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*Honest to John! A Response to Reviews of The Fourth Gospel and the
Quest for Jesus*

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It is with great appreciation to the reviewers that I respond to their thoughtful engagements of my book on the Gospel of John and the

Jesus of history. As they all acknowledge, the disjunction of these two subjects has been the prevalent modern paradigm for conducting both Johannine and Jesus studies in recent decades, but such a move has its own sets of new critical problems. While this book calls attention to those new problems, it also seeks to find solutions to the original issues that modern critical theories have tried to address. In doing so, it seeks to build on the most plausible of literary and tradition-development theories, even if new approaches and syntheses are required. In taking seriously the character and claims of the Johannine tradition, however, this approach attempts to be *honest to John*. On that score, critical and traditional approaches alike have too often fallen dismally short.

Jeff Staley has done an excellent job of describing the overall thrust of the book. He rightly notes the importance of the literary theories the book advances, including their implications for a plausible view of the development of the Johannine tradition. His introduction also points helpfully to the connections between the historical subject of the Fourth Gospel, Jesus and the unfolding history of the Johannine situation. As one who has appreciated Staley's literary-rhetorical analyses of John over the last two decades or more, I hope to benefit from the best of reader-response and new literary-critical approaches to John while not assuming that fictive literary function implies a fictional character and origin of the narrative. In that sense, historical narrative functions in many ways *similar* to fictive narrative. And, one literary characteristic claimed by the Johannine narrator is that at least some of the origin of John's tradition is rooted in first-hand encounter with the ministry of Jesus.

While it is impossible to prove that any or all of John's material goes back to an independent Jesus tradition, just as it is impossible to prove that none of it does, the overlooked reference to the apostle John's making a statement with an undeniably Johannine ring to it in Acts 4.20 (cf. 1 Jn 1.3) makes this a critically plausible consideration. 'We cannot help but testify to what we have seen and heard!' could not have been crafted as a more characteristically Johannine utterance, and while it may be misguided or wrong, it was written by Luke *a full century before* Irenaeus. Since the writing of the book, I have found another three dozen ways in which Luke departs from Mark and sides with John, doubling the evidence for Luke's dependence on the Johannine tradition in its oral stages, as argued in Part III. The point is that the

Johannine claim to forwarding an autonomous witness to the ministry of Jesus is also corroborated by a parallel tradition, perhaps even alluded to in Lk. 1.2, regarding indebtedness to ‘eyewitnesses and servants of the Logos’. Given also the fact that neither Bultmann’s source-critical hypothesis nor Markan-dependence theories stand up to critical scrutiny (see *Christology*, 1-136), alternative theories of John’s origin and development are required.

This is where John’s ‘dialogical autonomy’ poses a suitable way forward. While John’s tradition is not dependent on Mark or alien sources (and in that sense is *autonomous*), neither does it exhibit a disengaged or isolated form of independence. Rather, it reflects several levels and types of ‘dialogue’: a presentation of the divine–human dialogue wherein the ‘Word’ of God is sent to humanity inviting a response to the divine initiative; there is an earlier-later form of dialectic within the Johannine tradition itself, wherein earlier understandings are countered with emerging ones; dialogical interactions with parallel traditions (especially Mark) seem apparent; the dialectical Johannine situation is addressed by the narrator, as later hearers and readers are engaged in an imaginary dialogue with Jesus by means of the Johannine narrative; and the evangelist himself works dialectically with his theological content—and his historiographic work—producing a narrative contributing to dialectical theological and historical perspectives. While the Johannine Prologue leads off with a confession: ‘In the beginning was the Word’, an adequate appraisal of the Johannine tradition’s origin and development leads to a conclusion: ‘In the beginning was...the *dialogue*’.

Staley’s introduction sets the stage well for the following reviews.

Matthew Lowe’s engagement with Part II of the book covers the material well, and with notable insight and refreshing wit. I appreciate Lowe’s willingness to step in at the last moment, and I am all the more impressed that he took the time to read my first book also, as it lays the groundwork for the present volume. Indeed, the counterquestions predicted by Moody Smith have followed both books, and it is a pleasure to respond to the new ones raised by Lowe. First, though, I appreciate his exceptionally clear description of each of the twelve planks within the two platforms. Especially his comment on the third plank of Platform B is notable; indeed, ten categories elucidating hundreds of non-symbolic, illustrative details suggest particular aspects of historicity in

the Fourth Gospel, and despite its lateness, these features must still be dealt with if one is to place John off limits for historicity and Jesus studies. I also like Lowe's playful engagement with the plank-platform metaphors, although I don't intend to extend them into a full-blown allegory. Nonetheless, if 'foundations' were considered, they would involve the disciplinary tools we bring to the enterprise; 'constructions' upon the platforms would involve our impressions of the Fourth Gospel and the Jesus of history. The goal of Part II is a bit more modest than that: simply to test the soundness of the inferences made by modern critical scholars about John's ahistoricity and its implications, which have come to function in ways mythic as well as scholarly. What I mean here by the word 'mythic' is that these two modernistic platforms replace one set of mythic inferences with another. As features of modern myth, they (1) disambiguate the complex set of issues related to Johannine, Johannine-Synoptic and Jesus studies, oversimplifying the facts, (2) pose an alternative explanation to traditional views claiming the authoritative mantles of 'critical' and 'scientific' as bases for their authority and (3) imbue the results with transcendental associations, attributing religious meaning to a monological impression of Jesus and a marginalizing domestication of the enigmatic Johannine witness. Their legendary perpetuation, then, continues among modern scholars, who pass on 'what they have heard from the beginning', as the 'assured results of biblical critical scholarship' despite their critical weaknesses. As critical claims also require critical assessments if they are to endure the test of time, this book endeavors to inspect the materials used for further constructs, at least acknowledging strengths and weaknesses, hoping to amend what is lacking and to strengthen that which remains (Rev. 3.2).¹⁶

In addition to his noting the dialogical character of John's narrative and its implications for systematic theology, Lowe's counterquestions

16. This chapter was first presented in 2003 at the John, Jesus, and History Consultation under the title, 'Why this Study is Needed, and Why it is Needed Now', and it is now published in Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just and Tom Thatcher (eds.), *John, Jesus, and History. I. Critical Assessments of Critical Views* (Symposium Series, 44; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2007), pp. 13-70. The John, Jesus, and History Project is scheduled to go from 2002-2010 at the national SBL meetings, involving three triennia covering (1) literature reviews and introductory matters, (2) aspects of historicity in John and (3) Johannine contributions to Jesus research. Attendance at the sessions has ranged from 100 to 300, suggesting the interest in the project.

are well worth engaging. The first, regarding John's *context*, raises the question as to what it might have meant for Johannine Christians to have been confronted with expectations of emperor laud in the Greco-Roman world. His steering the reader toward Warren Carter's work is well taken, and although I have not built upon it in the present work, I intend to engage it in further works as I develop a more extended theory of the Johannine situation.¹⁷ Here, J. Louis Martyn's two levels of history apply to the Roman backdrop just as easily as they apply to the Jewish backdrop. While things did indeed get difficult for Christians and Jews under the reign of Domitian, that was not the first epoch of strident relations with the Roman occupiers. I would like to see a historical investigation of what things were like in Palestine under Tiberius, connected specifically with the Johannine presentation of the Roman presence in Jerusalem. I also wonder *how* Roman officials in the Tiberian era might have responded to messianic pretenders; Pilate certainly was removed from his position based upon the violent way he responded to the threat of 'the Samaritan' and his followers on Mount Gerizim in 36 CE, and Josephus indeed describes harsh treatment of Palestinians by Roman armies during the Jewish wars. As the Johannine leadership moved to one of the mission churches (no site fits the evidence better than the traditional memory of Ephesus—including Alexandria), emperor laud would have taken a number of forms. From lesser to greater degrees of explicitness in Asia Minor and elsewhere within the Empire, (1) subjects would have been expected to show respect for the occupying Roman forces by showing up for civic festivals; (2) subjects would have been expected to honor the emperor during imperial visits and in festivals (sometimes lasting for days) honoring his birthday and other Roman celebrations by their participation; (3) subjects would have been expected to offer sacrifices to the Emperor (ranging from incense to a bull) as signs of public veneration and support; (4) subjects would have been expected to make declarations of Caesar's lordship, and if questioned as subversives, to deny their allegiance to Christ and his followers. While Roman officials might have pressed the latter two

17. See also Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006); and Warren Carter, *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006). In addition, the appendix in Carter's newest book, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2008) features early Johannine christological developments under Caligula (pp. 343-84).

if someone seemed questionable, fellow citizens would have pressed Christians on the former two. After all, if diminishing support for Rome might have threatened *neokoros* status ('temple-keeper' privileges resulting in major civic gifts from Rome) for Ephesus in its competition with Smyrna and Pergamum for Roman favors, this would have raised concern among local merchants and civic officials, not just the occupying forces. While Jews in Ephesus had enjoyed dispensation for over two centuries to practice their own religious observances legally (hence also being excused from pagan religious rites and celebrations), it was the growth of the Jesus movement among the Gentile residents that was especially threatening to local leaders. Therefore, contextual pressures would have come from several directions, not just one.

Here I find Lowe's introduction of the agency motif an incisive suggestion, causing me to think about the connections between Jewish and Roman agency schemas. In addition to references to Jewish authority in a Palestinian context and an Asia Minor context, the agency motif may have been used in more than one direction. Just as Thomas's declaration of Jesus as 'My Lord and my God!' would have borne associative challenges to emperor worship under Domitian (81–96 CE; Domitian even required his associates to refer to him as 'lord and god'), so the basileic authority of Jesus' reign is presented as a contrast to Pilate's. Agency here roots in authenticity, and truth alone is liberating.

I also appreciate Lowe's questions about dialectical historiography in the light of the dialectical theologizing of the Evangelist. Indeed, the failure to interpret John's theological themes—replete with their inherent tensions—dialectically is to fail to appreciate the character of the material being considered. The same applies to John's historiography, yet modern historians have failed to apply such methodologies to the critical analysis of the origin and development of Gospel traditions. This book begins such an investigation (suggesting such in Part V), but further work is yet to be done. I like Lowe's bringing in Brueggemann's work as a model for Johannine–Synoptic dialogical relations; the idea that the Johannine Evangelist engaged other traditions dialectically *because* of having an alternative historical perspective seems more realistic to me than assuming that all purveyors of gospel traditions agreed on all points, both major and minor. My point is that this is exactly what 'historical' contributions do. They affirm some aspects of parallel renderings, while introducing alternative perspectives and distinctive interpretations. Especially important is cognitive-critical work on the

formation and development of memory as related to historiography, replete with its adaptive and rhetorical features. I am grateful to Matt for raising these points, and I hope to draw them into my future work.

Michael Pahl in his analysis of Part III likewise does a fine job of describing the territory covered by this chapter. As a student of Mark Goodacre's, he is well aware of the plethora of issues surrounding Gospel-relations studies, and he picks up well on the particular aspects comprising my new synthesis regarding John's relations to particular traditions. Pahl summarizes clearly three sets of data that he has effectively garnered from different parts of the book: the literary similarities and differences between John and the Synoptics, the basic structure of my two-edition theory of composition, and the main elements of John's distinctive relations with each of the four (including Q) Synoptic traditions. Impressively, Pahl goes beyond summarizing the book's arguments; he has also synthesized them in the light of their implications for Gospel tradition-development studies, raising questions about the larger issues regarding consonant and dissonant engagements between the Johannine tradition and alternative ones. Speaking of scholarly foundations, in 'kicking the tires', Pahl not only engages my theory of Johannine-Synoptic relations, he also questions the Synoptic Hypothesis foundations far more extensively than I do.

At this point, allow me to clarify which modern foundations I *do* believe are solid and worthy of building upon. In order of descending plausibility, the evidence seems strongest for: (1) Markan priority, as shorter, rougher texts seem to be followed by longer, more refined ones; (2) Matthean incorporation of nearly all of Mark, probably having had access to Mark in written form, to which Matthean material was added; (3) Lukan incorporation of most of Mark, while adding material from various sources—not necessarily a unified, early Lukan source; and (4) Matthean and Lukan uses of common tradition, arguably involving something like a Q source, although this may have involved more than one source, and the 'minor agreements' between Matthew and Luke call for further considerations. Of course, written finalizations of the three Synoptic Gospels to which we have access were built upon oral traditions and developing written ones, and at this point I have not chosen to make specific references to those variegated stages and forms of Synoptic traditions. Neither have I sought to engage the Jesus-sayings material clearly found in the letters of Paul, Peter and James, or even in

the *Didache* and the *Gospel of Thomas*. Some of this Jesus tradition antedated even Mark, but I have not included it in my Johannine–Synoptic relations theory because of its non-narrative form and uncertain relation to gospel traditions. Pahl’s exhortation to extend the analysis to ‘a common fund of oral Jesus traditions’ is thus worth considering, and it lifts the investigation beyond narrative literary analyses alone.

The first of Pahl’s two questions pushes for a consideration of the Johannine tradition’s dialectical engagement with other traditions if something more fluid than the Two- or Four-Source Hypotheses might have been the case. What if the Matthean tradition were earlier than assumed, and what if a ‘common oral fund’ of Jesus-sayings material accounts better for the distinctively Matthean and Lukan contacts than an inferred Q source? Certainly the minor agreements between Matthew and Luke (often a one-word or a two-word departure from a passage otherwise included in Mark, found distinctively in Matthew and Luke) call for an alternative explanation to a Q document that was devoid of Markan material. Might Q have also included parts of Mark? How do we know it did not? While I do think the case can be made for something like Q, the Goulder and Goodacre hypothesis that Luke may have been familiar with an earlier form of Matthew might account for some of these features better than the Q hypothesis, although these two theories are not mutually exclusive. If the ‘bolt out of the Johannine blue’ were a feature of Luke’s borrowing a theme from Matthew—a theme sounding *very* Johannine—my guess would be similar to my inference regarding Q: the early Matthean tradition may have borrowed from the early Johannine tradition. Of course, such a theme regarding the Father’s relation to the Son could have gone back to Jesus, and if that *were* the case, it would simply point to John’s historicity. On the idea of a ‘widespread common fund of oral Jesus tradition’, an expanded approach to interfluentiality would indeed be well advised. It would account for Johannine contacts with not only the pre-Markan and hypothetical Q traditions, but would also extend to those underlying the Pauline and Thomasine writings as well. It could be that the Johannine Evangelist and final editor might not have always known the source of a Jesus-tradition idea or motif that they were engaging dialectically. On Luke’s employment of the Johannine oral tradition, however, his borrowing seems knowing and intentional.

Pahl's second question challenges the supposition that Gospel traditions were written for particular communities, reflecting individuated versions of Christianity. While I agree with some of Bauckham's thesis that Gospels were written for more general audiences than for local communities only, I would put it this way: John and Matthew were not written *for* particular communities or sectors of Christianity, as much as *from* them. Mark and Luke appear to have been more generalized from the start. At this point I agree with Pahl, that there is more evidence to support community-related theories for John because of the clearly community-oriented thrust of the Johannine Epistles. That is why I refer to Matthew's situation as a Jewish-Christian 'sector' of early Christianity rather than a single community, proper. Ignatius, however, clearly sought to export a Matthean monarchical approach to local leadership among the churches of Asia Minor, and it was likely an early form of this development that the author of 3 John, as the final compiler of the Gospel, was addressing.

Beyond these qualifications, I want to affirm Pahl's picking up on the personal character of Gospel traditions. Indeed we are speaking of *people*, who are the effectual 'tradents and transmitters of tradition', and considering how to investigate critically 'a personal interfluentiality' may pose an important step forward. As I developed in chapter 7 of *Christology*, one of the key reasons for the differences between the pre-Markan and the early Johannine traditions may have been the individuated ministries and personalities of the two personal sources of these traditions. Whether they were the tradition-attested Peter and John, or whether they were other known or unknown figures, the likelihood of differing gifts, inclinations and ministries between the pre-Markan and early Johannine preachers would have affected what they taught and how they emphasized interpretive points along the way. Those differences may have gone back to the earliest stages of Gospel traditions, and they would have continued to impact their developments at every stage along the way.

The reason these matters are significant for Jesus studies is that the alternative presentation of Jesus and his ministry in the Johannine tradition, if understood within a more plausible theory of development and inter-traditional dialogue, may serve better as a source for Jesus research than has been recently granted. If I were to try to assimilate Pahl's final suggestion regarding Johannine consonant and dissonant engagements within my inferences of the first and the final editions of

the Johannine Gospel, I might put it this way: the first edition appears to have engaged the Markan Gospel and a few other traditional themes augmentively and correctively; the final edition appears to have engaged primarily the direct or indirect influence of Matthew dialectically and correctively, although other Markan, or more generally Synoptic, presentations may have been considered, as well. This approach does not work so well, however, with the Lukan and hypothetical Q traditions, as they seemed to have borrowed from the Johannine oral tradition. I could go with some measure of Q–Johannine interfluentiality in addition, although the double-tradition and Johannine contacts could also be a factor of secondary orality or general interfluentiality between multiple traditions. On this matter, an expanded theory of interfluentiality is a worthy consideration, although hypotheses in these directions must be considered extended, and thus tentatively held. The value, however, lies in keeping in mind that the ‘reality’ being described will always be more complex and multivarious than even the best of tradition-history theories.

Anne Moore’s critique of Part IV, like the above essays, is more than simply a review. It engages the larger set of issues, ranging from the book’s implications for how Jesus scholars work to the dialectical character of historiography itself, introducing new resources that will inform my own studies and those of others as well. In picking up on the call for a paradigm shift as to how scholars work, Moore infers correctly the larger thrust of the book. Within scientific research, critical investigations proceed with established sets of assumptions and by means of agreed-upon procedures. And they rightly retain their authority as long as they tend to be functional and reliable. When a valid tenet gets pressed beyond its breaking point, however, or when too many exceptions to a generalization get noticed, alternative explanations and approaches are required. That is how paradigm shifts happen within science, and also within other critical fields of inquiry—what modern biblical studies claim to be. In that sense, while this book challenges modern foundations for Johannine and Jesus studies, it attempts to do so on the basis of plausible evidence and rational analysis—the very stuff of scientific critical analysis. It therefore challenges modernistic platforms on their own modern terms, while introducing fresh perspectives and analyses, calling for at least a more nuanced view of John, Jesus and history. Whether it succeeds, of course, depends on

what other interpreters do with the suggestions, and here Moore's contribution is extremely helpful.

In bringing in the work of Jonathan Smith, Moore rightly calls attention to the connections between ways scholars have categorized this material and their own rhetorical interests, often influencing their judgments on John's historicity with greater and lesser degrees of confidence. Indeed, the very typological associations of Jesus with Jewish and Hellenistic redeemer figures in John, designed to be compelling for first-century audiences, became a liability for some modernist audiences, especially European ones, in their attempts to distinguish Christianity from paganism and Judaism. Put otherwise, Bultmann and others were willing to sacrifice the historicity of all gospel traditions, especially John, in deference to the existential call to faith so clearly put in the Johannine evangel. However, the category mistake is to infer an ahistorical origin from the final theological packaging of John's material, especially when there are so many exceptions to Bultmann's own evidence claims, and when so much mundane, archaeological, topographical and chronological material in John is hard to explain otherwise.

With Moore's comments on the 31 points of similarity between *all four canonical Gospels*, if John is patently nonhistorical, one must be willing to assert that if John is not historical, none of these elements can be considered historical in any of the other three Gospels, either. Scholars do not make that move, however, and this is grossly inconsistent. Neither are any of the contacts between John and the Synoptics on these points identical, so theories of derivative influence or literary dependence are scant in terms of critical plausibility. These are just some of the reasons why a new theory is required. Despite John's theological character, there are too many exceptions to its purported ahistoricity for such a claim to stand the test of time.

With allowances for John's rhetorical interests and the Evangelist's employment of theological crafting of his story of Jesus, Moore rightly distills five major ways in which John contributes to the quest for the Jesus of history. Her incorporation of multiple-attestation material along with distinctively Johannine material makes for suitable bases for Jesus research rooted in the Johannine witness. In addition to appreciating how they point the way forward, I might recommend these five points as an outline that other Jesus scholars might build upon in seeking to explore how John's witness might yet contribute to scholarly

Jesus research. I also appreciate Moore's affirmation of the interfluent character of emerging Jesus material in the first century CE, and I agree with her critique that my table of Johannine–Synoptic relations (Table 3.3) *might not be messy enough!* Her and Pahl's judgments along these lines counter effectively the tendency of some scholars to resist complexification, or to try to explain the entire Johannine–Synoptic problem on the basis of a single theory: 'John was dependent', or 'John was independent', when histories of development and dialectical engagement over seven decades were inevitably more complex than a simplistic theory can muster. Her introduction of the Thomas tradition and the *Egerton Gospel* should be added to the 'fund of Jesus tradition' material suggested by Pahl, and further work deserves at least some consideration as I develop 'A Bi-Optic Hypothesis: A Theory of Interfluentiality between the Johannine and Markan Traditions'.¹⁸

Professor Moore goes on to make two critical suggestions as to what the paradigm shift might look like, both of which I agree with. The first points out that while the present book does call for a change in how scholars work, it does not go far enough in fully developing what the Jesus of history in Johannine perspective might look like. Agreed! That will be the thrust of my next book, currently under contract with Eerdmans.¹⁹ While the present book has sought to engage critically the foundations for the relations between the Fourth Gospel and Jesus research, the eight ways that John might contribute to Jesus quests do outline the parameters of such a study. I might also note, though, that John's contributions to Jesus quests are not argued as overturning Synoptic bases for Jesus studies but as augmenting them. Therefore, the eight ways (among others) in which I still believe the Synoptics pose a fuller glimpse at the Jesus of history (over John's) should still be kept in mind. Rather, a bi-optic approach to the Jesus of history poses a more nuanced corrective to the imbalanced modernistic excluding of John from the table. That being the case, the twenty-four elements of the three categories in Part IV should be considered suggestive rather than

18. This is the title of the presidential address I delivered at the Pacific Northwest AAR/SBL/ASOR meetings at George Fox University in May 2008. Alan Culpepper has encouraged me to expand the theory into a full-fledged monograph, which I also hope to attempt in the near future.

19. Scheduled for 2009 or 2010, the working title for that book is *Jesus in Johannine Perspective: A Fourth Quest for Jesus*

exhaustive. If Part III suggests new blueprints for determining the foundations of Jesus and Johannine research, Part IV suggests some of the building material that might be useful in constructing further understandings of the historical Jesus.

In service to this end, Moore's two final points are especially welcome. First, adequate Jesus research is to be based upon the most inclusive and serviceable database of plausible material, and the data within John and in non-canonical traditions deserve consideration in their own right. I could not agree more! I also like her bringing Hayden White's insights into the mix; attention given to the 'historical chronicle' at hand, complete with its accompanying detail, can and should be investigated alongside the rhetorical and interpretive interests of the narrator. In that sense, history is rhetorical as well as fiction; the question is how this might be so with respect to the origin and development of Jesus traditions in general, and John's in particular. Moore's second point is also well taken, about finding new ways of analyzing how the 'historical chronicle' of the Johannine Evangelist connects with our own 'interpretive narratives' in the twenty-first century. Here I believe the challenge of the Johannine Jesus to political and religious authorities of his day in the name of the liberating power of truth has great potential for meaningful interpretation in later settings, and prophetically so.

As a dialectical exploration of the truth, however, the Johannine narrative not only exposes the foibles and conventionalities of its first-century settings and contexts, but also challenges subsequent audiences: Christian and otherwise. Wrong is the modernist notion that meaningful historiography must be neutral and disengaged. While we might argue that good history-writing will necessarily be fair and objective, interpreting the significance of historical events in terms of their earlier meanings and later implications will always be a subjective endeavor. Hence, the rhetoric of history deserves critical consideration every bit as much as the rhetoric of fiction.²⁰ In the analysis of Marianne Meye

20. In appreciation for ways that Jeff Staley and others have made good use of Wayne Booth's books, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn, 1983) and *The Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), we might also investigate critically 'the rhetoric of history' as a critical consideration. See Marianne Meye Thompson's call for fresh approaches to Johannine historiography by means of incorporating new analyses of historiography by such historical-critical scholars as Michel de Certeau, Paul Veyne, Hayden

Thompson, the ‘Spiritual Gospel’ is the way ‘John the Theologian’ writes history.²¹ Coming to terms with the dialectical character of John’s historiography may help us deal with one of the greatest controversies of the modern era, just as coming to terms with the dialectical character of John’s theology helped Christian leaders deal with the greatest of controversies in the patristic era. This was the counsel of the Master from Marburg in his 1927 Eisenach address (p. 175), but modern interpreters have yet to consider what dialectical historiography might entail. Given the fact of multiple types and levels of dialogue within any historiographic project, and the Johannine witness in particular, an interdisciplinary approach to these classic debates must be attempted. In service to that goal, fresh literary, historical and theological analyses deserve consideration in respect to the origin and development of the Johannine tradition and the quest for Jesus. Whether such an endeavor, of course, is successful will be the true test of whether a paradigm shift takes root among Jesus and Johannine scholars, and on that score, only time will tell.

In conclusion, I want to thank my colleagues for a really fine engagement of *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*. Not only has each of the reviews commented instructively upon some of the key points the book argues, but each has also raised a new set of issues that move the scholarly quest forward into further investigations and analysis. In that sense, not only is a book project reviewed well, but more importantly, scaffolding is set up in service to further work ongoing and serviceable constructs. When Clement of Alexandria referred to the Synoptics and John as the ‘somatic’ and the ‘pneumatic’ Gospels, in no way was he making a factuality-versus-spirituality distinction. Upon such a flawed conception have many false assumptions been wrongly based. Rather than a John-versus-Jesus dichotomy, a fresh interdisciplinary approach might yet help critical and traditional scholars alike be more *honest to John*, and therefore more fully *honest to Jesus*.

White, Brian Stock, Albert Cook, and David Lowenthal, in her essay, ‘The “Spiritual Gospel”: How John the Theologian Writes History’, in *John, Jesus, and History*, p. 104.

21. As a response to Robert Kysar’s literature review regarding the de-historicizing of John, Meye Thompson argues that history and theology are false dichotomies in ‘Spiritual Gospel’, pp. 103-107.