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THE LOGOS IN THE PROLOGUE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

“In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and God (predicate) was the Logos.”

We have here, at the opening of St. John's Gospel and arranged in climactic succession, three ponderous propositions concerning the Logos. It can hardly be questioned that, in the use of this term, it is not the purpose of the writer to introduce a hitherto unfamiliar conception within the circle of Christian readers. When John wrote the fourth Gospel, the name Logos evidently constituted a part of the Christian vocabulary as a current designation of Jesus Christ. That it is found only in the Johannean writings seems to point to a comparatively late origin. The name occurs four times in our prologue. Here it is used absolutely, without any modifier. In Rev. 19, 13 we have the phrase “the Word of God” (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ), while in 1 John 1, 1 the expression is “the Word of life” (ὁ λόγος τῆς ζωῆς). These are the only passages in which the title is found. The question, therefore, that confronts us at the outset is as to whence this idea and name were derived.

Harnack, after the manner of the Tuebingen school, discerns in the employment of this title the prelude toward the blending of Christianity with Greek philosophy. According to his opinion, the writer of this prologue is the forerunner of those Christian “teachers who, prior to their

conversion to Christianity, had been adherents of the Platonic-Stoic philosophy, and to whom, therefore, the idea of the 'Logos' was an inalienable element in their *Weltanschauung*." He paved the way for those who, in order to embrace Christianity without relinquishing their philosophic notions, boldly conceived the idea of identifying the Logos of their speculations with the historical Christ. This was, in Harnack's view, a most fortunate thing. The identification of the Logos with Jesus Christ "was," he says, "the most important step ever taken in the history of Christian dogma." "Instead of the wholly unintelligible term 'Messiah' a more intelligible one was found at a single stroke; Christology, fluctuating by reason of its multifarious modes of expression, received a fixed form; the world-significance of Christ was established, his mysterious relation to the Deity made clear; Cosmos, reason, and ethics were gathered together in one central idea." This conjunction of the Logos with Jesus "became the decisive point in the coalescence of Greek philosophy with the apostolic legacy, and led the thinking Greeks to the latter."¹) Thus the great stumbling-block was removed. Henceforth the word of Paul no longer applied. After the introduction of the Logos-idea, the Gospel was not "foolishness" to the Greeks. The Logos bridged over the chasm. It was a convenient key that fitted both locks, Christianity on the one hand, the wisdom of the Greeks on the other.

Long before Harnack the historian Gibbon expressed similar views, though with this difference that with him the Apostle John comes in for all the credit for naturalizing the new idea. He says, with an obvious sneer: "A prophet or apostle inspired by the Deity can alone exercise a lawful dominion over the faith of mankind; and the theology of Plato might have been forever confounded with the philosophical visions of the Academy, the Porch, and the Ly-

1) *Das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 127 sq.

caem, if the name and divine attributes of the Logos had not been confirmed by the celestial pen of the last and most sublime of the Evangelists. The Christian revelation, which was consummated under the reign of Nerva, disclosed to the world the amazing secret that the Logos, who was with God from the beginning, and was God, who had made all things, and for whom all things had been made, was incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ.'')¹⁾

Accordingly, the idea of the Logos is supposed to have been imported from contemporary philosophy. It is an exotic plant transferred from the gardens of the academy to the vineyard of the Christian Church. The author of the fourth Gospel is declared to be indebted to pagan philosophers for the unique title that he applies to Jesus Christ.

However, such a contention is beset with insurmountable difficulties. For the present, we shall state, in a general way, what seems to be the fatal Achilles heel of this position. If, as the exponents of the theory maintain, the author of this prologue is a disciple of Plato, or more particularly of Philo, the chief representative of Neoplatonism, he certainly kept all his philosophical ideas out of sight while writing the fourth Gospel, which is singularly free from all metaphysical speculation. Nowhere do we find any attempt to make the pagan Logos conception dovetail into the Christology of the Church; nowhere any attempt to mediate between Christianity and Alexandrianism. If, on the other hand, the Johannean authorship be conceded, an absorption of heathen elements into the lump of Christian doctrine becomes absolutely preposterous. Christianity, in its genuine form, never resorts to expedients of this kind in order to commend itself to the acceptance of men. Such methods are alien to its spirit. It is rigidly and uncompromisingly exclusive. Paul might become a Greek to the Greek, but never in the sense of watering down his

1) *Decline and Fall*, edition by Milman, vol. I, p. 305 sq.

Gospel of Christ crucified to suit the Greek's palate, as is abundantly shown by his writings. In like manner, we cannot, with any show of reason, ascribe to John a purpose so repugnant to the tenor of sound Christianity as the assumption of a fusion between the heathen Logos theory and the historical person of Jesus Christ would imply. Not such a weak temporizer was this "son of thunder" and "pillar of the church." It is he that records the Savior's interview with Nicodemus, which urges the necessity of the rebirth as the indispensable condition of entering the kingdom of God. Nor would he have hesitated to affirm the same truth over against the Logos speculations of the Platonists or the Stoics.

Since, however, the Logos of St. John is persistently traced to a philosophic source, more especially to Philo of Alexandria, it may not be amiss to inquire into this matter a little more closely. Philo was a Jewish philosopher who lived at Alexandria in the first century of our era. I think we might call him a Jew with a Greek head. At any rate, his unbounded admiration for the philosophy of the Greeks betrayed him into the most painful efforts to bring his Jewish faith into harmony with the former. By means of an allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament he sought to effect a synthesis between it and the doctrines of the Platonic and Stoic schools. It is needless to say that he set himself an impossible task. With all his allegorizing, spiritualizing, rationalizing, his attempt was a failure. Moses and Plato could not go hand in hand. Philo's system, if the word can be used, is full of contradictions and incongruities. When he locks arms with the Greeks, his Judaism will not follow, and when he cannot quite free himself from the latter, Plato eludes his grasp. As the inevitable consequence of its eclectic character, the philosophy of Philo may fitly be characterized as a *rudis indigestaque moles*, an illimitable, undefinable *tohu vabohu*, without order or coherence. Platonic, Stoic, and Jewish elements are jumbled

together in motley profusion, resulting in a patchwork more parti-colored than Joseph's coat. One of the fundamental tenets in Philo's speculation is that God is an undeterminable essence existing neither in time nor in space, without any affections or qualities (*ἀποιος*), without a name even (*ἄρρητος*), and hence absolutely beyond the reach of human cognition or apprehension (*ἀκατάληπτος*). God is a pure, abstract, ethereal being; and to predicate of Him any quality whatsoever, would be to reduce Him to the sphere of the finite, and consequently to undo Him. In this respect, Philo anticipated the *omnis determinatio est negatio* of another Jewish philosopher who lived in more recent times, of Baruch Spinoza.

It appears, then, that according to Philo there is an impassable gulf fixed between God and the material world. The God of Philo is incapable of contact with finite things. He can have nothing to do with matter. Not only does the very essence of the Deity forbid such an idea, but the nature of matter as well; matter being considered as intrinsically evil. Consequently, Philo required an intermediary to fill up the chasm between his transcendental God and the world. And such an agent he found in the philosophy of Plato and the Stoics. Plato had spoken of the Logos as the "archetypal idea" (*ἰδέα ἰδεῶν*); the Stoics used the same term in the sense of the "world-reason," the operative principle that pervades all matter (*ὁ κοινὸς λόγος ὁ διὰ πάντων ἐρχόμενος*). This conception was adopted by Philo in order to give a philosophic interpretation to his Judaism. By means of the Logos, Philo endeavored to find a connecting link between God as abstract being and the world of matter. His representations of this intermediate being are hesitating, discordant, contradictory. Philo is feeling for something which is too elusive to be grasped. What this Logos of Philo really is can hardly be said. There is, in particular, a continual fluctuation between the personal and impersonal. Now it seems to be endowed with personality,

and then again it seems to be only a property of the Deity. This fluctuation is easily accounted for. The great difficulty with which Philo found himself confronted was to bring this mediating agent into relationship with God as pure essence on the one hand and with the hard fact of the world on the other. If the Logos appertains to the divine being, it seems to resolve him into an attribute of God; if he is represented as the creator of the world, this function requires a distinct personality. Again, when Philo speaks as a Greek, he calls this being the Logos, or the *ἰδέα ἰδεῶν*, the archetypal idea; when he speaks as a Jew, he calls him the Archangel (*ἀρχάγγελος*), the High-priest (*ἀρχιερεύς*), the interpreter of the mind and will of God (*ἐρμηνεύς καὶ προφήτης*), the image of God (*εἰκὼν*), etc. Philo's Logos is thus a vague, shadowy conception, as unreal to himself, perhaps, as it is to anyone else.

If we now proceed to place the Philonic Logos beside the Johannean, it will appear that there is the widest possible divergence between them. There are no affinities whatever. The only thing in common is the name. To begin with, it is evident from the foregoing that the Logos of Philo is merely a philosophic conception, the joint product of a peculiar theory respecting the nature of the Deity and the fact of the existence of the material universe. The Logos is to Philo a logical and metaphysical necessity. This intermediate agent is the only bond by which he can unite his etherealized God with the finite world. Now, if the author of the fourth Gospel was a disciple of Philo, seeking to open the way for an influx of Greek ideas into the Christian Church, to mediate between Alexandrianism and Christianity, his qualities as an amalgamizer and religion-maker were of a very low order. So far is he from approaching Philo with overtures of peace that he rather throws down the gauntlet as a declaration of war. His representation of the Logos differs *toto caelo* from that of the Hellenizing Jew. St. John is not excoꝑitating for himself a religio-philosophic

theory of the world (*Weltanschauung*). When he declares in the opening verses that the Logos was with God and was God, and that all things were made by Him, this is not to be understood in a Philonic sense, as if the Logos were only a reflection of God, and that without Him God would be doomed to a state of inert and eternal quiescence, but rather to exhibit the true divinity of Christ and the consequent enormity of rejecting Him.

The wholly divergent tendencies of the two writers appear also in another respect. According to Philo, the Logos must ever remain above the sensuous world. Was not matter essentially evil? Was it not the ambition of the full-fledged Neoplatonists to free themselves from the impure fetters of the flesh and to bathe in the sunny ocean of divine existence? "Does not the defilement of the human soul arise from its connection with the body?" The mere thought, therefore, of an *incarnation* of the Logos would have been in the highest degree abhorrent to the tastes and sensibilities of the Alexandrians. What blasphemy to bring the reflection of the Deity into the infectious dungeon from which the souls of the "perfect" sought to escape! Nor does it ever occur to Philo to identify his Logos with the Messiah. And yet the author of our prologue, who is supposed to make "straight the way" for Philonic ideas, bluntly says: *καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο* ("and the Word was made flesh"), a statement which is in itself sufficient to prove that John had no affinity with the thought of the Jew. "St. John," says Edersheim, "strikes the pen through Alexandrianism when he lays it down as the fundamental fact of New Testament history that 'the Logos was made flesh.'"¹⁾

If it be argued that the writer of the fourth Gospel was, as it were, driven to this statement by the exigencies of his position, that is to say, by the dire necessity of bringing

1) *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. I, p. 56.

the Logos of Philo, in one way or another, into connection with the man Jesus, we may answer that, if he had found himself in such a desperate situation, he would have overcome the difficulties in a somewhat different way. He would probably have followed the example of Philo who had ways of his own in dealing with things that seemed too crude and crass. Philo, who is unable to find room in his speculations for the angels, gets rid of these beings, for instance, by resolving them into "immortal ideas" (*ἀθάνατοι λόγοι*). Now how is it that the writer of the fourth Gospel, if, indeed, his aim was to harmonize the doctrine of Philo with the teaching of Christianity, did not have recourse to a similar ingenious device when he found himself face to face with the knotty problem? Why did he not, after the manner of the Docetae, represent the union of the Logos with a material human form as a mere illusion upon the senses of men, instead of rudely shocking the feelings of all orthodox Alexandrians by the unvarnished statement of the incarnation? Why does he not begin to rationalize and spiritualize in order to preserve the Logos from the defiling contact with a real human body? It is to this that the stress of the situation would have driven him if the purpose he had in view had been such as is attributed to him. "If," says Zahn, "John had applied to Christ a Logos-speculation that had sprung up on extra-Christian soil, and, guided by it, had risen to a higher apprehension of the Christ, it would have been inevitable that the sharply-outlined figure of the man Jesus would have been dissolved into a mere shadow and distorted into a phantom."¹⁾

Baur felt the force of this objection so keenly that, in order to sustain the theory we are examining, he was con-

1) "Wenn Johannes eine auf ausserchristlichem Boden gewachsene Logosspeculation auf Christus angewandt und, durch eine solche bestimmt, zu einer hoeheren Auffassung Christi sich aufgeschwungen haette, so waere es unvermeidlich gewesen, dass die festumgrenzte Gestalt des Menschen Jesus schattenhaft zerflossen und geisterhaft verzerrt worden waere." *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, II, p. 541.

strained to explain away v. 14 of the prologue altogether. What John means to say in this verse is, according to Baur's exegesis, not that the Logos actually assumed flesh and blood, but only that He became visible by a kind of theophany. On the contrary, John means just what he says. He says that the Logos became flesh, and his entire Gospel furnishes the best commentary on the meaning of the statement. Jesus is weary with His journey and, seated on a well, asks the Samaritan woman for a drink to quench His thirst (4, 6. 7); He sheds tears at the grave of a friend (11, 35); He is moved and troubled (11, 33); He shudders at the thought of His death (12, 27). In fact, the Savior is represented throughout as a real human person with human affections, in full conformity with the real incarnation of the Logos, so distinctly affirmed in the prologue.

Moreover, it is historically proved that the first readers of John's Gospel did not associate Philonic notions with the Logos. Ignatius, the first clearly speaking witness on behalf of the fourth Gospel, says: "One is God, who has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, His Son, who is His Word that came forth out of silence and in all things pleased Him, by whom He was commissioned." That is to say, after long silence God at last uttered Himself in His Son Jesus Christ, who for this reason is called the Word. The first who discovered a Logos theory in the prologue, or, rather, who artificially imposed one upon it, were Valentine the Gnostic and Justin "the philosopher."¹)

Again, the functions performed in the spiritual world by the Logos of Philo and John, respectively, are totally different. To be sure, Philo calls his Logos the interpreter of God, but this designation must be accepted with very important restrictions. Not only is the Logos as the re-

1) "Valentinus der Gnostiker und Justinus 'der Philosoph' sind die Ersten, welche in dem Prolog eine Logoslehre entdeckt oder vielmehr sie in dieselbe [denselben] hineingedichtet haben." Zahn, *Einleitung*, II, p. 547.

vealer of God wholly unnecessary to the perfect sage, but he is also a very imperfect mediator to those who require his services. According to the Alexandrian teaching, the true philosophic "saint" needs no intermediary of any kind in order to enter into communion with God. He employs a short and easy method. He immerses himself, as it were, into the divine Being by immediate intuition. He arrives at the knowledge of God by ecstatic vision and contemplation. He attains to the possession of the absolute truth, not through any mediation, not even by logical thought, but by a process of mystic enthusiasm in which the reasoning faculty and self-consciousness are entirely suspended and the individual subject coalesces with the object—God. In short, a kind of mental delirium and intoxication constitutes the true way that leads straight to the Deity. As for those who are incapable of this "divine frenzy" and therefore unable to rise to the sublime contemplations of the perfect sage, they must content themselves with the lesser light granted them by the Logos, the subordinate deity (*δεύτερος θεός*). Not being able to push forward to the perfect model, they must be content to look at the portrait. Accordingly, those who accept the guidance of the Logos never reach the end, God, while those who would arrive at the coveted goal must pass by the Logos entirely.

Contrast with this the teaching of St. John, who declares all access to God to be impossible except by the Logos. The incarnate Logos of St. John says: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." (14, 6.) In v. 12 of the prologue it is said that to those who receive Him by faith the Logos gives *the power to become* the children of God. This verse asserts three things, viz.: Man is by nature not in a relation of sonship to God; he cannot, by his own efforts, enter into this relation; the incarnate Logos alone removes the natural barrier and makes union with God possible. So here again John "strikes the pen" through the Alexandrian program.

Finally, if we compare the Philonic notion that God as absolute being is incapable of contact with the finite world, except through the Logos, with the teaching of John on this point, the gulf between the Jewish philosopher and our Evangelist will become still more apparent. Philo's God is a God afar off. He cannot show forth his power in the sphere of mundane things; and if he could, he would not, for communication with the world would result in defilement. The Logos, therefore, comes in as an obedient servant to relieve him of something so impossible to his nature and derogatory to his character. Now the God of whom John speaks is of an entirely different character. He is not an abstract being, destitute of all attributes and calmly brooding like Brahma in eternal solitude and quiescence. He is a living God, full of intelligence and activity. He is the Father who so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (3, 16.) He worketh even as the Son worketh (5, 17); He raiseth the dead and giveth them life (5, 21), nay, the miracles of Jesus Himself are represented as gifts from the Father (5, 36). Thus He continually exerts His power in the sensuous world, without any fear of soiling His garments. So far is He from requiring the services of an intermediate organ that it is He that *draws* men to Jesus ("No man can come to me," says Jesus, "except the Father who hath sent me draw him," 6, 44), and *gives* unto the Son all that come to Him ("All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," 6, 37). Here, then, we have a conception not only different from, but quite the reverse of, that of Philo, an idea which would have been to Philo the height of unreason.

Such, then, are some of the radical differences between Philo and John in their teaching respecting the Logos, differences not pertaining to surface matters or outward details, but touching the very heart and marrow of the substance itself. If John ever had any sympathy for the

speculations of the Jew, it seems plain that he must have thoroughly purged out the old leaven before he wrote the prologue of the fourth Gospel. We will, therefore, not hesitate in estimating at its true value the statement of a French critic when he says: "The Alexandrian theology is the synthesis of Judaism and Greek philosophy; and the doctrine of John is, in its turn, the synthesis of the Alexandrian theology with the Christian tradition."¹) The fact is, there is no fusion or synthesis of any kind. As already observed, the only thing in common between Philo and John is the name Logos, which, with the one, denotes *reason*, with the other, Word. The Logos of St. John is not of Alexandrian origin.

Another method of accounting for the origin of the term Logos as a title of Jesus Christ has been to trace it to a Jewish source. Jewish theology, governed by the idea of the unapproachable character of the Deity (cf. the unutterable name יהוה), distinguished between God as inaccessibly removed from the world and as entering into communication with it, between the hidden and the self-revealing God. For this reason, the Jewish doctors, in the Chaldaic paraphrases called Targumim, frequently make use of the phrase *memra Jehovah* (word of the Lord), where the Old Testament simply has God or Lord.²) For instance, when in Gen. 21, 20 it is said, "God was with the lad," the paraphrasts have, "The word of Jehovah was with the lad." Jacob's declaration, "The Lord shall be my God," Gen. 28, 21, is paraphrased into, "The word of Jehovah shall be my God." Instead of, "The Lord was with Joseph," Gen. 39, 21, the Targums have, "The word was with Joseph." While in Ex. 19, 17 it is said that "Moses brought forth the

1) Jean Réville, quoted by Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, vol. I, p. 180.

2) These writings date from the third or fourth century of our era; but they undoubtedly rest upon much more ancient works. Cf. Schürer, *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschichte*.

people to meet God," the Jewish theologians say that "Moses brought forth the people to meet the word of Jehovah." God says in Is. 1, 14, "My soul hateth your new moons;" for "my soul" the paraphrase substitutes, "My word." Thus it is seen that this *memra* (word) of Jewish teachers occupies a mediating position between God and the world. The term is employed especially in such passages as ascribe to God human actions and emotions. It was a means of overcoming the strong anthropomorphisms and anthropopathies in which the Old Testament Scriptures abound. This *memra* of the Jews has been said to be the original of the Johannean term *Logos* as applied to Jesus.

But there are several considerations that make this theory altogether improbable, to say the least. Cremer even goes so far as to say that it hardly admits of a doubt that the Apostle John was not even acquainted with the *memra* of the Jewish schools. He is to be classed with the עם הארץ (the illiterate country people), who knew not the law (cf. John 7, 49) and were ignorant of the theological technicalities of the learned scribes.¹⁾ Perhaps this is true. It certainly was true so long as John was a Galilean fisherman. But whether the apostle *remained* ignorant of these things during his entire ministry, whether he was still unacquainted with the *memra* of the Jews when toward the close of his career he wrote the fourth Gospel, is more than improbable. He may have heard and learned many things in regard to Jewish theology during his long life. The necessity of defending the truth over against Jewish adversaries would naturally lead him to acquire some knowledge as to the manner in which the representatives of Jewish learning dealt with the Old Testament.

Nevertheless we cannot believe that John, even though acquainted with the corresponding Jewish term, adopted the notion of the *Logos* from this source. In the first place,

1) *Bibl. theol. Wörterbuch*, siebente Aufl., p. 570.

as Cremer says, the constant interpretation of Jewish terminologies in the Gospel of John is unfavorable to the notion that the readers were acquainted with Jewish theology.¹⁾ Besides, John manifests throughout the entire Gospel that between him (though himself of Jewish extraction) and the Jews the last tie of fellowship has been severed. "The Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι), so often mentioned in his Gospel, are strangers and foreigners to him. They represent the people who, through their authorities and in the majority of their members, had rejected the Messiah. Through their persistent unbelief and diabolical perverseness they have forfeited the favor of God and become "the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 3, 9). It would, therefore, be entirely incongruous, if John had conferred upon this people the distinguished honor of borrowing from the phraseology of their schools a name which he employs as the most exalted and adequate title of Jesus the Messiah. And then again, the *memra* of the Jews is nothing more than the product of theological reflection ("ein Theologumenon," Cremer), just as that of Philo is the result of philosophic reflection. It is a device invented in order to render the notion of revelation conceivable to Jewish thought. But of such an idea there is nowhere a trace in the prologue of John.

If, therefore, we are obliged to reject not only the theory of the Alexandrian, but also that of the Jewish origin of the term *Logos*, the question as to the derivation of this conception comes back to us with increased force. What, then, is the origin of this peculiar name? Has it no antecedents or presuppositions anywhere, or is it to be regarded as an entirely isolated designation? Who could fail to notice that in the ἐν ἀρχῇ, the first word of our prologue, we have a reproduction of the *bereschith*, the first word of Genesis? Hence also the *Logos* of this prologue evidently points back to the *vayomer* (and God said) of Gen. 1. The creative

1) Ibid.

activity of God is, according to Mosaic record, mediated through His word. And John in his Gospel accentuates the fact that He by whom the world was made is also its Redeemer.

The quasi-personality ascribed in many passages of the Old Testament to the word of God as the principle of His action points in the same direction. According to Is. 55, 11, God says, "My word shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." In Ps. 107, 20 it is said, "He sent His word, and healeth them." But if it should be stoutly insisted on that the passages referred to are purely poetic, and hence irrelevant to the question under discussion, we now introduce a being who cannot be resolved into a poetic fancy, and that is the *Malakh Jehovah*, or the Angel of the Lord. The *Malakh Jehovah* cannot, without an unwarranted thumb-screw exegesis, be reduced to the level of a creature angel. In Ex. 23, 21 God says of the Angel, "Beware of Him, . . . for He will not pardon your transgressions: for *my name* is in Him." Ordinary angels may be "ministering spirits," but they are not, and cannot be, the reflection of the essence of Jehovah. But this is what the expression, "My name is in Him," implies. Here, then, we have a real person with a divine character, a being in whom God manifests His name, reveals Himself. Isaiah calls this Angel the "Angel of the Presence" or the "Angel of the Face" (ch. 63, 9), *i. e.*, the Angel in whom the face or presence of God is manifest. Compare with this the declaration of Jesus; "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;" or the statement of Paul that the "face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4, 6) is the manifestation of the glory of God. Finally, Malachi, the last of the prophets, as if to obviate all possible misunderstanding, identifies the *Malakh Jehovah* with the Messiah. He says (ch. 3, 1), Suddenly the Lord whom ye seek and the Angel of the Covenant whom ye desire shall "come to His temple; . . . behold, He shall

come, saith the Lord of hosts," a prophecy which was fulfilled with the appearance of Jesus Christ, the incarnation of the Logos.

Nor should we omit in this connection the representation of *Wisdom* in the eighth chapter of the Book of Proverbs. The words referred to, verses 22—31, have again been explained as a poetic personification of an attribute of God. But there is manifestly something more than poetry, when Wisdom itself is made to say, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. . . . When He prepared the heavens, I was there; . . . when He established the clouds, . . . then I was by Him as one brought up with Him." As has already been remarked, this is more than poetry. A mere attribute of God would hardly be thus personified. Do not these expressions find their echo in the *ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν* of St. John's prologue?

In the light of the preceding discussion, therefore, there is no cogent reason for leaving the field of revelation in accounting both for the name and doctrine of the Logos. Like everything else in the New Testament, John's teaching as respecting the Logos rests on Old Testament foundations. Nay, it constitutes, beyond question, the strongest and most vital bond uniting the Old Testament with the New. Luthardt, therefore, says, "John would have written just so, even if no Plato or Philo had ever treated of the Logos."

And yet, here a question arises. Why does John alone employ this term? Why not Paul, for instance? May not, after all, some reference to contemporary thought be hidden in the use of the name Logos? According to the traditions of the church, John was long resident at Ephesus, the great reservoir, which received the various streams of philosophic and religious speculation that flowed in from different quarters. In these various systems the idea of an intermediate

being between God and the world played a prominent part. There was the *Oum* of the Hindus, the *Hom* of the Persians, the *Memar* of the Jews, and, particularly, the *Logos* of Greek philosophy and incipient Gnosticism. John, of course, must have heard of this chimerical mediator more than once during his long ministry in Asia Minor. It is probable that, like Paul, who proclaimed to the Athenians the "Unknown God," he often had occasion to speak to his contemporaries of the true Mediator between God and man, the "unknown Logos," about whom men were idly speculating. To be sure, this polemical tendency does not directly appear in the prologue; but it must be remembered that the prologue, as well as the entire Gospel, was primarily addressed to Christian believers. Besides, it would mar the surpassing majesty and stately grandeur of these opening verses if they were to descend to explicit apologetics. If such an object lies in the prologue it is subordinate and implicit.

But what John may have said and taught *orally* as regards the Logos—who can tell? He may often have said, to Christians and pagans alike: That connecting link between God and man which men are vainly groping after in the realms of hazy speculation we Christians possess in an historical personality, who, though existing with God before the foundation of the world, assumed flesh and blood in the fullness of time, and laid down His life as a ransom for many, in order that all who believe in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. He is the only, the true Logos of God. This would be so far from being an accommodation to current philosophy that the employment of the same term, but with an entirely different meaning, would be tantamount to a decided protest against the futility and inanity of all such speculations. It would be a kind of divine irony on all the Logos doctrines that had hitherto been spun out of the minds of unchristian thinkers. By applying the term Logos to Jesus Christ, the Crucified,

John said in effect what Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" 1 Cor. 1, 20.

It seems to us, therefore, that John may have been induced, in part, to use this name as the title of Jesus just *because* of the important role played by it in the thought of the time. This would not be the only instance that a Greek word was adopted by the writers of the New Testament and made the vehicle of entirely new truths. Our conclusion, therefore, is that, inspired by God, the Apostle John fixed on the word *Logos* as a designation of Jesus Christ, not only because the teaching of the Old Testament suggested it as singularly appropriate, but also in order to expose the futility of the *Logos* theories that had sprung up in the soil of pagan and semi-pagan philosophy.

We shall now turn our attention to the meaning of the title *Logos*. *Logos* means word; and if we start out from the simplest and primary meaning of this term, we will understand most readily why Christ has been called the *Logos*. If man was created in the image of his Maker, we may reasonably look for a certain analogy, no matter how imperfect, between the significance and function of the human word and the divine. The ancients were wont to say, "Speak that I may see thee." The word of man is the organ of his self-revelation. His word, if sincere, is the unveiling of his real self. Through his word he becomes visible, as it were, to his fellow beings. But the word externally expressed presupposes an internal word, a clearly conceived thought, as its foundation. Before the spoken word leaves our lips it must have received a definite objective form in our own minds. Otherwise there would be an inarticulate, meaningless sound, but no intelligible speech. Thus the human word is not only the means of making the self known to others, but even to itself.

And so also—only in an infinitely higher sense—as regards the *Logos* of God. The *Logos* is, first of all, with

God (πρὸς τὸν θεόν), an expression denoting not only the personality of the Logos, but also His intimate communion with God. Consequently, the preincarnate Logos has been called the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (the unuttered word). But this Logos, in whom God knows Himself from eternity, the whole mind and thought of God, has been expressed, according to St. John, not by a voice from heaven or by the tongues of angels, but by appearing in the form and fashion of a man in Jesus of Nazareth. Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο. The Logos who was with God before the world was created, who was God from all eternity, assumed a human body and tabernacled among us (ἐσκήνωσεν). Consequently, Christ is the revealer of God *sui generis*. He is the interpreter of the Father's will and counsel not only on specific occasions, like ordinary prophets, but constantly and uninterruptedly. The word did not *come* to Him at sundry times and in diverse manners, but proceeded from Him at all times, as from its original source. It cannot be said of Christ that He was inspired, because in Him dwelt the whole fullness of the godhead bodily. He is thus far removed from those human agents whom God occasionally employed as the *forth-tellers* (προφήτης) of divine truth. He is the revealer of God in an absolute sense. This is the import of the concluding verse of our prologue. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." To the same purport are the opening verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by the Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." A greater than Moses, Elijah, or Solomon is here.

But if the eternal Logos was made flesh, it further follows that Christ is the true revealer of God also in reference to His *works*. Not only by His teaching does Christ ex-

hibit Himself as the Logos but also by His deeds. He communicated the knowledge of His Father's will to humanity just as surely by what He did or suffered as by what He said. Jesus was just as truly fulfilling His mission as the incarnate Logos when He was suspended on the cross on Calvary as when He said to Nicodemus, "God so loved the world," etc.; just as distinctly when He gave sight to the blind as when He said, "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness;" just as plainly when He washed His disciples' feet as when He said, "Blessed are the meek." In short, Jesus Christ as the Logos incarnate is the supreme enunciator of the mind of God to the whole extent of His personality.

Nor is this all. If Christ is the incarnate Logos of God, it follows, as a necessity, that in Him are included in advance all those partial and fragmentary revelations which at sundry times and in diverse manners God had granted to humanity, as well as those given and written subsequent to the incarnation. Christ being the incarnate Logos represents the sum total of what God has to say to humanity. Not only is He in His own person the perfect revealer of God, but He is the sum and substance of all revelation. He is God's absolute Word, not only with respect to what He Himself did or said, but also in reference to what others have said under divine inspiration before and after His appearance in the flesh. Christ, the incarnate Logos, is the focal center of all Scripture. All the scattered rays of divine revelation that at various times have shed their kindly light upon those who sit in darkness find in Him their unifying and luminous center. As all the Roman roads that threaded the vast empire radiated from the "golden pillar" on the forum of the Eternal City, so all the numerous paths of God's disclosures to humankind radiate from Christ as their common beginning. Or, to give a different turn to the figure, Christ is the "golden pillar" at which all the diverse roads of divine revelation converge. Christ, the God-

man, is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning, middle, and end of what the Creator has to say to the world.

We shall conclude with a few observations on the practical import of the sublime truth that Christ is the Logos. If Christ is the Logos, it is vain to attempt to pry into the mystery of the godhead with human reason. All human speculations on the nature of the Deity will either end in fog or something more tangible perhaps—materialism. Philippi, speaking of the folly of trying to comprehend the mystery of the Trinity, and of the still greater folly of denying it for the reason that it is incomprehensible, says: "The outcome of this folly is shown by the history of the newer philosophy. It began with a denial of the Trinity. Thus it lost God the Redeemer and God the Sanctifier, and aimed to retain only God the personal Creator. But also the latter was still too incomprehensible; therefore it advanced farther and conceived of God as the impersonal, eternal, spiritual substratum (Urgrund) of the world, who realizes and reveals Himself in the universe and in the human mind. But also this uniform spiritual substratum of the world was still too mysterious to them [the advocates of this wisdom]; so, finally, they canceled Him also, until they had nothing left but force and matter, materialism and atheism."¹⁾

If Christ is the Logos by whom the world was made, all such things as naturalistic development, the fortuitous concourse of atoms, blind chance, or fatal necessity are once for all branded as lies. If Christ is the Logos, there is no room for development in the sphere of Christian doctrine. The final and absolute truth has already been revealed and deposited in the Scriptures, and all progress must be limited to a better understanding of what has thus been laid down. Once more, if Christ is the Logos, all religious syncretism aiming to obliterate the sharp line of demarcation between

1) *Der Eingang des Johannesevangeliums, in Meditationen ausgelegt*, p. 48.

the religion of Christ and other systems is an impious folly. To place Christ the Logos on the same, or nearly the same, level as the founders of pagan systems, to put Him in one company with Buddha, or Confucius, or Mahomet, and "other masters," is to offer Him as great an indignity as did Alexander Severus, the Roman emperor, who placed the statue of Christ among his household deities. If Christ is the Logos, the only Mediator between God and man, Unitarianism, Judaism, bald Deism, and the popular notion that a vague belief in the existence of a "Supreme Being" somewhere above the clouds constitutes Christianity, are so many delusions of men, who out of carnal presumption or ignorance would scale the battlements of heaven instead of passing in through the divinely-appointed door. To endeavor to enter into communion with the Father except by the mediation of the incarnate Logos is the very acme of godless folly and impotent pride. Finally, if Christ is the Logos, only two alternatives are placed before the children of men—accept and live, or, reject and perish.

C. GAENSSLE.

PATRICK HAMILTON,

The First Lutheran Preacher and Martyr of Scotland.

By WILLIAM DALLMANN.*

Patrick Hamilton was born near Glasgow, about 1504. His father was Sir Patrick Hamilton, son of Lord of Hamilton and Princess Mary, daughter of King James II of Scotland. Sir Patrick was the first of Scottish knights when Scottish chivalry was in the height of its glory. The mother of our hero was Catherine Stewart, daughter of the Duke of

* *Authorities*:—Prof. Peter Lorimer's *Patrick Hamilton*; John Knox, *Hist. Ref. in Scotland*; John Spotswood, *Hist. Church in Scotland*; John Cunningham, *Church Hist. of Scotland*; D'Aubigné, *Ref. in Scotland*; *The Baird Lectures for 1899*; *Dictionary of National Biography*; *Realencyklopaedie fuer prot. Theol. u. Kirche*.