illustrated by many examples in the New Testament, but nowhere more clearly than by the fact that Jesus is called, or rather calls himself, the Son of Man. And since Dr Morris has devoted a considerable part of his labours, especially in the last few years, to studies in the Gospel of John, it seemed that to explore the meaning of the title Son of Man in the Gospel of John would be a fitting way to contribute to the purpose of the present volume.

I

People observe from time to time¹ that little research is directed to the Son of Man theme in John, at least by comparison with the flood of studies on the Son of Man in the synoptic gospels. The topic has of course not been entirely neglected.² In order to justify another examination of it, one must offer some comment not only on the conclusions, but, perhaps even more, on the aims and methods of recent investigators. For essays simply headed "The Son of Man in the Fourth Gospel" (or the like) can in fact have widely differing aims, which are too seldom explicitly stated.

One possible aim is the historical: to see whether, and how, the Gospel of John takes us back to the actual words of Jesus, or at least to the general

¹ R. Schnackenburg, "Der Menschensohn im Johannesevangelium", *NTS*, 11 (1964-65), p. 123; S. S. Smalley, "The Johannine Son of Man Sayings", *NTS*, 15 (1968-69), p. 278.

² In addition to the works mentioned in n. 1, see S. Schulz, *Untersuchungen zur Menschensohn-Christologie im Johannesevangelium. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Methodengeschichte der Auslegung des 4. Evangeliums* (1957); E. D. Freed, "The Son of Man in the Fourth Gospel", *JBL*, 86 (1967), pp. 402-409; and relevant chapters in E. M. Sidebottom, *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel* (1961); A. J. B. Higgins, *Jesus and the Son of Man* (1964); F. H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* (1967) and C. Colpe, *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, *TWNT*, VIII (1967). See also R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, I (1965, E.T. 1968), Excursus V, pp. 529-42, which is similar to though not identical with his article mentioned in n. 1.

intent of his teaching. Several of the works mentioned in notes 1 and 2 (especially those of Higgins, Freed and Smalley) are mainly concerned with this aim. To many it seems the most obvious reason for studying the subject. Indeed, in the opinion of Schnackenburg¹ it is just because of the wide-spread recognition that John is less likely to take us back to the authentic words of Jesus that studies on the Son of Man have for the most part been concerned only with the synoptic gospels. Another, related aim would be to ask how the Son of Man texts in John came to be so formulated: to what extent, and how, the evangelist was influenced by earlier Christian tradition or by language about the Son of Man in the wider religious environment. It is with such questions that the studies of Schulz, Sidebottom, Schnackenburg, Borsch and (naturally) Colpe are largely concerned.

All such questions are of course important, and anyone who seeks to contribute to the general topic will have to take proper account of them. But in the meantime the point is to be made that enquiry can also profitably be directed to another set of questions, which in the case of the Son of Man passages in John have not received adequate attention. How are we to read rightly the phenomenon of the designation of Jesus as Son of Man in John? What connotations does the term carry? Are they recognizably the same connotations in all Johannine instances? Are they similar connotations to those carried by the term in the synoptic gospels? How are the connotations of the term Son of Man related to those of other Christological titles in John? Was "Son of Man" a "live" Christological formula in the circles in which John was written? These questions form the centre of interest of the present study. But before tackling them directly it will be necessary to state briefly some conclusions on the historical questions which others have explored.

To identify the authentic sayings of Jesus about the Son of Man is notoriously difficult in the case of the synoptic gospels.² In the case of John our scepticism about arriving at clear-cut answers must be still greater. Although in recent years, through the work of C. H. Dodd and others, the case has been strengthened for accepting sound historical traditions behind John, our confidence is properly directed towards the mention of persons, places and events, but not towards precise formulations of the teaching of Jesus, for this has been refracted through the vigorous theological response of the Johannine church, on the one hand to the original Gospel events, on the other hand to the questions, challenges and opportunities of new circumstances in a new generation.³ Therefore

¹ *Loc. cit.* (n. 1).

² See I. H. Marshall, "The Synoptic Son of Man Sayings in Recent Discussion", *NTS*, 12 (1965-66), pp. 327-51, and my comment on Marshall's results in "The Function of the Son of Man according to the Synoptic Gospels", *NTS*, 15 (1968-69), pp. 45 f.

³ See C. K. Barrett, "The Dialectical Theology of St. John", ch. 4 in his *New Testament Essays* (1972), esp. p. 68.

S. S. Smalley (*op. cit.*) seems to me to be straining too hard to establish connexions between details of the Son of Man sayings in John and the original words of Jesus.¹ On the other hand, A. J. B. Higgins is also overconfident in his conclusion that the tradition used in the Fourth Gospel “(does not shed) any fresh light on the problem of Jesus and the Son of man, (but) does support the view that the Son of man was the basic Christology of the early church”, and that the Johannine tradition “provides no sure evidence that Jesus spoke of himself as Son of man, either in his involvement in his earthly ministry, or in regard to his approaching passion”.² Higgins’ view on John is influenced by his conclusion that even in the synoptic gospels there is no authentic teaching of Jesus in which he identifies himself with the Son of Man;³ then the point on which his interpretation of the Johannine material turns is the understanding of John 9:35, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”, as a Christological confession of the Johannine church, which “points to the Son of man as the evangelist’s fundamental and principal Christology”. This is a dubious conclusion, and the weighty arguments against it will be referred to later.

There are in fact no convincing arguments either for Smalley’s assertion of the general authenticity of the Son of Man sayings in John or for Higgins’ denial of it. Rather we should extend to John the important principle laid down by M. D. Hooker concerning the Son of Man sayings in Mark: “It is comparatively easy to argue against the authenticity of any one particular saying considered in isolation; the arguments look less convincing when they are weighed against the total evidence of all the Son of man sayings. . . . It may well be, in fact, that *all* our ‘Son of man’ sayings are, to a lesser or greater degree, distorted; and that, conversely, all together are needed to contain the whole truth about the Son of man”.⁴ The way in which this principle is applied will not of course be quite the same for John as for Mark. We must take account, first, of the possibility that some Son of Man sayings of Jesus himself have been preserved, to

¹ In particular, two tendencies seem to me to lead in wrong directions: (a) Johannine sentences mentioning the Son of Man are treated in isolation as “logia”, implying that the sentences have come down from early tradition in solid form as they appear in the text, whereas most of them are closely interwoven with their contexts and therefore may be supposed to have been formulated by the evangelist. (b) It is repeatedly said that “vindicated suffering” is an integral part of the Son of Man theme, even in pre-Christian sources. Such an understanding of Daniel 7 is possible though not certain (depending on whether 7:9 f., 13 f. was written as one piece with the rest of the chapter, or had an independent, prior existence in oral tradition, as many hold). But it is wrong for 1 Enoch. It is likely that Isa. 52:13 (LXX) has influenced the terminology of *ὕψωθῆναι/δοξασθῆναι* relating to the Son of Man in John 3:14, 8:28, 12:23-34 and 13:31 f., but even that does not mean that the whole pattern of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah was associated by John with the Son of Man (cf. J. W. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts* (1954), pp. 133 f.): still less persuasive is Smalley’s detection of a note of suffering in John 1:51 because Gen. Rabbah 68:16, which some have adduced as a “parallel” to John 1:51, alludes to Isa. 49:3.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 182 f.

³ On this, see my review of Higgins’s book in *ABR*, 13 (1965), pp. 64 ff.

⁴ M. D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (1967), p. 79.

emerge in John, by a stream of oral tradition that did not contribute to the synoptic gospels; secondly, of active, formative influences within that stream; and thirdly, of the theological purposes of the evangelist. Once the point is granted, as I think it must (against Higgins and others, such as P. Vielhauer and N. Perrin), that the designation of Jesus as Son of Man is due historically to Jesus' own initiative,¹ the point of the principle that "all (the sayings) together are needed to contain the whole truth about the Son of Man" is that it is *a priori* unlikely that the carriers of the early tradition, when modifying and extending the corpus of Son of Man sayings, would have done so in such a way as to give the title a radically different sense from that in which Jesus used it.²

Concerning the religious background and the relation of John to the earlier tradition of the sayings of Jesus about the Son of Man, it will suffice here to indicate general agreement with the statement of the matter by Schnackenburg; one or two questions on which I take a different view will be indicated below, as they arise. From this starting-point we can proceed to do the exegesis of the Johannine Son of Man sayings, taking them not only individually but also as a group, and regarding them not only in isolation but also in relation to their respective contexts. The resulting picture will certainly not take us back to the very words of Jesus himself, but it will show us how Jesus' teaching about himself as Son of Man looked from John's perspective. This question is worth asking for its own sake, but is usually obscured by pre-occupation either with the question of "genuineness" or with the tracing of the religious background. When the answer to this inquiry concerning John is compared with the results of a similar investigation concerning the synoptic gospels,³ we shall have a way of approach, indirect but still useful, to the shape and meaning of Jesus' own teaching. Where a similar significance shines

¹ There is neither space nor need to take up this question here. I have discussed it in some detail in my article "The Quest for Valid Methods in 'Son of Man' Research", *ABR*, 19 (1971), pp. 36-51, reprinted in *TSF Bulletin* 61 (1971), pp. 14-21, and as "Methodenfragen in der Menschensohnforschung", *Ev. Th.*, 32 (1972), pp. 143-60.

² It is true that the Church Fathers, from Ignatius and pseudo-Barnabas on, show a distinct break from the earlier tradition when they take "Son of Man" as referring to the incarnation: cf. Colpe, *op. cit.*, pp. 480 f. They are, however, not primarily concerned with the gospel tradition but with opposing Gnosticism, for which purpose the traditional title, taken literally, was a convenient weapon. That they could do this weighs heavily against Higgins's contention that "Son of Man" was a living form of Christological confession in the Johannine church, since Ignatius, at least, cannot be separated very far from John in time or place.

³ This was undertaken in my article "The Function of the Son of Man according to the Synoptic Gospels" (p. 187, n. 2) to which the present study is a sequel. My conclusion there was that through all three of the traditional groupings of the Son of Man sayings (earthly life, passion and resurrection, future coming) there is a constant theme: the Son of Man is he who carries out ultimate judgement; those whom he saves are those who stand in a special relationship to him; those who resist his claim for obedience and for allegiance to his elect community he condemns to destruction. In the synoptic gospels it is declared not only that the Son of Man will soon hold his universal assize (which is what we find already in the Similitudes of I Enoch) but that he has appeared on the stage of human history, and that the process of eschatological judgement has therefore already begun.

through different forms of expression, we may have reasonable confidence that the different streams are carrying water from the same well-spring.

II

John 1:51, "Truly, truly I tell you, you will see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man". This saying, in which the Son of Man is mentioned for the first time in John, rings with echoes of so many biblical passages that its interpretation is a subtle matter. On the one hand, it has affinities with sayings in the synoptic gospels about the future coming in glory of the Son of Man as universal judge; cf. Mark 14:62/Matt. 26:64 ("you will see", and the association of the Son of Man with heaven), and Mark 8:38 pars. (the heavenly Son of Man associated with angels). On the other hand, the clear allusion to Gen. 28:12¹ seems to set the Son of Man in the place of Jacob, i.e., on the earth: he is the "Bethel" – the place of God's revelation, which is promised not as an eschatological prediction but as a gift for faith.² Again, "the heaven opened" is taken by some to be reminiscent of the scene at Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:10 f.), which would support the interpretation that true disciples, along with Nathanael, are here promised a revelation of the identity of the earthly Jesus as God's Son. (That "Son" or "Son of God" and "Son of Man" are fully interchangeable terms in John has often been asserted: to this question we shall return later.) However, the further parallel in Acts 7:56 (Stephen, as he dies, says "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at God's right hand") seems to me to be more significant than most commentators allow, and to tip the scales in favour of understanding the Son of Man in John 1:51 to be at the heavenly, not the earthly end of the ladder. In its context the saying identifies the "greater things" that Nathanael will see. That this refers to the Son of Man enthroned in his heavenly glory is made probable not only by the passages in the synoptic material telling how people "will see" the Son of Man, but also by John 6:62, where Jesus says to his disciples, "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending where he was before?" To take 1:51 otherwise would be to make it too much *sui generis*, by comparison not only with the Son of Man tradition as a whole, but also with the conceptions of the Gospel of John. (That the angels first ascend and then descend does not help to locate the Son of Man, but is wording due to Gen. 28:12.) In the context, the saying must be taken as pointing to an understanding of Jesus' status and function superior to that which has just been mentioned, "the King of Israel" (1:49). In all the gospels, that greater status and function

¹ That it is Genesis itself and not the story referred to in Gen. Rabbah 68:18 is the view expressed, probably rightly, by several recent commentators.

² So Schnackenburg, *Commentary*, *ad loc.*

are those of the Son of Man, who will be exalted to heaven to be enthroned as judge of the world and saviour of the community of his disciples. Here nothing is said explicitly about these mutually complementary functions, but the function of saving his elect is hinted at by the picture of the angels ascending and descending (cf. Mark 13:27/Matt. 24:31). Although the Son of Man will be exalted high in heaven, he will not be out of touch with his people on earth. It is not Jesus but Nathanael, the one who is "truly an Israelite" (1:47) who corresponds to Jacob in Gen. 28:12: it is he, and those who share his faith, who will not only be reassured by the sight of their Saviour in heaven, as Stephen was, but also have the aid of the divine messengers to maintain lively contact with him.

The next two Son of Man sayings come together. John 3:13 f., "No one has gone up into heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, in order that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." In his commentary, Schnackenburg argues with some force that in this chapter vv. 31-36 were originally intended to stand between vv. 12 and 13. Since that passage has to do with salvation and judgement, it would follow that the reference to the Son of Man in v. 13 would have to be read in the context of soteriology rather than of revelation (v. 12). If this could be accepted with confidence, it would mean that the Son of Man occurs in the same sort of setting familiar from the synoptic gospels, I Enoch 37-71 and Daniel 7: he ascends to heaven to receive from God the authority to judge and save. Yet hypotheses about the rearrangement of the text of John are notoriously tricky. Many such proposals have been made, and while any given one may seem plausible and attractive from one point of view, it then usually turns out to be doubtful from another. This same passage has been carved up in other ways: for example, G. H. C. Macgregor (*The Gospel of John*, Moffatt N.T. Commentary (1928), *ad loc.*) proposed to put vv. 31-36 after, not before, v. 13, and to take off vv. 14-21 to be woven into 12:33-35. These contradictory theories do not disprove the possibility that the text of John has suffered some displacement, but in the absence of more substantial evidence it is safer to deal with the text as we have it. This means that the mention of the Son of Man in 3:13 is not introduced by any explicit reference to the theme of salvation and judgement. But it is noteworthy that what is said of the Son of Man fits harmoniously with what is said in 1:51, as we have interpreted it. And this mention of the ascension of the Son of Man to heaven leads naturally to a discussion of the means whereby this exaltation takes place (the crucifixion, 3:14) and its consequences (the imparting of life to believers and the judgement of unbelievers, 3:15 ff.). The reference to Jesus as Son of Man is therefore fundamental to the pericope: it is when this title has been introduced that the discussion of salvation/judgement is elaborated.

However, the introduction of the title "Son of Man" in 3:13 has a further important significance. We have argued that in 1:51 the ascending and descending angels indicate the continuing, lively relationship between the Son of Man in heaven and his disciples on earth; and this is consonant with the synoptic and pre-Christian concepts of the Son of Man, in which he is always associated with an earthly community that looks to him for vindication. Now v. 13 forms the transition to vv. 14-21, which are about judgement and salvation, from vv. 1-12, which are about the new life that must be entered by rebirth through water and spirit. Looked at in a certain light, the Gospel of John seems to have an individualistic conception of judgement and salvation.¹ On the other hand, it seems to me undeniable that John has an interest in the sacraments, which comes to expression here in relation to baptism and in ch. 6 in relation to the eucharist, and that this points to an interest in the church as the gathered community of those who owe their salvation to the Son of Man. Those who receive the new life made available by the death and heavenly exaltation of the Son of Man do so by being incorporated within the Son of Man's earthly community. In this respect, too, John turns out to be in the same line of interpretation of the Son of Man theme as the synoptic evangelists. The church is the eschatological community, and it is the faithful members of the church whom the Son of Man rescues from the destruction of the final judgement.² This communal aspect of salvation and judgement is further indicated in vv. 19-21, where men are divided, in the fashion of Qumran, into those who love the light and those who love the darkness. The same note is struck still more distinctly later, at the end of the most emphatic Johannine discussion of the judgement of the Son of Man: 12:36, "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light". At Qumran "the sons of light" are the members of the community destined for salvation; and the same seems to be implied in these Johannine passages too.

In interpreting the function of the Son of Man in 3:14 ff., we encounter a problem, which will recur later in relation to 5:27. In vv. 14 f. it is "the Son of Man" whose "lifting up" will enable every believer to have eternal life; but in vv. 16 ff., it is "the (only) Son (of God)". This change of title is not matched by any change of function; in fact what is predicated of the Son of Man in v. 15 is repeated verbatim as a predicate of "the only Son" in v. 16: that is, the function is the same no matter what the title, and to that extent the titles are synonymous.³ E. D. Freed underlines this

¹ So C. F. D. Moule, "The Individualism of the Fourth Gospel", *Nov. Test.*, 5 (1962), pp. 171-90.

² Cf. A. Corell, *Consummatum Est* (1950, ET, 1958), pp. 162-65.

³ R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (1966, ET, 1971), pp. 153 f., n. 3, says that for the evangelist the identity of the two figures is a matter of course, but that in v. 16 "the Son" only becomes "the Son of Man" "as a result of his mission". This seems a rather forced interpretation, especially in view of v. 13, "... he who came down from heaven, the Son of Man".

point, not only in relation to this passage but generally throughout John. He shows that "the Son of Man" usually occurs in passages where Jesus is also spoken of by name, or by another title or metaphor, and that therefore there is a fluid interchange of connotations, and no connotations are exclusively reserved for any one title. This leads him to conclude: "The evidence indicates that the title Son of man is only a variation for at least two other titles, namely, the Son of God and the Son. And this means, therefore, that there is no separate Son of man christology in the fourth gospel".¹ By this he apparently means that various traditional titles for Jesus are introduced by John merely for the sake of literary variation, and without regard for any special connotations the respective titles originally carried. On any reading, of course, John is in this respect quite different from the synoptic gospels, where "the Son of Man" almost never (only Mark 14:61 f., pars., and Matt. 16:13-16) occurs in the same context as "the Son" or "the Son of God", and the titles have quite distinct meanings.² The matter is more correctly explained by Schnackenburg,³ who says that in the Johannine Christology the central concept is "the Son", to which the theme of "the Son of Man" has been assimilated. But the process of assimilation is not, I think, complete. The following difference can still be observed. When Jesus is described as acting more or less independently, on his own initiative, in his function of judging/imparting life, he is called "the Son of Man"; when he is seen as the earthly representative and manifestation of the action of God, he is called "the Son" or "the Son of God". At least this explanation suits the transition from 3:14 f. to vv. 16 ff. We shall need to test it further in relation to 5:19-30, below. In 3:14-21 the primary concern is Jesus' role as saviour and judge, and so he is called the Son of Man. And the comparison of the "lifting up" of the Son of Man with that of the serpent in the desert indicates (what John discusses more specifically in 12:20-36) that it is by his death and heavenly exaltation that the Son of Man carries out this function. But then it is recalled that this is also the work of the Father, and so Jesus is secondarily referred to as "the Son".

John 5:27, "And he has given him authority to carry out judgement, because he is the Son of Man". Here we find the most striking expression in John, and indeed in the whole NT, of the essential function of the Son of Man as Judge. Without broaching here the question of the history of the tradition behind this passage (since such discussion is not the main concern of this paper), we may observe some striking points of correspondence between John 5 and Mark 2. The statement that it is because he is Son of Man that Jesus has been given authority to carry out judgement

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 403.

² See F. Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology* (1963, ET. 1969), chs. 1 and 5.

³ "Der Menschensohn . . .", p. 136, cf. Colpe, *op. cit.*, p. 469. The view of Schulz, *op. cit.*, Part II B, that the "Son" sayings are really "Son of Man" sayings in a more advanced stage of interpretation, has been rightly rejected by later writers.

is of the same order as Mark 2:10, "The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on the earth". In each case the setting is the healing of a sick man whom Jesus commands to rise, take up his bed and walk (John 5:8b is identical in wording with Mark 2:9c). As usual, the Johannine pericope is more extended and complex than its immediate synoptic equivalent. In this case, the immediate sequel to the healing miracle, in John 5:9c-18, is a controversy between Jesus and "the Jews" arising from the fact that Jesus had performed the cure on the Sabbath: and this recalls a similar incident in Mark 3:1-6, which follows immediately upon Jesus' saying that "the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath". To this saying there is an approximate equivalent in John 5:17, "My Father is working until now, and I am working (i.e. even on the Sabbath)". The context of ideas in which this saying is to be understood is, I think, eschatological: the Sabbath as observed by the Jews is only a shadow of the true Sabbath of of the Age to Come, of which the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks.¹ Thus before the judgement exercised by the Son of Man is mentioned there seem to be oblique allusions to his authority to forgive sins and to his eschatological "lordship". It seems, then, that this fourth Johannine Son of Man saying is also consistent with the general pattern of ideas concerning the Son of Man.

However, it has sometimes been suggested² that John 5:27-29 is a foreign body intruded into the text by a late redaction. Bultmann observes that here we have futuristic eschatology drawing heavily on the language of Dan. 12:2, in contrast to the "realized" eschatology typical of John.³ To make John "consistent" in this regard would require the setting aside also of similar passages in 6:39, 40, 54; 12:48 - and Bultmann in fact regards these too as interpolations. This exegesis is, however, somewhat Procrustean. The evangelist works in terms not of logical consistency but of poetic paradox: there is a paradoxical oscillation between future-mythological and present-historicized eschatology, just as there is between physical event and spiritual meaning in the Johannine miracles.

¹ I have discussed this question in "The Function of the Son of Man according to the Synoptic Gospels" (p. 187, n. 2), pp. 66 f., with reference to H. Riesenfeld's important study, "Sabbat et jour du Seigneur", in A. J. B. Higgins (ed.), *N.T. Essays in Memory of T. W. Manson* (1959), pp. 210-17. This line of approach is more fruitful than that taken by R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (Anchor Bible), I (1966), *ad loc.*, where Rabbinic evidence is cited to show that the Jews held that God did, after all, work on the Sabbath. Brown's view accounts for the reaction of the Jews that Jesus was making himself God's equal, but does not explain the striking time-phrase *ἕως ἄρτι*.

² Notably by Bultmann, *Commentary*, *ad loc.*

³ In his review of C. H. Dodd's *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (NTS, 1 (1954-55), pp. 77-91, ET in *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 27, 2 (1963), pp. 9-22) Bultmann complains (pp. 10, 18 f., 22) of Dodd's refusal to take seriously the question of a source-analysis of John. The difficulty is that Bultmann's only proof of his source-analysis is his own conception of the consistency of thought to be expected of the evangelist, together with his conviction that the Christology and soteriology of John have a gnostic rather than Jewish background - an idea which does not have much support in contemporary research.

The other ground of objection is that in the immediate context (vv. 19-30) the main title by which Jesus speaks of himself is not "the Son of Man" (which occurs only once, v. 27) but "the Son" (eight times; in v. 25, "the Son of God"), and yet his double function of imparting life and judging receives concentrated discussion from v. 21 to v. 30. The question thus arises again, as in 3:14-21, whether for John "the Son" is not a fully appropriate title under which to present Jesus in his work of salvation and judgement. If so, then the suspicion arises that vv. 27-29 may have been inserted by a redactor influenced by the older tradition, in which these functions were specifically associated with the title Son of Man. Closer examination shows, however, that the change of title from "the Son (of God)" in vv. 19-26 to "the Son of Man" in v. 27 is due to a shift in the emphasis of the argument. The same thing is happening as in 3:14-21, except that this time the progression of thought is in the opposite direction. The three references to "the Son" in vv. 19 f. refer not to judgement but to the unity of action of the Son with the Father. This theme, introduced in v. 17, is really the main theme of the whole chapter. And it is to this theme that the title "the Son" is appropriate in the over-all usage of John.¹ Now when Jesus says in v. 17 "the Father is working until now, and I am working", and in v. 20 "for the Father loves the Son and shows him everything which he himself is doing", it is natural for the author to give some indication of what work it is that the Father and the Son are both doing. The answer is, as throughout the book, that Jesus, representing the Father, imparts life to those who believe in him and judges those who do not. So in vv. 21 ff. the nature of the work which the Son does in company with the Father is explained; but the emphasis still is not on the work itself but on the Son's unity with the Father: "He has given all the judgement to the Son, *in order that* all may honour the Son as they honour the Father who sent him" (vv. 22 f.). In v. 24 more deliberate attention is given to the process whereby life is received and judgement avoided, but Jesus speaks of himself in the simple first person. In v. 25 the words have an apocalyptic ring, like v. 28, and so "Son of Man" might have been expected - as indeed some MSS read. But v. 26, which supplies the basis and explanation of v. 25, shows that once more what is meant is the unity of the Son with the Father. Now that this point has been so firmly established, attention is allowed to return for the time to the reality of the judgement, and therewith the Son, who acts only and always in unity with the Father, is identified as the Son of Man, the eschatological judge and saviour.

John 6:26-65, "(27) Work for . . . the food which lasts to produce eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you . . . (53) If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you do not have life within yourselves. . . . (62) What then if you see the Son of Man going up

¹ Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (1953), pp. 257 ff.

where he was before? . . ." In this discourse the title "Son of Man" is mentioned these three times and "the Son" once, in v. 40. Again, the use of the latter title is intended to emphasize Jesus' unity of action with the Father, "This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes should have eternal life." That the title "Son of Man" is intended to be a prominent element in the discourse is shown not only by its use explicitly at the beginning and end and once in the middle, but also by the repeated use of the idea of "coming down from heaven" (vv. 33, 38, 42, 50, 51, 58), cf. 3:13, and the statement that those who receive life will be "raised up at the last day" (vv. 39, 40, 44, 54), cf. 5:28 f. Here only the positive aspect of the work of the Son of Man is emphasized, that of imparting life. This work is connected with both the death and the heavenly exaltation of the Son of Man, as in 3:13 ff. Again the concept of the eschatological community is introduced by way of reference to the sacramental life of the church, this time in the eucharist.¹ In its eucharistic worship (though not because of it in any mechanical way)² the church receives from the Son of Man the gift of life. V. 27, "Work not for the food that perishes, but for the food that lasts, and produces eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you", is close in its essential thought to 4:14 ". . . But the water which I shall give him will be a spring of welling water which produces eternal life". But in the whole of ch. 4 the title "Son of Man" is not used. Several reasons can be suggested why it was used in ch. 6. First, the life-producing bread spoken of by Jesus is compared with the manna of the desert, which "came down from heaven", and in John one of the chief predicates of the Son of Man is that he "came

¹ That there is indeed reference to the eucharist here is the view of most commentators, and seems to me unavoidable. The wording of vv. 53-56 could hardly be more explicit, given the setting in which this discourse is delivered. Bultmann, who holds that the evangelist is an anti-sacramentalist, regards vv. 51b-58 as an interpolation, but the unity of the chapter has been demonstrated by P. Borgen, *Bread from Heaven* (1965), cf. C. K. Barrett, "The Dialectical Theology of St. John", in his *N. T. Essays* (1972). The discussion becomes *explicitly* sacramental only in these verses, but a sacramental concern is implicit from the beginning. Other interpreters regard the language about eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood as metaphorical rather than sacramental. Among these is Dr Leon Morris, who says (*Commentary*, on v. 53): "Both 'eat' and 'drink' are aorists, denoting once-for-all action. It is not a repeated eating and drinking, such as would be appropriate to the sacrament. . . . Eating and drinking thus appear to be a very graphic way of saying that men must take Christ into their innermost being." This linguistic argument is not conclusive. Blass-Debrunner 373:3; in the N.T. *ἐάν* is used, in the overwhelming majority of cases, with the aorist subjunctive, whether the reference is general or to a specific case in the future. It may also be observed that eating and drinking are referred to with present participles in vv. 54 and 56, which suggests a general or repeated action.

² Cf. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 67: "He who eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of man has life, but he does not have it as a personal possession which he holds in his own right; he will never cease to need what is expressed in the words 'I will raise him up at the last day'. There is thus a radical difference between this Johannine paragraph and the Ignatian *φάρμακον ἀθανασίας*, the *ἀντίδοτος τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν*. The Lord's Supper is thus neither a bare historical commemoration of an interesting and impressive event in the life of Jesus, nor an independent automatic means of conveying spiritual substance. It is part of the dialectic of time and eternity, of matter and spirit (cf. verse 63), in which the 'night in which he was betrayed' and the 'last day' each play their significant roles."

down from heaven" (3:13, cf. 6:62, 9:39).¹ Second, like the first part of ch. 3, where also the Son of Man is mentioned, but unlike ch. 4, ch. 6 has a sacramental interest. In the sacraments the communal life of the church is held in view, and it is an essential part of the pre-Johannine tradition about the Son of Man that he forms and saves the eschatological community. Third, in ch. 6 there is reference to the death of Jesus, as there is in ch. 3 but not in ch 4. The Son of Man, then, is a heavenly being who enters the world in order to impart to men the gift of eternal life. Men receive this gift when they "believe in him", which includes obeying his call for allegiance to his teaching and to the life of his community. After his death his power to win men to his allegiance is immeasurably increased, since his presence is no longer physically limited, but his Spirit is wherever his community is (6:62 f., cf. 7:38 f., 16:7). That those who are saved by the Son of Man are thought of as a community rather than as isolated individuals is clear in the synoptic gospels, as in 1 Enoch. In John this is stated in different terms, relating specifically to the church's worship in obedience to the command of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:24 f.): "If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within yourselves" – if you do not participate in the worshipping life of the church you are not among those who receive his life: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*.

The next of John's Son of Man sayings is perhaps the most obscure: 8:28, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am." The obscurity is due partly to the epigrammatic, even enigmatic, style of the surrounding discourse, and partly to textual and grammatical problems, of which the most difficult, in the immediate context, is in v. 25b. In the interpretation of R. E. Brown (*Commentary, ad loc.*), when the Jews ask Jesus, "Who are you?" he answers, "What I have been telling you from the beginning". It is unfortunately not certain whether *τὴν ἀρχὴν* has a temporal force, or, if it has, whether it modifies *εἶμι* (understood), meaning "I am from the beginning (of creation)" or *λαλῶ*, meaning

¹ It may be that Daniel 7:13 is the background of this idea. "Came down from heaven" sounds like a paraphrase of "coming with the clouds of heaven", once the latter was interpreted of descent rather than ascent or, perhaps, lateral movement. This reinterpretation may already have been known to Luke and have been the reason for his omission (at 22:69) of the words (from Mark 14:62) "and coming with the clouds of heaven". It occurs in Joshua ben Levi's statement (c. 250 A.D.) that if Israel is unworthy the Messiah will come riding on an ass and if Israel is worthy he will come with the clouds of heaven (bT Sanhedrin 98a); and in the traditional Christian interpretation. But the relating of this coming of the Son of Man from heaven to the past event of the life of Jesus rather than to a future event is a peculiarity of John's. Here John seems to be under the influence not only of the fundamental teaching found in the synoptic gospels, that Jesus was in his lifetime the Son of Man, but also of the idea of the Son of Man's pre-existence, found in the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, where it is said that the Son of Man had been hidden with God in heaven since before the foundation of the world, and that "the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits has revealed him to the holy and righteous . . . For in his name they are saved, and according to his good pleasure has it been in regard to their life" (48:6 f.). This passage recalls both the incarnational Christology of John and also John's soteriological theme, that salvation is achieved when God reveals the Son of Man to men.

(with Brown) "I have been telling you from the beginning". If the latter is right, Jesus' answer presumably refers to his first statement about himself in this gospel, which is 1:51, "You will see . . . the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man". That is, when the Jews ask him about his identity, Jesus answers, in effect, "I am the Son of Man". Such a downright statement identifying Jesus with the Son of Man never occurs in any of the gospels: the nearest approach to it is, perhaps, John 8:28 itself, but here we come upon our next problem. At first reading, the verse might appear to mean that when the Jews "lift up" the Son of Man, then they will know that that is who Jesus is – the Son of Man. However, the phrase *ἐγὼ εἶμι* may be intended here, as in several other places in John, not to imply a specific predicate, but in a mysterious way, echoing God's speech about himself in the Old Testament (e.g. Isa. 43:10, LXX), to hint at Jesus' divine status. At all events, what is plain is that after the Jews ask about Jesus' identity (v. 25) he speaks about his coming death and exaltation as the Son of Man. As F. H. Borsch has well observed,¹ this sequence in the dialogue is somewhat reminiscent of two scenes in Mark: 8:27 ff. (at Caesarea Philippi) and 14:61 ff. (at the trial before the High Priest): "A 'Who is Jesus?' question leads to a statement about the Son of Man". To this we can add the further observation, that both in John 8:25 ff. and in the dialogue following the question at Caesarea Philippi in Mark there is a reference to the Son of Man's right to judge those who do not hear the words that he speaks into the world (John 8:26) or who are ashamed of him and his words in an adulterous and sinful generation (Mark 8:38).

In 9:35 Jesus asks the man whom he had healed of his congenital blindness, and whom the Jews had now excluded from the synagogue, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Several scholars regard this saying as standing apart from the general pattern of Son of Man sayings in John, on the ground that, whereas the others seem to have deep roots in tradition (whether or not those roots are thought to reach back to Jesus), this one looks like a confessional formula that may have been taken over from the baptismal practice of the church to which John belonged,² and as pointing "to the Son of Man as the evangelist's fundamental and principal Christology".³ These suggestions are unconvincing. This saying on its own is far too flimsy a basis for assuming that it represents a baptismal confession, especially in view of the remarkable fact (and how remarkable it is, is perhaps too easy to forget) that "the Son of Man" never occurs as a title for Jesus in the NT outside the gospels, except for Acts 7:56,⁴ and

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 304, n. 1.

² On this point, Smalley, *op. cit.*, pp. 296, 297, agrees with Higgins, *Jesus and the Son of Man*, p. 155.

³ Higgins, *loc. cit.*

⁴ Heb. 2:6-9; Rev. 1:13; 14:14 are not real exceptions, since there OT passages in which "Son of Man" occurs are applied to Jesus.

that, again with the sole exception of Acts 7:56, the title is always spoken by Jesus himself.¹ If we are looking in John for a confessional formula of the church, we would do better to think of 20:28, where Thomas calls Jesus "my Lord and my God".² Against the view that the title Son of Man expresses "the evangelist's fundamental and principal Christology" we may cite not only Thomas' confession but also the original ending of the gospel: 20:31, "These things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the *Christ*, the *Son of God* . . ." In John's day the living talk about Jesus was in terms of Lord, Christ and Son of God: Borsch and Colpe are right in thinking that the prominence of the title Son of Man in John is due entirely to the strength of the tradition that in his lifetime Jesus had used this title of himself.³

Far from being an oddity among the Son of Man sayings, John 9:35 has, when its context is taken into account, interesting lines of connexion with other Son of Man passages in John, and even in Mark. First, the theme of judgement, so prominent in association with the Son of Man in the synoptics and 1 Enoch, occurs here too: 9:39, "For judgement I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see and those who see may become blind".⁴ The disclosure that Jesus is the Son of Man is only properly complete when he has declared the function of the Son of Man as the one who brings judgement into the world. This connexion of the Son of Man with judgement comes, as we have seen, in John 3:14 ff., 5:27 and 8:25-28, and it will come once more, in 12:31-35. But there are also points of more specific literary contact with some of these passages. It is as the light-bearer that the Son of Man brings judgement into the world: so 3:19 ff., following 3:14 f., and 12:31-35; in ch. 9, judgement is carried out by the bestowal or deprivation of sight (vv. 39-41), and this harks back to v. 5, "When I am in the world, I am the light of the world". Then in 9:39 there is an allusion to Isa. 6:9, and the same passage is quoted in 12:39 f., where the line of thought is still continuing from 12:31-35. Second, like 5:27, 9:35 makes a good parallel to Mark 2:10.⁵ That the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins is only another way of

¹ John 12:34 is of course not an exception, since the crowd takes up a statement Jesus has, we are meant to assume, made about himself.

² Indeed, even in the present passage, according to most MSS, when Jesus has revealed his identity as the Son of Man the response of the formerly blind man is to worship him as *Lord* (v. 38), though since the discovery of P75 the case for excluding this verse as an interpolation has been made quite strong. See R. E. Brown, *Commentary, ad loc.*; B. Lindars, *New Century Bible: The Gospel of John* (1972), *ad loc.*

³ Borsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 304 f., Colpe, *op. cit.*, p. 468:9-14.

⁴ I cannot see what reason Smalley has for saying that "even the theme of judgement which follows closely (39) is not really connected (with the Son of Man saying in v. 35)", *op. cit.*, p. 296. The connexion is all the closer if vv. 38, 39a are to be excised.

⁵ Against Schnackenburg, "Der Menschensohn . . .", p. 131, "Unbestreitbar wird der joh. Jesus schon in seiner gegenwärtigen Befindlichkeit auf Erden als der 'Menschensohn' betrachtet. . . ; aber sprachlich und inhaltlich fehlt in den joh. Logien jeglicher Kontakt mit jenen synoptischen Sprüchen, die davon künden, dass der Menschensohn macht hat, auf Erden Sünden zu vergeben (Mark. 2:10). . ."

saying that he has authority to judge. Though certainly John's terminology is different from Mark's, the two gospels (indeed all four) share the proclamation that the Son of Man is not only a superhuman figure of the future but is present on earth in the person of Jesus, already exercising eschatological judgement. Third, it is interesting for the present discussion that Jesus finds the man whose sight he has restored and reveals himself to him as the Son of Man only after he hears that the man has been excommunicated.¹ The man has been thrown out of the religious community of Israel, but he is offered the chance to "believe in the Son of Man", i.e., to become a member of the new eschatological community.² Those who do not believe are thereby "judged": their sins are retained, and they mark themselves out as "sons of darkness" rather than "sons of light" (cf. vv. 40 f.).

John 12:20-36, "(23b) The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified . . . (31 ff.) Now is the judgement of this world; now will the ruler of this world be thrown out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. (In saying this, he was indicating the kind of death by which he would die.) . . . (34) Why do you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? . . ." Jesus himself mentions the title "Son of Man" only once in this pericope (v. 23). The glorification of the Son of Man is related to the death of Jesus through which life is made available for men (cf. 7:39; 12:16; 17:1 f.). But when Jesus speaks (without using a title) of his *ὕψωθῆναι* (v. 32) the crowd understands this as a reference to the death of the Son of Man.³ In this pericope Jesus begins his speech about the Son of Man's glorification through death in "answer" to Andrew and Philip, when they report to him that there are some Greeks who wish to see him. This means that the Gentile mission is made possible only by the death and glorification of the Son of Man. The same point is repeated in v. 32, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself". "All men" does not, however, include the Jews, who refuse to believe in Jesus and thus remain "sons of darkness" (vv. 35-41), though the possibility of course remains for individual Jews to align

¹ V. 34, cf. v. 22. The precise nature of this excommunication is not important for the present discussion; cf. Barrett, *Commentary*, on v. 22.

² On the baptismal associations of John 9 see R. E. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 380 f., cf. A. Corell, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-69.

³ The connexions of this passage with the Marcan tradition have been explored by others, and require no comment here: see esp. Borsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 305-12. It is wrong to take the question of the crowd, as some have done, to be evidence that the concept "Son of Man" was unknown in first-century Judaism. G. H. P. Thompson, "The Son of Man - Some Further Considerations", *JTS*, 12 (1961), pp. 203-209, has rightly pointed out that the question of the crowd is provoked not by Jesus' use of the title Son of Man but by his saying that he must be lifted up. The identity of Jesus and the Son of Man is to be assumed from the context (cf. v. 23). The Jewish interlocutors of Jesus must be assumed to be familiar with the concept of a heavenly Son of Man such as is set out in 1 Enoch 37-71. The problem for them is not the expression Son of Man in itself, but the idea of a Son of Man who must be "lifted up", for the Son of Man is supposed to be in heaven already.

themselves with the new rather than the old community of salvation (v. 42). Like many of Jesus' interlocutors in the Johannine dialogues (e.g. 4:19 f., 5:18, 6:41 f., 7:27, etc.) the crowd want to argue about the interpretation of traditional religious teachings (v. 34). But as usual Jesus refuses to be drawn into such a dispute (cf. 4:20 f., 7:41 f.). The important thing to recognize is that in the coming of Jesus men are faced with the moment of decision, which is also the moment of judgement; and since his crucifixion, which seals the doom of Israel, is already imminent, the time for making this decision is very short (vv. 35 f.). The very fact of asking questions instead of making the decision of allegiance to Jesus marks men out as unfit for the eternal life which he offered them. This is true not only of random individuals but of the Jews as a nation, as is indicated by the use, in this concluding report of Jesus' public ministry (v. 40), of the same quotation from Isa. 6:9 f. with which Luke ends the book of Acts (cf. also Matt. 13:15). But since John has less interest in historical movements than Luke has, and confines his interest to theology, he makes quite explicit, what Luke also would not have denied, that in spite of the rejection of the Jews as a whole each man can of his own initiative "come to the light" so that he will not "remain in darkness" (v. 46): i.e., can accept the "words" of Jesus, which are his "commandment", which is the gift of eternal life, and thus escape the judgement that inevitably falls on those who reject him (vv. 47-50).

The last occurrence of the title "the Son of Man" in John is in 13:31, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him". Jesus speaks these words as soon as Judas (a "son of darkness", cf. v. 30b, into whom Satan has entered, v. 27) has left the supper; and since Judas is going out in order to arrange Jesus' arrest there is a hint that when Jesus speaks of the "glorification" of the Son of Man he is again referring to his death (cf. 12:23 ff.). It is perhaps surprising that this title, which has been rather prominent in the section of John dealing with Jesus' public ministry, occurs only this once in the farewell discourse, and will not be used again in the remainder of the book. Several factors may combine to provide an explanation. First, it is also true that "Christ" and "Son of God" or "Son" are less frequent from now on; only "Lord" remains fairly frequent, especially after the resurrection: thus the change of scene seems to influence the general usage of the titles. Second, since the title "Son of Man" owes its prominence in the gospels to the force of the memory that Jesus spoke of himself thus (though not all Son of Man sayings are to be regarded as verbatim quotations of Jesus), we might expect it to be less prominent in those passages, such as the farewell discourse in John, where the tradition of the teaching of Jesus plays a smaller role and Christian meditation on the person and work of Jesus a larger. Third, we must reckon with the probability, to which reference has already been made, that the general theme of the Son of Man continues

to have an influence even where the title has been allowed to drop out.¹

13:31 is the beginning of the farewell discourse, and perhaps is to be regarded as a kind of heading to it, so that the significance of the title is to be understood as underlying the whole discourse. The salvation of Jesus' disciples is soon discussed (14:1-6), and indeed is spoken of repeatedly and at length throughout chs. 14-17. The judgement of the world is hinted at in 14:17 ff., but is not properly resumed until 15:18-27; 16:7-11. In these passages judgement is not associated with any title of Jesus but rather with the Paraclete whom Jesus will send (15:26; 16:7 f.). But there is the closest possible connexion between the Paraclete and Jesus,² and indeed Jesus as the Son of Man.³ It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the background of the term "Paraclete" as used in John, and its possible connexions with the Son of Man theme. But it may be observed that some of the vocabulary associated with the Son of Man theme can be traced in the farewell discourse, including passages concerning the Paraclete. The disciples are those whom Jesus has "elected" (15:19);⁴ they are closely bound to Jesus, and with him are sharply distinguished from "the world" (15:18-21, cf. Matt. 10:22-25 - a "Son of Man" passage). The theme of the judgement of the Paraclete is "sin, righteousness and judgement" (16:8). Sin consists in not believing in Jesus - and in the synoptic gospels, as in 1 Enoch, the judgement of the Son of Man falls on those who oppose the Son of Man or his elect community.⁵ "With respect to righteousness, because I am going to the Father" perhaps means that Jesus' heavenly exaltation will be followed by the judgement in which it will be revealed who really are "the righteous", i.e., those who are linked by faith and obedience with the Son of Man (so Matt. 13:37-43; 25:31,

¹ Examples in the synoptic gospels that come readily to mind are the narrative of the transfiguration, Mark 9:2-8 pars., cf. v. 9, and the ending of the Gospel of Matthew, Matt. 28:16-20. Here we come upon the large question, why "the Son of Man" is missing from the NT epistles, and whether there are nevertheless indirect echoes of the Son of Man theme in them; but there is not the space to pursue that question here.

² Cf. N. Johansson, *Parakletoi* (1960), pp. 256-70. Without explanation, the Paraclete is said to be another Paraclete. In 1 John 2:1 Jesus himself is called a Paraclete. The connexion between Jesus and the Paraclete in John 14-16 is evidently intended to amount almost to identity.

³ So Schulz, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-57.

⁴ In 1 Enoch 37-71 "the Elect One" is an alternative title for "the Son of Man", and the earthly group which looks to him for salvation is called "the elect" or "holy" or "righteous", or some combination of these adjectives. "Elect" is used a number of times in the synoptic gospels to designate the members of the community associated with the Son of Man (Mark 13:20, 22, 27 pars.; Luke 18:7; cf. Matt. 22:14): more rarely, Jesus himself is called "elect" (Luke 9:35; 23:35; and, according to a perhaps correct variant reading, John 1:34). Correspondingly, in the epistles and Revelation Christians are not infrequently called "elect", but this term is used for Jesus only in 1 Pet. 2:4, and that in dependence on Isa. 28:16 (LXX) - but it is in keeping with the "elect" terminology of 1 Enoch that there is a parallelism between Jesus as the Elect One (1 Pet. 2:4, 6) and his community as an "elect race" (v. 9).

⁵ That this is the meaning of the "unforgivable sin" in Matt. 12:32, I have argued in "The Function of the Son of Man according to the Synoptic Gospels", pp. 58 ff.

37 etc.).¹ "Concerning judgement, because the ruler of this world has been judged" is reminiscent of 12:31, "Now will the ruler of this world be thrown out", which is linked with the "lifting up" of the Son of Man. There are also other indications that the whole farewell discourse is to be read in the light of the Son of Man theme. The long discourse at the supper recalls 1 Enoch 62:14, "And with that Son of Man shall they eat and lie down and rise up for ever and ever". Still more strikingly, the "mansions" or "resting-places" in "the house of my Father" recall 1 Enoch 41:2, 45:3.² The farewell discourse plays in John a dramatic function remarkably similar to that played in Matthew by the last part of the eschatological discourse (Matt. 24:45-25:46), for in John the Son of Man gives his disciples the new commandment, that they should love one another (13:34 f., repeated 15:11-17 and 17:11-23), and in the Matthew passage emphasis is laid on the responsibility of the leaders of the church to maintain the unity and fellowship of Jesus' disciples, who are the eschatological community of the Son of Man.³ (Similarly, John 12:20-50 may be taken as approximately equivalent to Matt. 24:1-44, for in both passages the theme is the judgement of the world by the Son of Man.)

III

That Jesus was conscious of a special filial relationship to God has left its mark on the synoptic tradition (Mark 14:36; Matt. 11:25 ff.; Luke 10:21 f.), but in John has become so prominent as virtually to have become the organizing principle of John's presentation of the whole career of Jesus. Therefore "the Son" is the most frequently used of the Christological titles in John. Two other titles, which in the synoptic gospels have meanings quite different both from each other and from "the Son", namely "the Son of God" and "the Son of Man", have been assimilated in meaning to it. But our exegesis has shown that in the case of "the Son of Man" this assimilation is far from complete. In spite of considerable differences of vocabulary and imagery, the fundamental significance of the title "the Son of Man" in John is not different from that which it has in the synoptic gospels. As already in the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, the Son of Man is the eschatological judge who stands in intimate relationship to those who look to him for vindication and salvation and who will save them at the end. The closest approach to the synoptic imagery in which the judgement of the Son of Man is described comes in

¹ Cf. A. Descamps, *Les justes et la justice dans les évangiles et dans le christianisme primitif* (1950): there is a sectarian-eschatological significance in NT statements about "the righteous ones" (see esp. pp. 305 f.).

² So B. Aebert, *Die Eschatologie des Johannesevangeliums* (1936), pp. 33 f.

³ On this, see my article, "Who are the 'Sheep' and the 'Goats'?", *ABR*, 13 (1965), pp. 19-28.

John 5:27 ff.: judgement will take place at the end of the world, though in the case of John it is the general resurrection rather than the "parousia" of the Son of Man which is emphasized. As in the synoptics, the eschatological judgement exercised by the Son of Man has already begun with the earthly ministry of Jesus, the Son of Man, and indeed this aspect of the matter is insisted on by John almost to the exclusion of the future aspect. Like Matthew and Luke, John sees eschatological significance in the life of the church, which is brought into being by the Son of Man and lives in close spiritual unity with him. As in Matthew, it is emphasized that the church is the earthly locus of salvation (3:1-21; 6:26-65; 9:35-41) and that the unity and fellowship within this community of the Son of Man are of great importance (13:31 ff.). In common with Luke, John sees the ministry of Jesus, the Son of Man, as a great turning-point in the world's history, which results in the rejection of the Jews because of their rejection of Jesus, and the reception into the community of salvation of men of all nations (12:20-36). The idea, which in the synoptic gospels is only hinted at (Mark 10:45 pars.), that the death of the Son of Man not only precedes his exaltation but also effects the salvation of his elect community, has a prominent part in John (especially ch. 12, but also chs. 3, 6 and 13): for the death of the Son of Man is seen as identical with his heavenly exaltation, and the heavenly exaltation of the Son of Man has made possible the activity of the "other Paraclete", the Holy Spirit, by whose power the church in fact "receives life" while the world remains in death, and by whose agency the judgement of the world is carried out. For John the important fact, already foreshadowed in the synoptic gospels (and in the teaching of Jesus, though we cannot with any confidence reconstruct the details), is that eschatological salvation and its negative counterpart of condemnation and punishment are in all essential features already accomplished.