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The Relation of the Beloved Disciple to the Twelve

The aim of this paper is to show how the Fourth Evangelist's implicit comparison of the deliberately anonymous beloved disciple to the more fallible Peter, Philip and Judas Iscariot reveals that he was a brother of Jesus and the last to join the Twelve but ranked first (20:4,8) in true discipleship.

The Twelve's failure to understand Jesus (Jn 4:32; 10:6; 12:16; 14:5–9; 16:18; 20:9) is typified by Peter at the Last Supper (13:6–8, 36–37). As he had access to Jesus to ask a private question only through the beloved disciple, Peter's position at the Supper was one of lesser favor, honor and accessibility than that of the beloved disciple. He was in a far better position than Peter to ask a private question. Jesus' answer and action revealed to the beloved disciple alone the betrayer's identity, though not the intention and timeliness of his own words, "do it quickly" (13:27–28). The beloved disciple's location, designation and keeping secret the answer to a private question indicate that he was "on particularly close terms with Jesus".¹ He occupied "the place of a trusted friend".² To recline on the bosom of Jesus (13:23) is "intended to suggest a very special intimacy".³ As a close confidant he was more spiritually akin to Jesus than was any other. As the only-begotten Son was in the bosom of the Father (1:18, cf. 14), so the beloved disciple lay on the bosom of the Son. This ideal relationship is a model for that of the other disciples with the Father and Son (14:20; 15:4–5, 9; 17:21–23, 26).

¹ B. Olsson, *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel*, Lund 1974, 273; cf. J. Roloff, *Der johanneische "Lieblingsjünger" und der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit*, NTS 15 (1968), 138; Th. Lorenzen, *Der Lieblingsjünger im Johannesevangelium*, Stuttgart 1971, 83, 87; A. Dauer, *Die Passionsgeschichte im Johannesevangelium*, München 1972, 319; R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium. III*, Freiburg, Basel, Wien 1975, 34.

² C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, N.Y. 1955, 372; N. E. Johnson, *The Beloved Disciple and the Fourth Gospel*, CQR 167 (1966), 281.

³ B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John (New Century Bible)*, London 1972, 458.

A. Kragerud⁴ rightly observes: “As Christ is the one whom God loves par excellence (3:35; 5:20; 10:17; cf. 17:23, 24, 26), ...the beloved disciple stands in the same relation to Christ as Christ to God; as Christ is in a special sense the ἀγαπητός of God, so the beloved disciple is portrayed as the ἀγαπητός of Christ in a special way.” Κόλπος (bosom) symbolizes the love and fellowship in a family or religious community or at the feast of the blessed.⁵ J. Roloff⁶ calls attention to the correlation of love and knowledge in the Fourth Gospel; because the beloved disciple and Jesus knew each other intimately, his special understanding of Christ qualified him to be a witness and transmitter. Th. Lorenzen⁷ infers from their closeness that the beloved disciple knew the thought of Jesus just as Jesus revealed the Father. The beloved disciple could have declared the truth and grace that came through Christ (1:17). He “revealed to the church the mind of the Lord”.⁸ He revealed his innermost thoughts to that disciple.⁹ The relationship is thus analogous to that of 1:18, upon which John Calvin commented: “Men are said to admit to their bosom those to whom they communicate all their secrets. The breast is the seat of counsel. He therefore teaches that the Son knows the most hidden secrets of the Father.”¹⁰

B. Lindars¹¹ discerns that the beloved disciple symbolizes “the ideal

⁴ *Der Lieblingsjünger im Johannesevangelium*, Oslo 1959, 72; also Lorenzen (n. 1), 86. Cf. *Peter in the New Testament*, ed. R. E. Brown, K. P. Donfried & J. Reumann, Minneapolis (Augsburg) & N.Y. 1973, 135: “the Beloved Disciple enjoys a primacy in Jesus’ love... Jesus favors him.”

⁵ R. Meyer, *κόλπος*, TDNT iii (1965), 824–25. Cf. Aboth of R. Nathan 31 (8b): “The Torah lay on God’s bosom.” P. S. Minear (*The Beloved Disciple in the Gospel of John. Some Clues and Conjectures*, NT 19 [1977], 114) writes that “breast” connotes “closeness to Jesus..., trust, intimacy of shared knowledge and intention...”

⁶ N. 1, 137–39.

⁷ N. 1, 84. Minear (n. 5), 117, finds ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ (1:18; 13:23, 25) “suggests intimacy of vision and knowledge that qualifies a person to mediate divine grace and truth.”

⁸ E. L. Allen, *On This Rock*, JTS 5 (1954), 62; quoted approvingly by J. N. Sanders & B. A. Mastin, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*, N. Y. & Evanston 1968, 456.

⁹ R. Schnackenburg, *Der Jünger, den Jesus liebte*, EKK Vorarbeiten 2 (1970), 100–02. Cf. H. Strathmann, *Die Stellung des Petrus in der Urkirche*, ZSTh 20 (1943), 266: “the heir of the most intimate tradition [and understanding] of Jesus.”

¹⁰ *The Gospel according to St. John*, N. Y. 1959, 26.

¹¹ N. 3, 34; cf. *Peter in the N. T.*, 136: he, “especially at the Cross, emerges... as the true follower of Jesus who was faithful to him.”

disciple, who remains true where Peter fails... This role demands an Apostle more discerning and more loyal than Peter." S. Agourides¹² observes that "after his denial, Peter vanishes from the story. The beloved disciple, however, follows Jesus up to the end; he alone." The prophecy that his disciples would scatter and leave him alone (16:32; cf. Mk 14:27, 50) is fulfilled. The singular presence of the beloved disciple at the cross makes it possible for him to receive, as Christ's brother, the custody of Mary, who represents the people and heritage of true, Messianic Israel.¹³ From that hour (of Christ's exaltation and glorification: a chronologically imprecise term; cf. 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1) he took Mary to τὰ ἴδια (19:27), where the new Israel gathered (20:2, 10, 18; Acts 1:13–14). As the text does not indicate their premature departure from the cross or the presence of another unidentified male disciple who took the beloved disciple's place as witness, we must follow the natural probability that the beloved disciple remained faithfully to the bitter end (possibly awaiting a σημεῖον) and became the Gospel's witness to the place of burial (20:3) and to the crucially important flow of blood and water. R. Schnackenburg¹⁴ points out the association of seeing and bearing witness by John the Baptist, the beloved disciple and the author (19:35; cf. 1:32, 34; I Jn 1:2)¹⁵; the reliability of the beloved disciple as witness is emphasized in both 19:35 and 21:24.¹⁶ Following the simplest grammatical interpretation, H. H. Wendt, C. K. Barrett, R. Brown, J. N. Sanders (B. A. Mastin) and R. Schnackenburg understand ἐξεῖνος to refer to him who had seen and borne true witness. His honesty is affirmed. L. Morris¹⁷ comments that the perfect, "has witnessed", signifies "he has set it on permanent record." His testimony to physical facts and their true spiritual meaning, which promotes faith, includes: Christ's death and glo-

¹² Peter and John in the Fourth Gospel, *Studia Evangelica* Vol. IV, Berlin 1968, 5.

¹³ R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, *AncB* ii 1971, 936.

¹⁴ *N. 1*, iii, 339–40.

¹⁵ Moreover, all three functioned so that readers could believe that Jesus is the Christ (1:7; 19:35; 20:31; cf. I Jn 2:22–26).

¹⁶ "He is the human witness par excellence for the Johannine community (19:35; 21:24), and how do we explain this emphasis if the evangelist knew that the beloved disciple really was not present at... events he is supposed to have witnessed?" (Mary and the New Testament, R. E. Brown et al. [eds.], Philadelphia & New York 1978, 209).

¹⁷ *The Gospel according to John*, Grand Rapids 1971, 820, n. 94; also Schnackenburg (*n. 1*), iii, 445.

rification; the identity of the crucified and the exalted Lord¹⁸; the saving efficacy of his sacrificial death¹⁹ (cf. 1 Jn 1:7); and the flow of water and blood and their soteriological and/or sacramental significance.

The fact that the beloved disciple ran quicker than Peter and reached the tomb first (πρῶτος) (20:4) could be explained by his youth; he was the last of the important disciples to die (21:22–23). But the Evangelist meant to emphasize not his vigor, endurance or age, but rather his primacy and Peter's following him (20:6) in love, devotion, expectant faith, or at least in hope. Each of these spiritual excellences could account and prepare the way for the priority of the beloved disciple in stooping to see and in believing (20:5,8). His understanding is the outcome of his love and hope. His belief in the resurrection reflected not his knowledge of scriptural prophecy (20:9), but his memory and application of the words of Jesus (2:20–22; 14:18–26; 16:16–23). He was first to perceive the meaning of the signs which he "saw": the empty tomb and the position of the kerchief and linen cloths.²⁰ He took precedence over Peter in discerning how these signs fulfilled the promises of Christ to die and rise again. Unlike Mary Magdalene (20:2–3, 15–18), the beloved disciple did not believe only when he saw the risen Lord as proof. He is the prototype of the blessed believer²¹ (including the ideal reader), who, unlike Thomas, believes without seeing (20:25, 28–29) that Jesus is declared the Son of God by his resurrection (14:12–14; 20:29–31; cf. Rom 1:4). Peter's role in this narrative is limited to entering the tomb in order to be chief witness to conditions inside it.²² In spite of getting a look at the facts, Peter did not yet believe, either from observation or from Scripture, that Jesus had risen (20:8–9; cf. Lk 24:12, 24). Presumably the beloved disciple explained to him the meaning of the empty tomb while they were returning

¹⁸ H.J. Venetz, *Zeuge des Erhöhten. Ein exegetischer Beitrag zu Joh 19,31–37*, FZPhTh 23 (1976), 103–07.

¹⁹ H. Strathmann, μαρτύς, Kittel, Bromiley (eds.), (n.5), iv (1967), 500; cf. E.C. Hoskyns & (ed.) F.N. Davey, *The Fourth Gospel*, London 1947, 533.

²⁰ Ibid., 540; Peter in the N.T., 138, n.295; F. Salvoni, *The So-Called Jesus Resurrection Proof (John 20:7)*, RestQ 22 (1979), 72–76.

²¹ Sanders & Mastin (n.8), 422; Schnackenburg (n.1), iii, 457; R.F. Collins, *The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel*, DR 94 (1976), 130.

²² R. Mahoney, *Two Disciples at the Tomb*, Bern & Frankfurt 1974, 251–52, 278.

home.²³ Mary Magdalene was not so informed or convinced; her role was to bring to the others the news of Christ's first appearance (20:13,18).

When Jesus appeared on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, the beloved disciple again was the first to recognize him from the sign of the large catch of fish. He said to Peter: "It is the Lord" (21:7). Though He was not physically distinguishable (21:4), the beloved disciple's characteristic intuitive insight quickly grasped the sign, and Peter enthusiastically believed him. All other disciples, symbolized by Peter, are "dependent on the insight and the word of the BD", as M. de Jonge notes.²⁴ When Peter hauls in the untorn net with all 153 kinds of fish²⁵ (21:11), he acts as fisher of all types of men who enter the church (cf. 12:32: ἔλκειν; Mk 1:17). His commission from Jesus to "feed my flock" (21:16–17) includes "other sheep not of this fold" who will hear His voice (10:16). His role as pastor and missionary is wider than that of the beloved disciple, who becomes responsible for Israelites (19:27). He assumes custody of Mary, which is analagous to Peter's pastoral care. Jesus himself remains the ideal shepherd (10:1–18).

Peter's love for Jesus is portrayed as imperfect. Somewhat rashly he followed Jesus to the high priest's courtyard after cutting off his servant's ear (18:10,15). Later he impetuously and penitentially jumped into the sea (21:7). He responded affirmatively to Christ's question whether he loved him more than these others do (21:15). Yet Jesus three-fold question (which gets progressively easier) casts doubt on the nature of his love because of his earlier three-fold denial. After twice asking ἀγαπᾷς με and receiving the answer φιλῶ σε, Jesus uses Peter's term, φιλεῖς με. The heavenly quality of ἀγάπη which the Son mediates²⁶ is more characteristic of his relation to the disciple whom he ἠγάπα (13:23; 19:26; 21:7,20; but cf. 20:2). Peter's friendship-love was not as serene and consistent²⁷, or as based on understanding truth.

²³ R. A. Culpepper, *The Johannine School* (SBL Diss. 26), Missoula 1974, 267. M. de Jonge, *Jesus: Stranger from Heaven and Son of God*, Missoula 1977, 107, 212–13. However, he (p.107) finds a "lack of real communication between" Peter and the beloved disciple, "who keeps all information and explanation to himself."

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

²⁵ Hoskyns (n.19), 554; Peter in the N.T., 141, n.301. See bibliogr. in St. S. Smalley, *The Signs in John xxi*, NTS 20 (1974), 284, n.2.

²⁶ E. Stauffer, ἀγαπάω, Kittel, Bromiley (n.5), i (1964), 52–53; G. Menestrina, *Agapē nelle Lettere di Giovanni*, BeO 19 (1977), 77–80. ²⁷ Agourides (n.12), 6.

Peter is repeatedly asked to do what the beloved disciple does spontaneously: love, feed the sheep, and follow (21:19,20,22). In these interrelated aspects of discipleship the beloved disciple is leader. However, Peter was given the more difficult role of “following” Jesus into martyrdom (21:18–19; cf. 10:11; 12:25–26; 13:36–37; 18:15). Generally, “to follow” means recognizing signs (6:2), listening to him as one’s teacher and personal shepherd (10:4–5,27; 11:37–38) and walking in the light of life (8:12). The beloved disciple’s pre-eminence in understanding truth reflects his precedence in following.

The idealized beloved disciple was given the privileged role of being the primary ongoing witness. This included the prospect of remaining until the Parousia, if it had been the Lord’s will. Peter is gently rebuked for asking about this (21:21–23). Moreover, through the Gospel the beloved disciple’s witness was to endure after his death (19:35, μεμαρτύρηκεν; 21:24, μαρτυρῶν [a present participle] & γράψας [aorist], which are independent of each other).²⁸ The saying current among the brethren, that the disciple does not die (present tense), suggests his immortality through witnessing. Likewise that of Moses (5:39,46) and John the Baptist (1:7–8,15; 3:28; 5:35) continues.

Having examined each of the *texts* where the beloved disciple is mentioned, let us now draw conclusions on his *function* as an authority for the Fourth Gospel. He, rather than Peter, was the disciple par excellence, who served as model of those who are loved by Jesus (cf. 13:1), who understand his mind and bear witness to truth, and who consistently, loyally follow him. He represents an idealized *historical personality* rather than an abstract literary fiction²⁹ for the following reasons. How could an imaginary figure be set “side by side with the other disciples”?³⁰ Differing types of disciples (Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, Nicodemus, Mary, Judas Iscariot) are no less real because they are

²⁸ Th. Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, N.Y. 1917, iii, 239; Brown (n.13), ii, 1123; Schnackenburg (n.1), iii, 445, 450; see above, n.17; R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, Philadelphia 1971, 717, n.3.

²⁹ Bibliogr. of proponents in Kragerud (n.4), 45, n.16 (cf. 50, 113); Brown (n.13), i, xciv–xcv; Lorenzen (n.1), 74–75.

³⁰ B.G. Griffith, *The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved*, ET 32 (1920–21), 379. See J. Bogaert, *Orthodox and Heretical Perfectionism in the Johannine Community*, Missoula, Mont. 1977, 166, n.40.

idealized representations. O. Cullmann³¹ states: "The evangelist never invents an event or a person for allegorical ends." W.H. Brownlee³² observes that "in John real history and symbolic expression have a way of coinciding". Even apocryphal gospels appealed to real persons. The anonymity of the beloved disciple presupposes that he was an historical person³³ who deserved a greater reputation (see below). R.E. Brown³⁴ notes that if he were unreal, "the community's self-defense would have surely crumbled". Finally, misunderstandings do not occur about the death of merely symbolic figures.

The Fourth Gospel's *tradition* is supported by the beloved disciple in four events: the Last Supper, the crucifixion, the empty tomb and the resurrection appearance by the sea. The superior credibility of his testimony (19:35; 21:24) pertains both to historical facts and their interpretation or significance for the faith and life of the church (13:31–35; 19:27,34; 20:8; 21:11,19,23) and its apologetics (13:26,28–29; 19:33–37; 20:9,28–29; 21:12–13). Peter also saw and heard, but did not understand as well (13:36–37; 20:6–9; 21:7,15–17,20–21) about the resurrection and following Christ. Did this foreshadow a "Johannine"-Petrine conflict concerning the understanding of these events? How else can one explain the emphasis on the spiritual insight and perception in which the beloved disciple excelled? This discernment rested on a unique ἀγάπη-relationship with Jesus. He entrusted to the disciple closest to him secret knowledge of Iscariot and the custody of the heritage of true Judaism. Jesus expected him best to understand his final revelations and meditations (ch.13–17). It was especially important that he heard and interpreted Christ's final promises, warnings and instructions to the church, including his words about apostolic rank and duties and the role of the Paraclete. Having been initiated into the most intimate knowledge of the person and words of Christ³⁵, he had

³¹ The Johannine Circle, London 1975, 74; cf. J. N. Sanders, Difficulties with Identifying the Beloved Disciple with John of Zebedee, in F. L. Cross (ed.), *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, London 1957, 82; Lorenzen (n.1), 79.

³² Ap. James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *John and Qumran*, London 1972, 193.

³³ Cullmann (n.31), 77.

³⁴ *Johannine Ecclesiology – The Community's Origins*, Interpretation 31 (1977), 386; R.E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, New York 1979 & Toronto 31–32.

³⁵ P. Le Fort, *Les structures de l'église militante selon Saint Jean*, Geneve 1970, 152, 181.

the authority to speak in His name as the mediator of His words and signs and their interpretation. "As Jesus is the only 'exegete' and 'revealer' of the Father, the beloved disciple is the 'exegete of Jesus' in a special way."³⁶ Through the Fourth Gospel the best understanding of Christ's teaching has been preserved because of this disciple's witness.³⁷

Though no special claim is made for the beloved disciple as the recipient of the Paraclete-Spirit, his ability to remember and interpret as the most reliable voice of tradition presupposes that his unique relationship of love with Jesus persisted after his ascension. If this disciple did not receive the promises of 14:21–26; 16:12–14, who did? The Paraclete is promised to those who love and obey Christ (14:15–16); in this he excelled. While not agreeing with Kragerud³⁸ that this disciple personified the Paraclete and symbolically represented wandering prophets, apostles and teachers, R.A. Culpepper³⁹ rightly points out the similarities of function of the Paraclete and the beloved disciple: namely, teaching, reminding and witnessing concerning the truth and being sent by Jesus. As the Paraclete-Spirit works through the inspired beloved disciple, he serves as the Evangelist's model in transmitting tradition. The Evangelist felt himself, by analogy, to be taught by the Paraclete in writing the Gospel's mediations as he remembered and interpreted the words of the beloved disciple or of John the Baptist. Hence as his Gospel grew, he added parenthetical explanations; he maintained the integrity of his "inspired" writing, rather than eliminate the paradoxes, which are sometimes seen as contradictions.⁴⁰ If redaction is assumed, the same reverence for the text (including its order, repetitions, awkward aporias, etc.) suggests a belief that the Paraclete had led the Evangelist into truth; nothing should be changed or lost. The Paraclete guaranteed that the Evangelist's writings and the beloved disciple's teachings were of the truth as revealed by the Son.

A. Dauer⁴¹ finds that the truthful witnessing of the beloved disciple

³⁶ Roloff (n.1), 138; Dauer (n.1), 331.

³⁷ Kragerud (n.4), 46–48; LeFort (n.35), 149.

³⁸ Kragerud (n.4), 82.

³⁹ N.23, 267–69.

⁴⁰ E. D. Freed, *Variations in the Language and Thought of John*, ZNW 55 (1964), 167–97.

⁴¹ Dauer, *Das Wort des Gekreuzigten an seine Mutter*, BZ (NF) 12 (1968), 91–92; (n.1), 333. H. Thyen (*Entwicklungen innerhalb der johanneischen Theologie...*, in

(who is the Evangelist's tradition-bearer) is the guarantee for the trustworthy witness of the Gospel, especially in the important Passion and resurrection narratives. In the signs proto-Gospel⁴² the beloved disciple functioned only as eyewitness to events for apologetic needs in promoting belief (19:35; 20:31). Thus Jesus proved his foreknowledge of his betrayer; because Jesus revealed his identity only to this witness but not the meaning of his words to Iscariot, nobody stopped him from leaving. This answered the question why not? Moreover, in fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus' legs were not broken. His blood was shed to wash away sin (19:32–37; cf. I Jn 1:7; 2:2) and give life (cf. 4–14; 6:51–58; 20:31). In later-written sections of the Gospel this disciple continues as a witness to signs, namely, resurrection appearances. But his unique role in later sections (including 19:25–27; 20:2–10, 21–29; 21) is to excel in a sort of competition with Peter. At the Last Supper, although being the special recipient of Christ's love and confidence, he had not yet demonstrated his primacy in loyalty and insight. But outside the proto-Gospel he is vested with theological authority to cope with misuse of a tradition which made Peter proponent of objectionable teachings. To undercut such claims the Fourth Evangelist taught that the beloved disciple was more perceptive than Peter; his Paraclete-inspired witnessing was longer-lasting and closer.⁴³ He had received custody of true Judaism in the form of Mary. Presumably Peter was being claimed as teacher⁴⁴ of O.T. exegesis (cf. 20:9) and a Christology and Soteriology which contradicted what our Evangelist and his followers had "heard from the beginning" (I–II Jn). The Evangelist's own

L'Évangile de Jean, ed M. de Jonge, Gembloux & Leuven, 1977, 292–93) notes the role of a real apostolic, tradition-bearing eyewitness in "canonization."

⁴² For a summary of recent discussions of the issue see R. Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel*, Minneapolis 1975, 13 ff. We assume that in the original form of the Gospel (i.e. of signs) the beloved disciple appeared in only its last half: 13:1a, 2–30, 36–38; 18:1b–13, 15a, 17–37, 38b–40; 19:1–24, 28–20:1, 11–20, 30–31; a study on the subject is planned.

⁴³ Brown, *The Community*, 84. Bultmann (n.28), 717, finds the purpose of ch.21 (especially vv.15–23) "is to substantiate the ecclesiastical authority of this Gospel"; Peter's authority passed over to the beloved disciple.

⁴⁴ B. B. Bacon, *The Motivation of John 21.15–25*, JBL 50 (1931), 74, 78; cf. Lorenzen (n.1), 108–09. Lindars (n.3), 620, correctly thinks "it possible that the Church of the Johannine circle needs to defend its position against those who claim to derive their authority from Peter."

church⁴⁵ became caught up in a theological controversy which appealed to, and made rivals of, the two disciples. "The community secured its own position by placing its hero, the Beloved Disciple, alongside Simon Peter and showing his primacy in love."⁴⁶ The community recognized the beloved disciple's existing authority⁴⁷ and appealed to him as the best *interpreter* of what he had seen.

J. N. Sanders⁴⁸ thought an apparently "deliberate attempt to denigrate Peter" could "most plausibly be accounted for in terms of tensions and conflicts within the early church..." W. W. Watty⁴⁹ believes that the writer uses "anonymity as response to a pastoral situation which seems to have necessitated a corrective to a developing Petrine tradition. 'Peter' stands for a negative strain in the gospel (6:68–71; 13:6–11, 36; 18:11). The name... highlights... what the evangelist wishes to correct, ...a category of discipleship, a tradition." S. Agourides⁵⁰ keenly deduces that the beloved disciple's favorable comparison to Peter signifies that he

"is in a position to correct traditions founded on the authority of Peter, or rather false interpretations of the Marcan Gospel relating to events in the life of Christ... (and) to counteract ideas relating to... Peter's superior authority. These ideas were based on a misunderstanding of the Synoptic tradition."

While Bultmann⁵¹ admitted that the determination of apostolic authority was important in the struggle against emerging heresies (as I John shows), he denied mention of this in Jn 21. However, in sections later added to the original signs gospel, the beloved disciple is witness to truths also inimical to the opponents in the Letters of John: namely, the "new" commandment of love as test of discipleship (13:34–35; 14:23–24; 21:17, 19; I Jn 2:5–9; 3:11, 14–15, 17–19, 23; 4:8, 20–21; II Jn 5–6) and confession of the tangible risen Jesus as "my God" (13:31–32; 20:25, 27–29; 21:13; I Jn 1:1–2; 4:1–3, 15; 5:20; II Jn 7).

According to Irenaeus (*adv. haer.* iii, 2. 7), "those who separate Jesus from the Christ and say that the Christ remained *impassibilis*, but that Jesus suffered, prefer that Gospel which is according to Mark." This Gospel was the one most amenable to an Adoptionist non-incarnationist⁵² misinterpretation. The Spirit came down into (εἰς) Jesus as a dove

⁴⁵ Cf. somewhat different views summarized by Mahoney (n. 22), 234–35; Kysar (n. 42), 100–01; Culpepper (n. 23), 265. Lorenzen (n. 1), 87–89, 96, rightly calls attention to the disciple's importance for the Johannine community and its disagreement with Jerusalem or Rome or with Petrine Jewish-oriented Christianity.

⁴⁶ Peter in the N.T., 147.

⁴⁷ Schnackenburg (n. 1), iii, 455.

⁴⁸ N. 8, 422–23.

⁴⁹ The Significance of Anonymity in the Fourth Gospel, ET 90 (1979), 211.

⁵⁰ N. 12, 5; cf. 3, 7.

⁵¹ N. 28, 717, n. 2.

⁵² Mark's lack of a Virgin Birth narrative would also please Cerinthus. There are two types of anti-incarnationism: the Son-Christ-Logos (of life) coming and leaving in the form of the Spirit and being temporarily spliced with the fleshly Jesus (i.e. Cerinthianism),

(1:10). The voice from heaven addressed him or the Spirit, "Thou art my beloved son..." (1:11; cf. 9:7: Shekinah as Son?). "The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness" (1:12). "And angels ministered to him" (1:13). Only then he began his ministry of preaching and healing (1:14 ff.). The cry by "Jesus" from the cross, "My God, my God (15:34; cf. Gosp. Peter 5.19: 'My power, my power'), why hast thou forsaken me?", could have suggested a separation of Jesus and the divine power in him, as in a widely accepted reading of I Jn 4:3 (λύει, i.e. *solvit*).⁵³ Usually when Jesus is called the Christ or Son of God, it is on the lips of his persecutors (Mk 14:61; 15:32, 39) or the deranged (3:11; 5:7; cf. 1:24); it could be claimed that Jesus did not openly accept the title (8:29–30). Cerinthus, while preferring Mark for these texts, would prefer Mt 26:63–64 ("You have said so") to Mk 14:62 ("I am" [the Christ]). Epiphanius (*Haer.* 28, 5.1; 30, 14.2) unreliably attributes to Cerinthus the use of a form of Matthew and (51, 7.3) the composition of his own Gospel. A final reason for the heretical preference for Mark is that it teaches little about true disciples' "new" commandment of love (12:30–33).

Opponents in the (Gospel and) Letters of John could have appealed also to the beginnings of a (secret) tradition of Mark such as the letter of Clement of Alexandria to Theodor⁵⁴ describes. Is it by accident that Carpocrates later appealed to secret Marcan teachings and that his Christology resembled that of Cerinthus (Irenaeus *adv. haer.* i, 25.1; 26.1–2), the traditional Johannine opponent? Or that the ethical insensitivities charged against opponents in I Jn (1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 9, 11; 3:4–12, 14–15; 4:8) and the sensuality attributed to Cerinthus (Dionysius Alex. *ap.* Eusebius, H.E. vii, 25.3; cf. iii, 28.2; I Jn 2:15–17; 4:4–6; 5:4–5) may be connected with the later libertinism of Carpocrates?

Whatever the extent to which Johannine opponents appealed to written or oral Marcan teachings⁵⁵, Mark's traditional association with

and Deity "seeming" to become, and suffer in flesh (i.e. true Docetism). All Christological texts in I Jn (1:1–3; 2:1–2, 22–23; 4:1–3, 14–15; 5:1, 5–8, 20) and II Jn (7, 9) contradict Cerinthianism, though some could apply to anti-incarnationism in general. See K. Wengst, *Häresie und Orthodoxie im Spiegel des ersten Johannesbriefes*, Gütersloh 1976, 31, n. 50.

⁵³ Its defenders have included J.B. Lightfoot, Zahn, Harnack, Chaîne, Preisker, Büchsel, O. Piper, Schnackenburg and Bultmann.

⁵⁴ M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, Mass. 1973.

⁵⁵ Our hypothesis is the antithesis of that which specifies John Mark as the beloved disciple (bibliogr. in Kragerud (n. 4), 45, n. 14; J.E. Bruns, *John Mark: A Riddle within the Johannine Enigma*, *Scrip.* 15 [1963], 88, nn. 4–5; 89, n. 1; F. Neirynck, *The "other Disciple" in Jn 18, 15–16*, *EThL* 51 [1975], 123–24). But if the maturity of John Mark in Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37 is uncertain, his reliability is all the more open to question fifteen to twenty years *earlier*, when Jesus so esteemed his discipleship and spiritual perception. Paul later felt so strongly against taking Mark on another journey that he split with his companion Barnabas over the issue. Would Paul dare to reject the favorite of Jesus? Or had Jesus misjudged his best friend? Col 4:10 indicates that Mark spiritually grew rather than deteriorated. Would the young man of Mk 14:51–52 (who is often

Peter enhances the likelihood that later-written portions of the Gospel of John reflect a response to an incipient or early schismatic (I Jn 2–19; cf. Jn 6:60–66; 10:12–13) appeal to “Petrine” tradition. The Fourth Evangelist’s increasing emphasis on the beloved disciple’s primacy in spiritual perspicacity presupposes that he was being unfavorably compared to Peter by those whose theology was allegedly Petrine. Perhaps “Johannine” irony appears in the command to Peter, “Feed my sheep.” “The good shepherd protects his sheep from the wolf... (10:11 ff.). This could be symbolic for protecting them from heresy (Acts 20:28–30”⁵⁶; cf. Mt 7:15).

The beloved disciple as the most reliable witness functioned in two ways: as an *apologist* to enhance faith and as the foremost *interpreter* of revealed truth, in anticipation of doubters and heretics (see above). As the Gospel recorded his testimony for these two purposes, his authority had to be enhanced for both unbelievers and believers who ignored or questioned it. In spite of leaving tantalizing clues which have invited so much analysis and speculation, the Evangelist did choose to leave the beloved disciple not merely unidentified but deliberately anonymous.⁵⁷ This is the case for the Gospel as a whole and for 21:2 in particular, where the two disciples are “purposely not named..., so as to leave the question of the Beloved Disciple unanswered.”⁵⁸ There is no reason to believe that the silence which is observed in 21:7 and everywhere else is broken in 21:2 with the mention of the sons of Zebedee⁵⁹ – or any of the

thought to be Mark) present himself before the high priest’s staff (Jn 18:15–17)? But the latter passage is just as untenable (see below, pp. 39–40) a basis for identifying the beloved disciple as speculation on the name of John.

⁵⁶ Peter and the New Testament, 142.

⁵⁷ W. Watty (n.49), 209, 210, points out the author’s “tendency to precision” in identifying persons and places and his effort to prove “his personal and intimate knowledge of his subject down to the minutest... details.” It is “inconceivable that... anonymity was due to inadequate information or lapses of memory.”

⁵⁸ Lindars (n.3), 624; cf. 33; Minear (n.5), 105: intentional hiding of his name.

⁵⁹ Cullmann (n.31), 76. That they should be dissociated from the Fourth Gospel has been shown by P. Parker (John the Son of Zebedee and the Fourth Gospel, JBL 81 [1962], 35–43) and O. Merlier (Le quatrième Evangile. La question Johannique, Athens, 1961, 200 ff.). Bibliogr. in F. Neirynck, The “Other Disciple” in Jn 18,15–16, Eph. Th. Lov. 51 (1975), 114, n.4. The intolerant, fiery, belligerent, vengeful, bold and self-seeking disposition of the son or thunder (or wrath) contrasts with the loveable, passive virtues taught and exemplified by Jesus. John’s narrow-minded aggressiveness and love of pre-eminence, in contrast with kinship of spiritual insight of the beloved disciple and Jesus, led to

other disciples named here. The fact that *two* disciples are left anonymous underlines the writer's determination to surround his witness with mystery. The reader's attention lingers on them and suggests an association with the persistently unnamed beloved disciple. The Evangelist does not name the mother and brothers of Jesus because he wanted to de-emphasize their relation to one who had "come down from heaven, sent out by the Father"; cf. the hostile function of their naming in Mt 13:55 and Mk 6:3.

The masking of the beloved disciple's identity suggests that his reputation was somewhat esoteric, or at least his name did not evoke a universal esteem among potential readers which was commensurate with his excellences. His anonymity suggests that he was unjustly considered a lesser apostle in a wider circle of potential readers. His authority to witness and explain was enhanced more by describing him, while leaving his identity obscure, than by citing his name. He was obviously much less of a luminary than Peter: a status unbefitting the sons of Zebedee, for example. Such distinguished names would not be concealed. Accordingly, we should not expect to learn much of the beloved disciple from other sources. Even his apparent survival as (one of) the last of the Lord's disciples (21:22–23) did not endow his name with the instant recognition and authority which the Evangelist's community desired for its tradition-bearer and exegete.⁶⁰ He remained relatively little known to the church as a whole because either the Evangelist's community was outside the mainstream or because the disciple spent nearly all of his ministry in an area such as Palestine, where linguistic, religious, racial and cultural differences and political developments cut him off from Diaspora Christendom. He was not "popularized", for example, by missionary work in the Pauline or Petrine communities in which nearly all NT writings originated. His custody of the true Israel, which Mary symbolized, suggests his association with such partially isolated concentrations of Hebrew Christians as Palestine, Mesopotamia or Alexandria.⁶¹ The circle surrounding the Evan-

corrections by Jesus (Mk 9:38–39; 10:35–37; Lk 9:49–50, 54). Furthermore, Jesus' predictions of the martyrdom of Peter (21:18–19, 22) and John (Mk 10:39) contrast with the belief that the beloved disciple was "not to die" (Jn 21:23).

⁶⁰ Schnackenburg (n.1), iii, 460; Roloff (n.1), 142.

⁶¹ J.J. Gunther, *The Alexandrian Gospel and Letters of John*, CBQ 41 (1979), 596–99.

gelist was cognizant of that disciple's eminent teaching authority, though nearby dissenting Christians appealed to the prestigious Marcan-Petrine tradition. But to gain credence among his own followers, the Evangelist would have had (1) to make known at least orally the name of the beloved disciple and (2) himself to have been an official "hearer" of that disciple; or the beloved disciple would have had to have spent some time in the Evangelist's community.

The disciple's stature in the universal church and in the Evangelist's community suggests that he was among the least known of the *Twelve*. Anyone specially loved by Jesus would necessarily gravitate toward *membership* in the Twelve. Unless we are prepared to dismiss the Fourth Gospel's portrait of his close kinship to Jesus as a mere "sales pitch" undergirding the Gospel's credibility, we must assume that Jesus esteemed him enough to include him among the Twelve or perhaps to leave directions that he take Iscariot's place. Could he have entrusted Mary to someone who was outside both the Twelve and his own family? Could the Evangelist have seen Mary (who was that disciple's responsibility) as representing true Israel, or could he have idealized him, if he were outside the Twelve? Mary Magdalene, upon seeing the stone rolled away from the tomb, "went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved", and told them (20:2). This implied parity or semi-rivalry suggests that each represented a different group of followers of Jesus.⁶² Peter, Andrew, James and John constituted one grouping (Mk 1:16–20, 29; 13:3; 14:33), the most important. The beloved disciple is associated with an anonymous disciple by the Sea of Galilee (21:2), the family of Jesus (19:25–26) and guests at the Last Supper, in addition to Peter. This suggests that he was a member of both the Twelve and another group, such as his family and their friends.

Though the Fourth Gospel names at most eight of the disciples (counting Nathanael and Judas [not Iscariot]) and suggests their incohesiveness (16:32; 20:24; 21:2), he does equate "the disciple" and the Twelve in the last two chapters (20:24–25; cf. 8–10, 18–20, 26, 30; 21:1, 2, 4, 8, 12, 14). The beloved disciple was ostensibly not included in the prophecy that each (ἐχαστος) disciple would abandon Jesus and scatter to his own house (16:32; cf. 19:25–27). Thus the Evangelist allows for exceptions and overlappings in his general, loose groupings.

⁶² Cullmann (n. 31), 76.

Probably the beloved disciple was (among) the last who joined the Twelve. If the most perceptive disciple were slow in being called, the Evangelist as an apologist might prefer to ignore the paradox. If the beloved disciple were among the first two to follow Jesus, would not the Evangelist have honored him by saying so and referred, at least cryptically, to his primacy in discipleship, love and understanding? Peter and Nathanael were characterized by their call (1:42, 47). M.C. Tenney⁶³ asks: "If he accompanied Jesus through the ministry . . . , why should not there be more frequent references to his presence?" Why should he not (re)appear until the Last Supper? Because he appears abruptly at the beginning of the Passion narrative (13:23), we may conclude either that he only gradually attached himself to Jesus, or that the Evangelist passed over in silence the lateness of his call or omitted his call because he chose not to reveal *why* Jesus favored him above all others. Each of these explanations could apply to the first of Jesus' brothers to become a believer. They were still unbelievers in 7:5. Significant virtues would be needed for one of them, especially the youngest, to leave his family for Jesus.

If the Twelve were not chosen until toward the end of Jesus' ministry, then the inclusion of one of his brothers is quite possible. There is no certainty as to when, or even if⁶⁴, Jesus made his final choice of the Twelve to "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30). In the context of the Last Supper Luke relates this promise by Jesus to those who had continued with him. Matthew locates the words (to those who had "left everything and followed" him) during the final journey to Jerusalem (ch. 19–20). Both Mt (20:21–23) and Mk (10:37–40) locate in this setting the request that the sons of Zebedee sit by his side in the kingdom. Since this request presupposes the choice of the Twelve to sit on thrones, it was probably occasioned by their fairly recent selection, either in Judea or Perea (Mt 19:1; Mk 10:1; Lk 17:11; Jn 10:40; 11:54). In behalf of a late date would be the need to test his disciples as long as possible. He had seen many come and go (Jn 6:66–67; 8:31). Others remained in danger of falling away due to

⁶³ The Author's Testimony to Himself, BS 120 (1963), 221; see Lorenzen (n.1), 37–46; Dauer (n.1), 320.

⁶⁴ On the dating of the Twelve's appointment see the bibliogr. in W. Bauer, *The Picture of the Apostle . . .*, in E. Hennecke & W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Philadelphia ii (1965), 35; cf. 28. On the general question see G. Schille, *Die urchristliche Kollegialmission*, Zürich & Stuttgart 1967.

family pressures, health problems, hardships of travel and hiding, discouragement or fear, personal or religious disagreements, etc. More worthy disciples, hopefully including some of his brothers, might be called.

There are anachronisms (e.g. “apostles” and rules in persecution) in the report that the “Twelve” were chosen and sent out to preach the coming Kingdom while they were still in Galilee (Mt 10:1–16; Mk 3:13–19; 6:7–11; Lk 9:1–6; cf. 6:13–16). A similar commissioning of the Seventy appears in Lk 10:1–20. Those who survived these tests eventually viewed their experience as the formal beginning of an institution. The Fourth Gospel superficially antedates the final unity of the Twelve in 6:67, 70. There is no other simple way in which the Evangelist could have designated the stabler inner group, including Iscariot (versus the unstable wider group of disciples: 6:14–15, 66; 7:3; 8:31) than by the use of the customary designation, “the Twelve”. This term may mean only eleven disciples (20:24; cf. I Cor 15:5) and cannot be pressed numerically. Jesus asks them, “Will you also go away?” When Peter professes their faith, Jesus replies that one of them is a devil. The falling away of Galilean disciples is suggestively followed by an account of the increasing interest of his brothers in his work (7:3–4, 6). By implication they heard Jesus reveal himself orally in Jerusalem (7:10–52).

If the beloved disciple were a brother of Jesus who was the last of the Twelve to follow him, then we should look for his *name* near the end or bottom of the lists in the Synoptic Gospels, which portray the family of Jesus as hostile to his mission (Mk 3:21, 31–35; 6:4; Mt 12:46–50; 13:57; Lk 8:19–21; 11:27–28),⁶⁵ and which omit mention of Jesus’ special love for any disciple. None of the Gospels describes the calls of the last four disciples on each list. The highest rank is held by those who followed Jesus “beginning from the baptism of John” (Acts 1:22) and those called soon afterward by the Sea of Galilee. Of the last three named members of the Twelve (James of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas of James [Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus]) only “Judas (not Iscariot)” seems to appear in the Fourth Gospel (14:22). Coincidentally the brothers of Jesus included a James, Simon and Judas (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3). Elsewhere⁶⁶ we hope to show that Judas (not Iscariot) was the Lord’s brother and received hypocoristic names based on *tad* (breast) and *leb* (heart, understanding).

Jn 14 reveals that Judas (not Iscariot) is more perceptive than Philip. The latter wanted the Greeks to see Jesus (12:20–23), and the disciples

⁶⁵ J. J. Gunther, *The Family of Jesus*, *EvQ* 46 (1974), 33–35.

⁶⁶ Cf. n. 65.

to see the Father (14:8–9); Judas wanted the world to see the returning Lord. He believed that Christ would return and manifest himself to, and be seen by, those who love and obey him (14:15 ff.), though he did not understand the exclusion of the world from this manifestation (and the Father's love –?). But Philip did not even recognize that the Father dwells in, and is revealed and seen in Christ (14:1, 7–11); he did not know Jesus as a manifestation of the Father. Philip was reprimanded by Jesus because they had been together so long (14:9) and he should have known better. M.-E. Boismard⁶⁷ correctly identifies the unnamed disciple in 1:37–40⁶⁸ as Philip. Ironically he, one of the first two disciples to hear the testimony of John the Baptist, to follow Jesus, to address him as “Rabbi” and to dwell with him two days – understood his teachings less than the last of the Twelve.

Judas Iscariot is also implicitly compared to the ideal beloved disciple. Iscariot is the antitype: the idealized negative disciple. As B. Lindars⁶⁹ observes, the beloved disciple is “what Judas is not, a loyal companion who understands the mind of Jesus.” Iscariot did not understand Mary's act of Love and devotion toward Jesus in anointing

⁶⁷ Les traditions johanniques concernant le Baptiste, RB 70 (1963), 39–42. Andrew and his companion (i.e. Philip) were disciples of John who were looking for the Messiah and who found him through the witness of John (1:35–38), through whom all men were to believe (1:7). Andrew and Philip, who were from the same town (1:44), always appear together (cf. Mk 3:18; Acts 1:13) in continuing the chain of proselytizing witnesses, begun with the Baptist, who bring all men to Christ. Andrew *πρῶτος* and then Philip found Simon and Nathanael (representative true Israelites), respectively, and witnessed: “we have found” the Messiah. They then brought them to Jesus (1:40–46, 48). Andrew's companion was invited by Jesus to “come” to where he dwelled and to “see” (1:38–39); similarly Philip was invited by Jesus to follow him to Galilee (1:43), and Philip himself asked Nathanael to “come and see” (1:46). Andrew and Philip later brought Greeks, who had gone up to the feast and had come to Philip, to “see” Jesus (12:21–23). They were the two disciples who had a role in the feeding of the multitude (6:5–9). As they function as a pair in the Johannine scheme of missionary witnessing, it is a reasonable inference that Philip appears incognito in 1:35–40, just as the beloved disciple appears incognito in 21:2 before being better introduced a few verses later. Moreover, Jesus reproached Philip, as one of his earliest disciples, for asking an unworthy question after having been with him so long (14:8–9).

⁶⁸ M. de Jonge (n. 23, 102–03, n. 1) points out that, as in the case of Nicodemus (3:1 ff.; 7:50; 19:39), the author in 21:20 refers back to the first time the beloved disciple is mentioned (13:23, 25); there would be “no clear function” of an allegedly implicit reference to him in ch. 1.

⁶⁹ Lindars (n. 3), 458. Bogart (n. 30, 59) writes: “Judas is the epitome of sin, the incarnation of radical unfaith.”

him (12:3–8). E.C. Hoskyns⁷⁰ noted that until Judas' departure Jesus' discourse on mutual love could not move freely (13:14–18, 31–35; 14:15 ff.). Whereas Jesus entrusted his own mother (symbol of the true Israel) to the beloved disciple, he entrusted only the money-box to Iscariot (12:6) and foresaw his betrayal. The devil, the ruler of this world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11)⁷¹, a murderer (cf. I Jn 3:12) and the father of lies (8:44), put it in Judas' heart to betray Jesus (13:2) and he entered into him (13:27). As his servant he is himself a devil (6:70).⁷² Under Satan's control he passes from the light into the outer darkness⁷³ (3:19–21; 11:10; 13:30).

Iscariot⁷⁴ acted out the role of the adversary with both Jesus (13:18) and Peter (cf. 6:67–71). As the tempter he seduced Peter into a situation where he denied he was a disciple of Jesus (18:15, 25–27): a sin amended in 21:15–18. The disciple who brought Peter into the high priest's courtyard had the sinister, devilish function of betraying Peter. Though he posed as a friend doing Peter a favor, he may have been setting a trap for Cephas as the potential ringleader of Jesus' disciples. Surely he knew that the court of the

⁷⁰ N.19, 441.

⁷¹ In this light Judas was seen as belonging to this world of unbelief and greed. His mind was set on earthly things. He was responsible for gifts to the poor (13:29) and criticized Jesus for negligence (12:4–8): their only recorded disagreement. As Iscariot had a special concern for material needs and responsibilities in this world order, both inside and outside Jesus' circle, he probably expected that in the Kingdom these would be fulfilled, and current injustices and disobedience would be rectified through divine judgment and power and apocalyptic reversal. Caesar would not be rendered unto (Mk 12:17). John the Baptist's preaching of righteous preparation and judgment (Lk 3:10–14, 17) would appeal to him. Had Jesus broken too many legal scruples and legislated on too few questions? As Jesus allegedly encouraged too much honoring of himself (Jn 12:3–5), did Judas think he had been following a human prophet who toward the end made "idolatrous" claims of coming glory as the returning Son of Man (Mk 13:26–27, 32; Mt 25:31 ff.)? Did Judas consider his fellow disciples unworthy to reign in the Kingdom (Lk 22:24)? Was Judas intolerant of weakness and disillusioned because Jesus did not prove his power against God's enemies during Passion Week? Betrayal presupposes that Judas was a zealot who thought in absolute terms of contrast; cf. J.-A. Morin, *Les deux derniers des Douze*: ..., RB 80 (1973), 346–47, 357–58. As Jesus' final actions and teachings did not measure up to Iscariot's legal and Messianic standards (including signs), he must be destroyed (Deut 13:1–11). The Fourth Evangelist saw Judas as devilish, like unbelieving Jews (8:23, 40, 44).

⁷² Sanders (n. 8), 200.

⁷³ Hoskyns (n. 19), 443.

⁷⁴ Simon his father had the same epithet (Jn 6:71; 13:2, 26). It probably means, "money-bag man", i.e. *Ish-charit* (or *k'resith* or even *scortea*). Presumably Jesus made Judas and Simon jointly responsible.

high priest, who was now the mortal enemy of Jesus, was a dangerous arena for a lone impulsive disciple, especially for one who had cut off an ear of the high priest's servant. The capturing party was standing by the fire near him (18:18); they and a kinsman of the wounded servant recognized Peter (18:25–26). The disciple who let Peter in surely knew that Peter was in no position to aid Jesus. This treacherous disciple did nothing to aid either Jesus or Peter. He simply disappears once he had gained entrance for Simon. This was his *sole* function, as pointed out by R. Bultmann, B. Lindars, A. Dauer and R. Schackenburg. Such a negative role and unavoidably sinister motives befit Judas Iscariot.⁷⁵ Who else but he was known to the chief priest (γνωστός) (18:16) and staff (18:3, 15–16; Mk 14:10; Lk 22:4) and had connections at that very moment? The maid would think the disciple whom Judas wanted to be let in was also a “traitor in the high priest's pay”.⁷⁶ Iscariot had led the capturing party to Gethsemane (Mk 14:43; Jn 18:3) and would have accompanied them back in order to avoid Peter's sword (18:10; Mk 14:47) or to give testimony against Jesus. The disciple who lured Peter into mortal danger and to his fall, followed Jesus to the high priest's court and entered “along with Jesus, while Peter stood outside at the door” (Jn 18:15–16). At this juncture no disciple could remain on friendly terms with *both* the conflicting forces of light and darkness (Mt 26:3–4, 14, 47; Jn 18:3, 14, 16, 19–24); one had to choose between following Jesus or the high priest. He who entered with Jesus and his captors and who was known to these captors and the door keeper had sided with the ruler of this world. Once he had let Peter into a trap, he disappears inside (among the witnesses against Jesus – ?), leaving Peter on his own.

The hypotheses that the beloved disciple appears in 18:15–17⁷⁷ and was himself a Jerusalem priest⁷⁸, presupposes that he who most perceptive in understanding Jesus was stupid enough to bring Peter into mortal physical and spiritual danger, and disloyal enough to associate with the forces of the unbelieving world⁷⁹ at the moment of conflict. This disciple performs no act of love. Nothing in his role or character is suggestive of the Evangelist's portrait. Peter and the beloved disciple stand in a very different relation than that assumed in 18:15–17.⁸⁰ Identifications should rest on the context rather than a faulty reading with the article. “The other disciple”, even if it were the correct text, would more naturally refer to Judas, the last named disciple with Peter (whom he betrayed), rather than to another disciple mentioned five chapters earlier. Perhaps the Evangelist did not name Iscariot in 18:15–17 because to do so would have underlined Peter's indiscretion in trusting him.

The attachment of the beloved disciple to the company of Jesus and the subsequent choice of the Twelve in the final months of his ministry left insufficient time for the development of a new – the deepest possible

⁷⁵ Bibliogr. of proponents in F. Neirynck, art. cit., EThL 51 (1975), 120, n.1.

⁷⁶ E. A. Abbott, *The Fourfold Gospel. II. The Beginning*, Cambridge 1914, 365; cf. 364: the maid asked Peter if he also (καὶ) was with Jesus (Mt 26:69).

⁷⁷ See the critique by Roloff (n.1), 131–32.

⁷⁸ Bibliogr. in Neirynck (n.75), 122–23. A priest would not be so imprecise about the relation between Annas and Caiaphas “that year” (11:49–50; 18:13, 22, 24).

⁷⁹ Dauer (n.1), 75; cf. Neirynck, 117.

⁸⁰ Bultmann (n.28), 646, 4.4; Dauer (n.1), 74.

human – friendship. A brother, however, would not have to stand such a long test of time, either to become a member of the Twelve or to become the recipient of Jesus' greatest love or to gain the profoundest understanding of his thought. Most apt to sit by the Lord's side and lean on his bosom would be a brother who finally believed in him. Who but a brother could receive the special attention of Jesus without violating the other disciples' sense of propriety and equity? Why did the Evangelist not reveal the basis of the special love? If its foundation were described as a blood relationship, the reader might not appreciate the transcendent quality of this love and the special authority which it brought to the beloved disciple and his testimony.

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