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JOHN AND JOHN MARK

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AT dinner one night, some of us fell to discussing the absurdly long roster of candidates for authorship of the Fourth Gospel: John the son of Zebedee; an unknown elder of Ephesus; an equally unknown Jerusalem disciple; a committee of followers of one of these; Nathanael, Lazarus, Theophilus, Matthias, and even Judas Iscariot. At last one of the group said with a grin, "Maybe it was John Mark!"

The words were spoken in jest, but they stayed in the writer's mind. The more he thought about them, the more he recognized that Mark and the Fourth Evangelist *are* in fact linked, by a remarkable series of coincidences. Some of these are set forth here, in the hope that they may elicit the comments of fellow NT students.

I. The Career of John Mark

The known facts about John Mark are hard to square with his authorship of the Second Gospel. They would fit beautifully with his authorship of the Fourth.

1. John Mark lived in Jerusalem. There is no record that he ever was in Galilee. Yet the Second Gospel devotes most of its attention to Galilee. When it gets to Jerusalem it is hesitant, and shows little familiarity with that city. The Fourth Evangelist, on the other hand, allots four-fifths of his book to Jerusalem and Judea, less than a sixth to Galilee. He shows detailed and, so far as can be judged, accurate knowledge of Jerusalem and its environs; and there is more than one hint that that was indeed his home (e.g., John 18 15; 19 27; 20 1-4, 10).

2. John Mark seems to have been of priestly family. His cousin Barnabas was a Levite (Col 4 10; Acts 4 36). The epithet *κολοβοδάκτυλος*, early applied to Mark, was taken by some to mean that he had mutilated one or more fingers so as to get out of the Temple service.¹ Yet the Second Gospel shows little interest in, or knowledge of, either the Temple or the priesthood. There is no reference to sacrificial lambs. The Law, so essential to the priesthood, is not once mentioned by name. The Fourth Evangelist, in contrast, is profoundly interested in the

¹ So the Vulgate preface, cod. Toletanus. Other Vulgate prefaces say Mark was of the priestly class. The tradition that he was *κολοβοδάκτυλος* is reiterated by Hippolytus, *Philos.* vii. 30, and in the Anti-Marcionite Prologue.

Temple, and puts most of Jesus' discourses there. In fact, he seems actually to build his chronology around the Jewish calendar of feasts. He uses the figure of the sacrificial lamb (1 29, 36) and, alone of the canonical Four, makes Jesus' death coincide with the Passover slayings. He cites or refers to the Torah fourteen separate times.² He recounts the doings of the priestly group at Jerusalem.³ The unnamed disciple, we are expressly told, knew the high priest, and could give orders to the high priest's maid and be obeyed (18 15 f.). And there is an ancient tradition that the Fourth Evangelist was, in fact, of the priestly caste and at one time wore the *πέταλον*.⁴

3. John Mark was evidently a person of means. He was able to travel about on his own. His Jerusalem home had a porch, and a guest-chamber big enough to house a concourse of the brethren, and was served by a maid (Acts 12 12-17). The Second Gospel shows little knowledge of the wealthy classes. It tells of the poor and the outcast, and of Jesus' compassion for these. The Fourth Gospel says little about the poor. Instead, Jesus is in constant touch with Jewish leaders, or the affluent, or homeowners. He even goes to Golgotha wearing a fine robe (19 23). Perhaps these Johannine features can be squared with the Synoptic picture. Plainly, however, the concern of the Fourth Evangelist is with just those groups that one would expect in a well-to-do follower of Christ.

4. If the Last Supper was in Mark's house, then Mark (or perhaps his father) must have been the host. Yet the Second Gospel describes the preparation of the Supper from, as it were, the outside (14 12-16). Disciples are *sent* to *find* the house, they ask for the host, and are shown what to do. In the Fourth Gospel no such searching out is described. Indeed John 13 1 f. reads exactly as it would if written from the host's own standpoint. And if the place of honor at Jesus' right hand was occupied by some one not of the Twelve, that would almost certainly be the host himself.⁵

5. John Mark, as a companion of Paul, was exposed to Paul's doc-

² 1 17; 1 45; 3 14; 5 54 f.; 6 32 f.; 7 19; 7 22 f.; 7 49; 7 51; 8 17; 9 28 f.; 18 31; 19 7; 19 36. The Psalms also are called *νόμος* at 10 34; 12 34; 15 25.

³ 1 19 f.; 7 44 f.; 11 47-53, 56; 12 10, 42 f.; 18; 19 21 f. Also "the Jews" seems frequently to mean the priestly group, e.g., at 2 18 f.; 5 10 f.; 7 11 f., 30 f.; 8 22; 18 29-32.

⁴ Eusebius, *H. E.* III.xxxi.3; V.xxiv.3 f. Bernard, in the *Gospel According to St. John* ("ICC"), vol. ii, p. 595, quotes a legend which Valois gave as a note on *H. E.* V. xxiv: "Beatum Marcum juxta ritum carnalis sacrificii pontificalis apicis petalum in populo gestasse Judaeorum . . . ex quo manifeste datur intelligi de stirpe eum Levitica, imo pontificis Aaron sacrae successionis originem habuisse." This is very close to Polycrates' description of *John*.

⁵ Also in the Second Gospel (14 18-20) when Jesus is asked who will betray him, he answers, "It is one of the Twelve," implying that at least one other besides these was in the room.

trines of righteousness, justification, salvation, light and darkness, Wisdom Christology, "the image of the invisible God," preëxistence, the ultimate restoration of Israel, union with Christ, life in the Spirit. None of these ideas appears to any extent in the Second Gospel. All of them, while couched in a non-Pauline vocabulary, are reflected prominently in the Fourth.

6. Every time Paul mentions Mark, he mentions Luke too (Col 4 10, 14; Philemon 24; cf. II Tim 4 10 f.). Mark was evidently of very different temperament and training from Paul's "beloved physician," but the two Evangelists must long have worked in the same areas, and shared similar experiences and similar oral traditions. Now while Luke makes large drafts on the Second Gospel, his relation to it is entirely *literary*. There is no sign that he and the Second Evangelist had had common experiences or listened to the same oral traditions.

Just such a common background *is* suggested when we compare the Third Gospel with the Fourth. Both these Evangelists discuss their own writing tasks (Luke 1 1-3; John 21 24 f.). Both are interested, far more than the others, in Samaria and Judea, in Jerusalem and in the Temple. Both place the feeding of the five thousand on the eastern shore of the lake (Luke 9 10; John 6 1). Neither speaks of any extensive Galilean ministry after that feeding and, in both, Peter's confession follows it immediately. Both show special interest in Jesus' mother; describe the sisters Mary and Martha; and tell of some one named Lazarus, whose return from death would fail to convert the nation. In writing of John the Baptist, both stress his *name* and his divine commission, give far more of his teaching than the other Gospels do, tell of popular wonder as to whether he was the Messiah; yet are exceedingly sketchy about his imprisonment. Both stress, more than the other Gospels, the inclusiveness of the word "disciple."⁶ Both say that Satan entered into Judas Iscariot (Luke 22 3; John 13 27). In both, Jesus tells Peter of the latter's restoration and commands him henceforth to lead the young Church (Luke 22 31 f.; John 21 15 ff.). Both describe Passovers before the last one, are interested in chronology, and in Jesus' age. Each describes a miraculous catch of fish.⁷ Each details the charges against Jesus and, in each, Pilate three times declares Jesus innocent. Both Luke and John have two angels at the tomb, tell what Mary Magdalene said to the Eleven, and report the disciples' visit to the sepulchre.⁸ The earliest Resurrection appearances are in or near Jeru-

⁶ Luke 6 13, 17; 14 25-27, 33; 19 37; Acts 6 1 f., 7; 9 10, 26; 15 10; 16 1; John 4 1; 6 60 f., 66 f.; 7 3; 8 31; 9 27 f.; 19 38; 21 1 f.

⁷ And both Luke 5 10 and John 21 2 make separate mention of "the sons of Zebedee." This was, then, part of their common tradition and is no more a signature of authorship in John than it is in Luke.

⁸ John 20 3-10; Luke 24 24. Cf. Luke 24 12 (NABWΘ *et al.*).

saalem, and include one in the upper room. The disciples at first fail to recognize Jesus, and he asks them to verify his physical reality by touching him. Both authors refer to the Ascension (Luke 24 50 ff.;⁹ John 3 13; 6 62). As is often remarked, even John 14–16 would seem more appropriate to the pre-Ascension period: its content closely resembles Acts 1 4–8, though the wording is utterly different. In Christology, Luke has fewer signs of a Messianic secret than have the other Synoptics, while John has none at all. Both Luke and John use “son of man” frequently before Peter’s confession,¹⁰ yet neither has nearly as much apocalyptic as have the other Gospels. Only in Luke and John is Jesus able to slip miraculously through a crowd (Luke 4 29 f.; John 8 59). Only in these are we told that his followers “saw his glory” (Luke 9 32; John 1 14).

In fact, by the present writer’s count, John has some 120 points of agreement with Luke against the first two Gospels. This is about five times as many as its contacts with Matthew alone, or with the Second Gospel alone, or with those two against Luke. While such a count is bound to be rough, it is nonetheless plain that the Third Gospel is related to the Fourth in a way completely unmatched by the other Synoptics. Yet these agreements are usually put in very different language, and set within totally different contexts and circumstances. The situation is precisely like that of two authors, of widely variant personality and education, who worked for a time in the same areas and shared a common oral tradition. That is what Luke and John Mark did.

7. John Mark seems, at least early in his career, to have been a Judaizer. Paul dubs him “of the circumcision,” which recalls Paul’s description of Peter’s mission to Jews (Col 4 10 f.; Gal 2 7 f.). Mark had gone with Paul among the synagogues of Cyprus, but when Paul set out to preach to gentiles Mark left him and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13 4–13). If Gal 2 and Acts 15 cover the same events, then Paul’s quarrel with Barnabas and Mark was, in part, over Judaizing. Thereupon Barnabas and Mark went right back to Cyprus where previously they had worked among Jews only.

Yet the Second Gospel comes down heavily, even polemically, on the gentile side of the Judaizing controversy.¹¹ If the Fourth Gospel reflects little concern over the question, it certainly fails to take the gentile side. Indeed, it speaks of circumcision without the slightest hint that that posed any problem to the author or his readers (John 7 22 f.).

8. The next point is closely related to what was just said. So far as

⁹ Probably, also, Luke 9 51, where ἀναλήψεως would more readily apply to the Ascension than to the Passion.

¹⁰ Luke 5 24; 6 5, 22; 7 34; John 1 52; 3 13, 14; 5 27; 6 27, 53, 62.

¹¹ See Pierson Parker, *The Gospel Before Mark* (Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1953), pp. 87–115.

the NT indicates, all of John Mark's missionary work was among Jews of the Diaspora.¹² Of the canonical Gospels, however, only the Fourth ever mentions the Diaspora (7 35). To this author, "Greek" seems to mean "Greek-speaking Jew" (7 35; 12 20), and even John 10 16 and 11 52 could as readily refer to Diaspora Judaism as to a more universal community. John never explains matters familiar to Jews outside Palestine: circumcision, the Feast of Dedication, Passover,¹³ Christ, Jerusalem, Samaria, Moses, Abraham, the Law. But it carefully elucidates whatever such people might *not* know: the meanings of Semitic words, details of Jerusalem geography, and the like. His purpose, the author says, is to establish that Jesus is Messiah (20 31). In Acts (9 20, 22; 13 32 f.; 17 2 f.; 18 5, 18) that was expressly the burden of Christian argument in the *synagogues*.

9. John Mark was a companion of Peter. On release from prison, Peter resorts at once to Mark's home (Acts 12 12 ff.). Years later he can call Mark "my son" or, at least, can be represented as doing so (I Pet 5 13). The bond between the two men is recalled again and again in early Christian writings. Yet the Second Gospel says less about Peter than does any of the other three. It, alone, never so much as hints at Peter's appointment to leadership. True, it records as though they were reminiscences some events in which Peter took part; but others had taken part too, and the stories could just as easily have come from, say, John or James. This playing down of Peter is sometimes attributed to the latter's "reticence." But Peter was not a reticent man. Besides, need *Mark* have been so modest about his friend?

The Fourth Evangelist displays no such hesitation. He names Peter more often than any other Gospel writer does. His story of Peter's shame is the gentlest of all. His story of Peter's restoration is the longest, and the most insistent on that apostle's coming leadership. Still more decisively, the rôle of the unnamed disciple is exactly that which tradition later assigned to Mark. Except for a single incident in Galilee, Peter in the Fourth Gospel is always with the unnamed disciple: at his conversion, at the Last Supper, at the high priest's house, at the other disciple's home — where, be it noted, Mary Magdalene knows that Peter will be; then at the tomb, and on the lake. And it is only that disciple for whose future Peter shows any concern.¹⁴

¹² Acts 12 25—13 13; 15 37—39; Col 4 10 f. Cf. also I Pet 5 13 with 1 1.

¹³ John 6 4 partially explains the Passover, but this was introduced without explanation at 2 13. In my article, "Two Editions of John" (*JBL*, vol. LXXV, 1956, pp. 303 ff.), it is argued that John 6 was not in the first draft of the Gospel.

¹⁴ Some have thought that the disciple of 1 35—40, 18 15 f., 19 35 and that of 13 23; 19 26 f.; 20 2—9; 21 7, 20 ff. are not the same. But they are described by the same phrases, ὁ ἄλλος, ὁ μαθητῆς ἐκείνος, and ἀκολουθῶν. Each takes a position of precedence, appears chiefly during the Passion, is at the cross, is companion and mediator for Peter,

10. Tradition further records that Mark was Peter's *ἐρμηνευτής*. There is no reason to suppose that Mark waited till late in the apostle's life to begin this service. At Jerusalem, Peter would have needed aid from the start. Now in the Fourth Gospel, the unnamed disciple constantly acts as interpreter for Peter. He relays Peter's question to Jesus, and obtains Jesus' answer. He gains Peter's admittance to the high priest's house. He precedes Peter to the tomb, and is the first to "believe." He recognizes the risen Lord, and tells Peter who it is. Always he opens the way for Peter, explains, interprets for him.

If, however, we limit *ἐρμηνευτής* to "interpreter of Peter's message," this again fits the Fourth Evangelist and no other. The most primitive account of Peter's preaching is in the Book of Acts.¹⁵ Consider, then, how constantly Peter's words, in Acts, find reflection only in John: The *λόγος* of God was sent to the people of Israel (Acts 10 36). The disciples were with Jesus from the time of John's baptism (Acts 1 21 f.; cf. especially John 15 27). Peter stresses the importance of eyewitnesses (Acts 2 32; 4 20; 5 32; 10 39, 41). These included others besides the Twelve (2 32). Peter addresses particularly the people of Judea and Jerusalem (2 14). Jesus worked *specifically in those areas* (2 22; 10 37, 39). His wonder works were "signs" (2 22). Peter cites the Torah (3 22). He underscores the divine agency and autonomy in all that has happened (2 23 f., 39; 3 18; 10 41). Yet blame fell squarely upon the Jews of Jerusalem (3 23, 36). Those who reject Christ will be condemned (3 23). Jesus since his Resurrection is to be known as Lord (2 36). Peter speaks of Christ's Ascension (1 22; 2 34; 3 21), exaltation (2 35), and the coming of the Spirit (2 38; 5 32; 10 47; 11 12, 15). *That coming was at Christ's own behest* (2 35). Jewish hearers must be persuaded that Jesus is Messiah (2 36). Notice, also, these typically "Johannine" expressions in Peter's speeches: the Father (2 33), Savior (5 31), peace (10 36), believe (10 43; 11 17), water (10 47), life (3 14), judge (10 42), *the Jews* (10 39; 12 11). Negatively, Peter's discourses contain little apocalyptic and nothing about the kingdom. This long list of correspondences has no equal in the Synoptic Gospels, and certainly not in the Second. Judging from Acts, only the Fourth Evangelist has expounded and developed Peter's own message. Thus only he merits the description, "interpreter of Peter."

11. Papias suggests, and Ireneus expressly says, that Mark wrote after Peter's death. But Clement of Alexandria says that Peter knew

is a *witness* of the things recorded; and of each it is insisted that "his witness is true." It is most unlikely that two different men would be given such identical rôles in the story.

¹⁵ At best, of course, the Acts speeches are paraphrases. However, Acts 1-15 often conflicts with Luke's own pro-gentile bias; so Luke here must have been governed by his sources.

of Mark's enterprise, permitted, and even approved it.¹⁶ If Mark wrote the Second Gospel, this discrepancy is hard to account for. If he wrote the Fourth, the explanation becomes almost obvious. John 21, which refers to Peter's death, is an addendum. The Gospel thus went through two editions, the second of which followed Peter's death, but a first draft of which might very well have preceded it.¹⁷

12. There is a tradition, the strength of which is debatable, that John Mark went to Alexandria.¹⁸ In any case he would have met Alexandrianism at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 7 9 ff.) and felt its influence during his repeated sojourns on Cyprus. There is no discernible Alexandrianism in the Second Gospel. The Fourth, however, has so much that it became a favorite among Alexandrian Gnostics; and some scholars think it actually originated in Alexandria.¹⁹

13. In the NT, of all the men named John, only John Mark is ever placed in Ephesus (I Tim 1 3; II Tim 1 18; 4 12). Mark's stay at Ephesus is asserted also by later writers.²⁰ Certainly he would have been well-known there! Therefore either Mark was one of the two Ephesian leaders named John, to whom Papias, Dionysius, and Eusebius refer;²¹ or, if there was only one such person, he was John Mark. Yet none but the Fourth Gospel is ever called "the Ephesian Gospel."

II. The Statement of Papias

As every NT student knows, Papias' statement about Mark seems to bristle with difficulties. Yet the worst difficulty is seldom dwelt upon: Papias' words just do not fit our Second Gospel at all. The fact is, they describe the Fourth! To show this, we break the famous quotation into phrases and comment on them severally:²²

¹⁶ On Papias, see Eusebius, *H. E.* III.xxxix.15; on Ireneus, *Adv. Haer.* III.i.2; on Clement, *Adumbr. in I Pet* 5 13; Eusebius, *H. E.* II. xv. 2.

¹⁷ See the article named in note 13 above.

¹⁸ Eusebius, *H. E.* II.xvi-xvii, xxiv; Chrysostom, *Prooem. in Matth.*; Epiphanius, *Haer.* li. 6; Jerome, *De Vir. Inlus.* 8; Acts of Barnabas (4th or 5th cent.); the Alexandrian *Liturgy of St. Mark* (see *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. vii, p. 556); Ado of Vienne (d. 874), *Chron.* VI.

¹⁹ E.g., K. G. Bretschneider, *Probabilia de evangelii et epistolarum Joannis apostoli, indole et origine*, Leipzig, 1820, pp. 224 f. Among recent studies see Alfred M. Perry, "Is John an Alexandrian Gospel?" art. in *JBL*, vol. LXIII (1944), pp. 99 ff.; J. N. Sanders, *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church*, Cambridge, 1943; K. and S. Lake, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 53. In a recent conversation, however, Dr. Silva Lake told me she had abandoned her earlier view of the Alexandrian origin.

²⁰ Eusebius, *H. E.* VII.xxv. Further, if Colossians was written from Ephesus, Col 4 10 puts Mark there about A.D. 55; if from Rome, Mark goes to Asia about A.D. 63.

²¹ *H. E.* III. xxxix. 3, 4, 6, 7; VII. xxv. 16. Cf. also Jerome, *De Vir. Inl.* 9.

²² *H. E.* III. xxxix.

- 1 And the Elder used to say this:
- 2 Mark, having become an interpreter of Peter,
- 3 wrote down accurately, though not, to be sure, in order,
- 4 whatsoever he remembered
- 5 of the things said or done by the Lord.
- 6 For neither had he heard the Lord nor followed him,
- 7 but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter,
- 8 who made his teachings in accordance with the needs,
- 9 but not, as it were, in orderly arrangement,
- 10 of the sayings given by the Lord.
- 11 So that neither did Mark sin
- 12 in thus having written down items as he remembered them.
- 13 For of one thing he took care, to leave out nothing that he had
heard
- 14 nor to falsify anything in them.
- 15 These things therefore are recorded by Papias concerning Mark.

The last line (15) ascribes all that precedes to Papias. It is hard to say how much of it is from the Elder, and how much is Papias' own comment. But now consider:

It is twice charged that Mark did not have his material in proper order (3, 9). Yet the pattern in the Second Gospel is virtually the same as that in the First and Third. Why, then, should the Elder (or Papias or Eusebius) single out *one* of these erring ones, and leave the others uncensured? John, on the other hand, does depart radically from the standard arrangement,²³ and must early have come under question in that regard. Indeed, the order of the Fourth Gospel has been subject to discussion, attack, and tinkering at least since the time of Tatian and down to our own day.

Mark's book is twice said to consist of reminiscences (4, 12). Here the subject may be either Mark, or Peter himself. Yet not one line of the Second Gospel sounds like Mark's own recollections, while those that could be Peter's could just as well be from some one else. Still worse, the bulk of the book is not personal reminiscence at all. As most scholars recognize, the Second Gospel has drawn on prior written documents. The Fourth, so far from betraying any demonstrable literary derivation, insists again and again that it records personal recollections (e.g., John 1 16; 2 22; 19 35; 20 30; 21 24).

Mark, asserts Papias, devoted a large part of his book to Jesus' teachings (5, 10; cf. also 6, 8, 13). The Second Gospel, however, contains

²³ Even the apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews probably adhered to the standard pattern. See my article, "A Proto-Lukan Basis for the Gospel According to the Hebrews," *JBL*, vol. LIX (1940), pp. 470 f.

less discourse material than any of the others. The Fourth contains the most of all.

Phrase 6 needs to be qualified by the opening lines of the Muratorian fragment, "Nevertheless he was present at some events and so recorded them." The latter is all that the Fourth Gospel claims for its unnamed disciple. If, furthermore, the author was not one of the Twelve, that might well have been enough, in Papias' mind, to justify the remark.

Papias twice says that Mark was Peter's associate (2, 7). For these assertions to be true, the work with Peter must either have followed Mark's Pauline period, or preceded it — or perhaps both. Papias' own ὕστερον (7) seems to refer to his preceding phrase, and thus to mean that Mark was with Peter after the main part of Jesus' ministry. This fits admirably with the behavior of the unnamed disciple who attended the Last Supper, and thereafter was Peter's host and interpreter, and object of his special regard.

Papias then adds (8) that Mark's Gospel was adapted to current needs. Of course every Gospel author did that, at least in part. The Second Gospel, for example, adjusted its message to gentile interests.²⁴ Preëminently, however, it is the Fourth Evangelist who has "made his teachings in accordance with the needs" — to meet the Gnostic heresy, the problem of John the Baptist, and Judaism's failure to receive the Messiah.

Nearly the whole Papias passage implies that Mark's book had come under attack and needed defense. (Note especially phrases 11, 14.) Now while the Second Gospel was neglected by the early Church, there is no clear evidence that it was attacked. The Fourth Gospel, on the contrary, was assailed frequently (Epiphanius' Alogi are an example²⁵); and Christian writers, like Ireneus and Hippolytus, had constantly to come to its defense.²⁶

Finally, Papias insists repeatedly that Mark's Gospel was *complete* (4, 5, 13). Yet the Second Gospel is the most incomplete of all. It omits much that a follower of Peter surely must have heard. Its huge gaps were, in fact, the very thing that caused its neglect.²⁷ Papias' words, here, might be applied to the First, Third, or Fourth Gospels. They do not apply to the Second.

Thus, of Papias' description of Mark's work, hardly a line fits the Second Gospel. Every word would fit the Fourth.

²⁴ Above, note 11.

²⁵ *Haer.* li. 2 f.

²⁶ Ireneus, *Adv. Haer.* III. xi. Hippolytus' defense is commemorated in an inscription on a statue of him, from ca. A.D. 222, now standing in the Lateran Museum.

²⁷ Augustine called its author a mere "lackey and abbreviator of Matthew" (*De Cons. Ev.* i).

III. The Fourth Gospel Itself

With John Mark as Fourth Evangelist, other features of that Gospel would fall into place. Sometimes, indeed, this looks like the only way to make the book believable as history.

1. At John 19 27, Jesus' mother goes to the unnamed disciple's home, apparently in or near Jerusalem.²⁸ Yet at Acts 1 13, 14 Mary is "abiding" at a Jerusalem house which was, in all likelihood, John Mark's.

2. The phrase "disciple whom Jesus loved" would sound less braggadocio if it described a younger companion of the Twelve, who elicited Jesus' special care. Furthermore, the Fourth Evangelist always speaks of "the Twelve" as an honored group apart (6 67, 71; 20 24). That is how John Mark, the young host at Jerusalem, would have regarded them; and Mark's rôle in the NT is always that of junior companion to the apostles.

3. In putting the Last Supper and Crucifixion on Nisan 14, this is the only Gospel to give aid and comfort to the Quartodecimans. John Mark, of Jerusalem and later of Ephesus, would almost certainly have taken the Quartodeciman side.

4. The Fourth Gospel lays great stress on eyewitness testimony. Now Luke virtually equates "eyewitness" (*αὐτόπτης*) with "minister" (*ὑπηρέτης*) — Luke 1 2. Yet the only Christian *ὑπηρέτης* whom Luke ever names is John Mark (Acts 13 5). Taken by itself this would mean little. Put beside Luke's remarkable contacts with the Fourth Gospel, it again hints at a connection between Mark's and the Fourth Evangelist's labors.

5. If the Fourth Evangelist used no written sources, this corresponds to Mark's situation. He was contemporary with Jesus, knew Peter intimately, housed the Jerusalem Church for a dozen years after the Crucifixion, and thus, for his book, would have felt need of little that his own memory could not supply.

6. Against Mark it might be objected that he was too young since, according to Ireneus, the Fourth Evangelist wrote in old age.²⁹ Note, however, that Ireneus knew of only one Ephesian leader named John. Others said there were two, in which case Ireneus must have applied some traditions to the wrong man. Be that as it may, the Fourth Gospel cannot have taken final shape till after Peter's death, perhaps years after. By that time *any* acquaintance of Jesus was nearing sixty, or more. That was old by Oriental standards.

7. John, the most theological of all our Gospels, is written in simple

²⁸ John 2 1-5 likewise intimates that the author had long known Mary's comportment as a guest.

²⁹ *Adv. Haer.* II.xxii.5; III.iii.4.

but good Greek; and it shows a keen grasp of both Jewish and pagan thought-forms. John Mark was son of a well-to-do, Jewish priestly family, was widely traveled, worked under Paul, and was skilled enough to be called *ἑρμηνευτής, ὑπηρέτης, and εὐχρηστος εἰς διακονίαν*.

8. The Fourth Evangelist wrote to combat a Gnostic heresy. In so doing, he took up the very language of Gnosticism and turned it to his own ends, to express and defend the true faith. It is one of the most remarkable feats in the NT. One other NT book nearly matches it, however: the Epistle to the Colossians. Colossians, too, meets a paganizing distortion of Christianity, and there too the language of heresy is seized upon to defeat the heresy. As a result Colossians, alone among Paul's letters, sounds almost like John. And whom does Paul then send to Colossae, to follow up his letter?

John Mark!

IV. The Name "John"

According to early and universal tradition, the Fourth Evangelist was named John.³⁰ The Gospel itself seems to bear this out, for it stresses the name when applied to others (1 6, 42; 21 15, 16, 17) as though the word itself were significant to the author. This would eliminate all such candidates as Lazarus, Theophilus, Matthias, or Nathanael. It does not eliminate John Mark.

Confusion of biblical names has always been easy. In specific instances, ancient writers mistook Philip the Deacon for Philip the Apostle, and James the Apostle for James the Lord's brother.³¹ With "John" the case would be, if possible, even worse. Acts applies an unembellished "John" to the Baptist (1 5, 22; 10 37; 11 16; 13 24 f.; 18 25; 19 3 f.), to a companion of Peter who was presumably the son of Zebedee (1 13; 3 1, 3, 4, 11; 4 13, 19; 8 14; 12 2), to a companion of the high priest (4 6), and to Mark himself (13 5, 13; 15 37). Often the name denotes different men in the same or adjacent contexts, and the reader must keep his wits about him to know who is meant.

Furthermore, both John Mark and John the son of Zebedee were in Jerusalem after the Crucifixion. Each was actively associated with Peter, and also with Paul. Each left Jerusalem, from time to time, for missionary work in the north, the son of Zebedee going to Samaria, Mark to Antioch. Each, tradition said, worked later in Asia. Add to all this the fact that the fathers, down to Tertullian, were unsure and equivocal

³⁰ For example, Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* III.i.1), Polycrates (Eusebius, *H.E.* III.xxxi.3; V.xxiv.2 f.), Origen (*H.E.* VI.xxv), Leucius Charinus (*Acts of John* [ca. A.D. 150] §89).

³¹ The Philips were confused by Polycrates, Proclus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Eusebius; the Jameses by Irenaeus and apparently by Papias. See R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John* ("ICC"), vol. i, pp. xl f.

about the Fourth Gospel's authorship. (They were almost as uncertain about the Second Gospel.) Clearly they could have mistaken one of these men for the other.

In fact, suggested Dionysius of Alexandria, and Eusebius after him, that is just what the fathers did.³² Dionysius contrasted the language of the Johannine Gospel and Epistles with that of Revelation. The latter, he saw, could not have come from the Evangelist's hand. Since Revelation is by *somebody* named John, it must be by another of that name. The only other candidate Dionysius could find, living at the right time and capable of such a book, was John Mark — though whether Mark actually wrote it, Dionysius was not quite prepared to say (*οὐκ ἂν φάλην*).³³ And Eusebius, in chiding Ireneus for confusing the two Johns, makes this comment:

It is important to notice this. For it is probable that it was the second [John], if one is not willing to admit that it was the first, who saw the revelation which is ascribed by name to John.

Maybe Dionysius was right, but maybe it was the other way around!

V. Problems

Should the Gospel of John turn out to be the Gospel of John Mark, this would certainly solve some problems. It would be clear how the authorship got ascribed, erroneously, to John the son of Zebedee. The trouble the book had in winning its way could have been due to the subordinate position of John Mark himself. The connection with Ephesus, the apparent Alexandrianism, the tantalizing affinities with Luke, and, above all, the book's highly individual content — all this would fall into place if this document recorded John Mark's message to the Diaspora.

Yet there are difficulties.

1. Not the least would be the disruption in our conception of Gospel origins. The present writer's own study of the Synoptic Problem would be affected.³⁴ The evidence remains, it is believed, unshakable that Matthew drew not from our Second Gospel but from the latter's immediate ancestor, and that that ancestor was abridged and modified to produce our Second Gospel. But who did the cutting, and under what circumstances — these questions would have to be reëxamined.

³² Eusebius, *H.E.* VII.xxv; III.xxxix.6.

³³ Several nineteenth-century scholars proposed Mark as author of the Apocalypse. See James Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner's, 1929), p. 512. Cf. note 35, below.

³⁴ *The Gospel Before Mark*, pp. 149–153.

2. Indeed the reader must long since have asked, If Mark wrote the Fourth Gospel, who wrote the Second? It seems almost too easy to suggest (though some have done so) that it was *another* Mark.³⁵ The name Marcus, while rare among Jews, was common enough among gentiles. However, no such Marcus, living at a suitable time and place, is known to us. Ascribing the Second Gospel to such a one merely pushes the problem a step back, while solving nothing.

Some, not afraid of wild suggestions, might even propose John the son of Zebedee. In other words the two authors, both named John, got interchanged in the tradition. The Second Gospel does pay unusual attention to John son of Zebedee, naming him as often as do all the others combined. Its strong apocalyptic flavor would fit his temper. Its eyewitness stories could have come from him. Its depreciation of the Twelve might stem from the rivalries in which John figured so prominently. Its pro-gentile tone might reflect his later work in Samaria and Asia Minor. Its relatively poor Greek, its ill acquaintance with the OT, and its hesitant treatment of Jerusalem, might all be due to the "unlearned and ignorant" John of Acts 4 13. One might even propose, by these means, to account for the variant order in some early canons: Matthew-John-Luke-Mark instead of Matthew-Mark-Luke-John. The difference stemmed from a prior uncertainty as to which was which! Yet it is not easy to see how a son of Zebedee could have erred about Galilean geography, as the Second Evangelist sometimes does. It is still harder to see why that John should have needed written sources.

If, however, we find no suitable author for the Second Gospel, this does not entitle us to fall back on Mark of Jerusalem. We have seen too many objections to that, and there are others. It was never attributed to that Mark until the time of Jerome, and then only tentatively.³⁶ Its Greek is too colloquial for one of his education. It contains historical uncertainties, even blunders, regarding Herod Antipas, and regarding the government of Bethsaida, Gerasa, Phoenicia, and Jericho. It greatly exaggerates the ceremonial strictness of the Jews. Its account of the Trial is inadequate and misleading, e.g., as to the time and procedures of the Sanhedrin hearing, and the time of the Crucifixion. It shows little knowledge of Jesus' family, although James the Lord's brother was in Jerusalem for years. John Mark of Jerusalem should have done better than all this.

³⁵ So, e.g., Johannes Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium*, pp. 382–414. See also Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1953), pp. 26 f.

³⁶ *Comm. in Philemon* 24. Justin (*Dial.* 106) attributes to ἀπομνημονεύματα [Πέτρος?] a phrase found only in the Second Gospel (3 17). However, (a) if there was confusion about Gospel authorships, it certainly must have begun before Justin's time. (b) Justin nowhere ascribes the quotation to *Mark's* Gospel.

3. Finally, to equate John Mark with John the Evangelist probably will not help toward identifying *the Elder*. Papias' Elder criticized Mark and so cannot have been John Mark himself. Nor can we meet this last by conjuring up the other, unknown Marcus as subject of the Elder's discussion. The Elder gives no sign that he and his subject bore the same name. Worse, he would have discussed the "other Mark's" work in utter bewilderment and ignorance, and censured it for the very qualities which most precisely characterized his own.

There is, of course, the familiar suggestion that the Elder John was some one otherwise unknown to us. Then, unless there were *three* Ephesian leaders by that name, we shall have to say that John the son of Zebedee never went to Ephesus, and must charge with fault all those who said he did.³⁷

Or was the son of Zebedee himself the Elder? If Peter could be called "Elder" (I Pet 5 1), then so could his fellow apostle. Indeed it is likely that an apostle would always be "elder" to another associated with him and bearing his name. But if the Elder was John the son of Zebedee, then Papias, in his famous passage on the Apostle John and the Elder John, was either very confusing or very confused.³⁸ The latter is quite conceivable. Eusebius called Papias "a man of very little intelligence,"³⁹ and he did, it seems, mistake *James* the son of Zebedee for James the brother of the Lord.⁴⁰

None of these suggestions is entirely satisfactory. Perhaps the difficulty lies in regarding "elder" too exclusively a title, for one individual. Many elders functioned in the early Church; and the word could also be used adjectivally, simply to indicate a man's relative age. Even John Mark, though not Papias' Elder, might with passing time and the death of John the Apostle have assumed the dignity of that designation.

Whatever be thought of the foregoing problems, there remains the astonishing series of links between John Mark and the Fourth Evangelist. They are too extensive, too all-pervading, to be lightly dismissed. If John Mark was not "the disciple who wrote these things," then how came these correspondences?

³⁷ Ireneus, *Adv. Haer.* II.xxii.5; III.i.1; iii.4; Eusebius, *H.E.* III.xx.9; xxiii.31; *Leucian Acts of John*; Clement of Alexandria, *Quis Dives Salvetur?* 42; and many others.

³⁸ Eusebius, *H.E.* xxxix.3 f.

³⁹ *H.E.* III.xxxix.13.

⁴⁰ Note 31 above.