

ARTICLE II.

PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF THE LOGOS.¹

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JOHN'S doctrine of the Logos has always been a favorite one with theological and apologetic writers. Special attention is directed to it to-day, in view of the fact that John's Gospel has become the battle-ground of Rationalist and Conservative. Rarely, if ever, however, do we see any reference to a Pauline doctrine of the Logos; or even the suggestion of a possibility of there being such a doctrine. Hence the novelty, interest, and importance of this inquiry.

It seems to the writer strange that, with the diversities of renderings on the part of translators of the New Testament, the term Logos in Paul's writings is never suggested—as far as he knows—as referring to Jesus as the fulfillment of the protevangelium. But that Jesus is the promised "seed," the Logos, seems to be plainly taught by Paul, not only in Gal. iii. 16, but elsewhere in his Epistles.

We find the term five times in the Pastoral Epistles: 1 Tim. i. 15; iii. 1; iv. 9; 2 Tim. ii. 11; Tit. iii. 8. Now it must be borne in mind that, although these Epistles were written late in Paul's life (apparently between the years 65 and 68), they precede by some years (probably twenty-five) the Gospel of John. Consequently, if Paul's reference is to the Son of God (and there is at least room for argument that such is the

¹ This inquiry was suggested by Rev. S. S. Laws, D.D., LL.D., of Washington, D. C., to whom the writer is indebted for valuable assistance.

case), his view is preliminary to John's, and suggestive, rather than supplementary.

It is all but certain that John had in mind the first verses in Genesis when he penned the prologue of his Gospel.¹ But had John read the Pastoral Epistles? It is not at all unlikely that he had seen those to Timothy, as Timothy had been a bishop in Ephesus; and John, later, had labored and died there. Naturally, if opportunity afforded, he would consult these Epistles which shed light on the condition of the early church in that city, and were probably current there. That he had seen also the Epistle to Titus is not improbable; it certainly is within the range of possibility.

But whether or not Paul suggests the term to John, there are certain tests by which may be approximately determined the Messianic meaning of the phrase translated (R. V.), "Faithful is the saying," the phrase which occurs in each of the five texts mentioned. These tests, as it appears to the writer, are (1) lexicographical, (2) grammatical, (3) an examination of the context, (4) theological, (5) a comparison with Paul's writings in general.

Let us apply these several tests to the first passage under review (1 Tim. i. 15).

1. *Lexicographical.* According to Thayer, *logos* is primarily a collection, as well of those things which are put together in thought, as of those which, having been thought, are expressed in words. I. As respects SPEECH: 1. *a word* (uttered), Latin *vox*. 2. *a saying*. *a. univ.*: e.g., Matt. xix. 22, "When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful." *b. of the sayings of God*; (*a*) i. q. *decree*. (*b*) of the moral precepts given by God in the Old Testament.

¹ Note the parallels *B'reshith* and *En arche*,—

"God said, 'Let there be a firmament'" } and, "All things were
"God said, 'Let there be light'" } made by him."

(c) i. q. *promise. univ.*: a divine declaration recorded in the Old Testament. (d) *ho logos tou Theou*, an oracle, or utterance by which God discloses, to the prophets or through the prophets, future events. c. a thought, declaration, aphorism (Latin *sententia*). 3. discourse (Latin *oratio*); a. the act of speaking. b. i. q. the faculty of speech. c. a kind (or style) of speaking. d. continuous speaking, discourse. e. instruction. 4. in an objective sense, doctrine. 5. a narration, narrative. 6. matter under discussion, affair. 7. thing talked about; event; deed. II. Its use as respects the MIND alone, Latin *ratio*. 1. reason, the mental faculty of thinking, meditating, etc. 2. account, i. e. regard, consideration. 3. account, i. e. reckoning, score. 4. account, i. e. answer or explanation in reference to judgment. 5. relation: *Pros hon hemin ho logos*, with whom as judge we stand in relation. 6. reason, cause, ground. III. In several passages in the writings of John, *ho logos* denotes the essential word of God, i. e. the personal (hypostatic) wisdom and power in union with God, his minister¹ in the creation and government of the universe, the cause of all the world's life both physical and ethical, which for the procurement of man's salvation put on human nature in the Person of Jesus the Messiah and shone forth conspicuously from his words and deeds.²

The personality of Christ pertains to the divine nature; so that the human nature was taken into impersonal union with the divine. Just as, in our complex constitution, the personality pertains to our higher nature. And if, as is generally agreed, the last definition given by Thayer is the true meaning of *logos* as used in John i. 1, 14, and in 1 John i. 1, there is at least the possibility of its being so used by Paul in the

¹ He might have added after "minister," "and *alter Ego*."

² The above paragraph is a condensation from Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, pp. 380-382.

passages under consideration. Is not the Logos here declared to be worthy of universal acceptance, or faith, as the Saviour from sin, and the author of eternal life, and King eternal?

2. *Grammatical.* Unless the adjective is preceded by the article, the adjective is predicate. *Pistos ho logos* is, therefore, "*Faithful is the word* [or Word]."

Of course, in Greek usage, the article marks the subject of the predication, as in John i. 1, *kai Theos, een ho logos*. Why does the author observe the order he does? Why not say, *ho logos een Theos*? Because this might have altered the meaning. It might have been plausibly asserted that the article before *Theos* is idiomatically omitted after *een*, making the reading equivalent to "The Word was God"; i.e. the Father.¹ But this is exactly what John wishes to avoid saying. Having inferred the distinct Personality of the Word in the preceding clause, he places *Theos*, without the article, at the beginning of this clause, to indicate a divine essence equal with the Father, as distinguished from an intermediate, or inferior, making it evident that *ho logos* is the subject.

The article *ho* with *logos* is the key to this passage (1 Tim. i. 15), as it may give to its noun a retrospective or a prospective import.

Moreover, in this passage, *hoti* is evidently a causal particle (as in ver. 12); and in this appropriate sense it gives the

¹For an idiomatic omission of the article, see Col. i. 15 (see Ellicott's Commentary). Middleton (On the Greek Article, p. 240) on John i. 1 says, "In whatever conception *Theos* is to be taken, it properly rejects the article, being here the predicate." "Besides it is not true that the sacred writers have distinguished between *Theos* and *ho Theos*. The word is used 1,300 times in the New Testament, and, like *Kurios* in the sense of God, takes or rejects the article indiscriminately." The theory that *ho* adds to *Theos* and detracts from *Kurios*, he repudiates.

proof of the fidelity of the Logos. "Faithful is the Word because Christ came into the world to save sinners" (as had been promised).

3. *An examination of the context.* Does not the fact stated above, of *ho* with *logos* being the key to the passage, imply that *logos* is the ultimate underlying subject of the weighty utterances that precede or follow? As a substantive sentence it is not only true that "the Logos is faithful," but this truth is so fundamental as worthily to underlie any gospel affirmation. The dominant predication here is salvation of sinners. By converting or perverting this substantive sentence, with its subject formally marked by the definite article, into an adverbial clause, "faithful is the saying," it is emptied of all theological as well as historical import, relative to the great promise of Gen. iii. 15, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," and degraded into a mere particle of emphasis, or assurance that the great deliverances just made, or about to be made, are worthy of all consideration.¹

It should be noted that in this passage (1 Tim. i. 15), as well as in the others in which the phrase *Pistos ho logos* occurs, it is in some intimate way conjoined with the most profound doctrines of the Gospel. After speaking of his having obtained mercy, who had been a blasphemer, a persecutor and an injurious person, Paul says the grace which originated the mercy experienced, superabounded with faith (begotten in one formerly so wicked), and the love which is in Christ Jesus; i.e. the love which proceeded from him as its source.

What in 1 Tim. i. precedes this fifteenth verse, in which *logos* occurs, seems almost like a continuation of Paul's course

¹ Cf. Heb. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 8.

at Damascus immediately after his conversion. "And straightway in the synagogues he preached Jesus, that he is the Son of God." There was opposition. "But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ" (Acts ix. 20, 22). The charge to Timothy shows that at Ephesus Paul had encountered like opposition from Jews, with reinforcements from Gentiles, and Timothy was charged to confute "everything contrary to the sound doctrine; according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my [Paul's] trust" (1 Tim. i. 11).

In charging Timothy, and committing to him the great trust of preaching the gospel, and refuting all hostile views, he is naturally reminded of the source and circumstances of the committal of that great trust to himself, a sinner saved thereby. It was from Jesus (*ho Kurios*, ver. 12, 14), the Saviour of sinners. The repeated use of this term to designate Christ as the incarnate Jehovah¹ at once lifts the mind into the sphere of the Messiahship of the Son of God as the Saviour of sinners. There would seem to be most violent presumption against the citation of the supreme mission of the Son of God, the Anointed, as the Saviour of sinners, as simply resting on the authority of a proverb—"Faithful is the saying." Moreover, what evidence is there of any such saying as is here referred to being then current? This degradation of a substantive sentence, with the noun *logos* marked as its subject by the definite article, into a mere vulgar, adverbial phrase, is presumably incredible.

4. *Theological*. Now this grace (with faith and love) was to characterize the mission of the Messiah, according to

¹ *Kurios* is the word which throughout LXX identifies the Christ of the New Testament with Jehovah of the Old.

the prediction of the prophets, when he should become incarnate. See Isa. lxi. 1, 2, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek," etc.—a passage which the Lord quotes in the synagogue of Nazareth as fulfilled in himself. Any number of passages to the same effect might be cited; but the point will be so readily conceded that it is unnecessary to refer to others. "This one," Paul would say, "who can save me, the chiefest of sinners, can save any one."

5. *A comparison of these passages, quoted from the Pastoral Epistles, with Paul's writings in general.* A notable feature of this great apostle's writings is his use of the term *logos* to designate the gospel, "the proclamation of the grace of God manifested and pledged in Christ."¹ "For this is a word of promise" (Rom. ix. 9). "The hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. i. 5). See also 2 Cor. i. 18; iv. 2; Eph. i. 13; Col. i. 25; iii. 16.

Another well-known characteristic of Paul's writings is his emphasis on the faithfulness of God to his purposes of mercy, to his promises, to his covenants. His attitude, sustained in all his preaching and in his Epistles, is one of humble and adoring confidence. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. iii. 4). See also Rom. ix. 6; xv. 8; 1 Cor. i. 9; x. 13; 2 Cor. i. 18; Gal. iii. 13-29; iv. 23, 28; Eph. i. 13; ii. 12, 13; Col. i. 5, 25; 1 Thess. v. 24; 2 Thess. iii. 3; 2 Tim. i. 1; ii. 13. This last passage is worthy of special notice.

Now in the verses before us in the Pastoral Epistles in which occurs the expression "Faithful is the saying," this favorite idea of God's faithfulness is referred to in connection with the term *word*, which he had so often used to des-

¹Thayer.

ignite the proclamation, or promises, or content of God's grace; but now in his old age a new meaning to be given to *logos* seems to suggest itself to his mature thought, an emphasis being placed on the Person in whom God's gracious purpose is fulfilled. Already he had written: "For how many soever be the promises of God, in him [the Son of God, Jesus Christ] is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us" (2 Cor. i. 20).

It is all the more probable that the reference in this place is to the same Person, in view of two facts: (1) the state of the church in Ephesus, the residence of Timothy at this time; (2) other prevalent doctrines of the Logos.

Let us examine these two facts.

1. *The state of the church in Ephesus.* There are apparent traces of the beginning of Judaistic Gnosticism. The great apostle had predicted, in his farewell address to the elders of this church, that after his departure—not his death, but his departure from this region—grievous wolves should enter in among them, not sparing the flock. This sad prediction was all too soon fulfilled in the rise of this false system, Judaic and Gnostic questioning of the Personal Messiahship of Jesus. This system, while it drew largely from the systems of Plato and the Stoics, incorporated its bald dualism, a two-fold principle of good and evil existing from the beginning, from Oriental religions. Matter is inherently evil, the universe came into being through a process of devolution of a primitive kind, there being a series of intermediary spirits, or aions. Individual life is the result of a process of evolution from the original essence. "Jesus" is the son of Joseph and Mary; at his baptism he received the aion "Christ" into union with himself. This aion withdrew from Jesus before the passion; so that only the man Jesus suffered on the cross.

The principal task which Gnosticism proposed for itself was to lead men by speculative knowledge to salvation. By salvation is meant deliverance of the soul from the imprisonment of matter.

Paul had already made reference, in writing to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians, to the teachings of a false philosophy which foreshadowed Gnosticism. And now, as the system is developing, he is naturally aroused to oppose with vigor a heresy in its effect neutralizing his doctrines of the Cross and the Resurrection and dishonoring the Person of his Lord. Where could a more appropriate place be found for his repetitious and emphatic insistence on the faithfulness of Jehovah-Christ, the promised Messiah, than in his Epistles to these young men, holding such responsible positions in the church, especially in that to Timothy, his *protégé* in the great city of Ephesus?

2. *Other prevalent doctrines of the Logos.* The term *Word*, or a kindred term *Reason*, is found in the Indian, Persian, Egyptian, and Chinese systems. The term had, in the providence of God, become a universally recognized one for four centuries previous to the advent of the Messiah; and Paul, in a number of instances, adopts a term already in common use, to illustrate and unfold, in a manner most effective, the doctrine, not only of the divine sonship of his Lord, but as the fulfiller of the Father's gracious will for a sinful race. What Kitto says of John is true of Paul: "He did not attempt to stop the current of popular language, but only to keep it to its proper channel."¹ Plato made Logos to be the mind, or reason, of God, and a kind of personification, but not very God, of whom Plato was ignorant. The Logos of Philo,

¹ Paul borrows from Gnosticism the terms *Gnosis* and *Pleroma*, and adapts them to his use.

who knew of the true God, is the embodiment, allegorically, of all divine powers and ideas, as he conceives them, but impersonal; or, at best, he wavers between a personal and an impersonal idealistic conception. There is no room in his system for an incarnation of the Personal Logos and his conscious union with humanity. His doctrine has a sufficient resemblance to the true to make it plausible and dangerous. Under the correcting hand of Paul, the minds thus prepared would be guided into the truth which John subsequently more fully and explicitly unfolded.

Both the Old Testament and the teaching of the Lord himself had drawn a distinction between the hidden and the revealed being of God. The latter personified his wisdom and his word. Says Melancthon W. Jacobus, "Throughout the Old Testament the Word of God came to be more and more distinctly set forth as a personal revelation of God's mind and will in reference to man, just as Wisdom is the personal revelation of himself in regard to his own essence and attributes."¹ And Thomas Weekes truly asserts, "The term Logos was already familiar [to the Jewish people] as the name of their Jehovah dwelling between the cherubim. There was no mystery about the name, no question about its meaning or application, nothing strained or forced in its use. The meaning of the Logos and its appropriation as a name were perfectly established, as truly so as Christ."²

Much that has been said in the application of the tests to the first passage quoted, will apply to all. The reader who wishes may apply these tests, or others which suggest themselves to him, in detail. But let us notice a few special features of the remaining four passages.

¹ Commentary on John.

² The Economy of the Ages, published anonymously.

In the text of Westcott and Hort (a text founded entirely upon MS. evidence), the words *Pistos ho logos*, which in both the Authorized and the Revised Version are the opening ones of the third chapter of First Timothy (see, however, the marginal note in the R. V.), are the closing ones of the second chapter. This seems their natural connection, as they, in Paul's style, assign an adequate reason for the extraordinary statement just made, to the effect that though woman led the way into sin, and incurred a notable disability, yet her maternity was honored in the realization of salvation in the case of herself and others, through faith and love. And surely this most naturally connects with the promise given in Eden, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. The rational ground of this consummation of that promise is the faithfulness of the Logos. And in 2 Cor. i. 20 (already quoted), Paul makes distinct declaration that all the promises of God are yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, and certain of fulfillment, whatever be the fickleness of the promises of man.

So *gar*, in 1 Tim. iv. 9, 10, assigns the faithfulness of the Logos as the foundation of the promises on which the hope of eternal life rests as entirely worthy of acceptance.

In the next passage quoted (2 Tim. ii. 11, 13), *gar* and *pistos menei* seem to put the question beyond conjecture.

In the last passage (Tit. iii. 8), the clause *Pistos ho logos* seems to belong to verse 7; or, rather to the sentence beginning with verse 4, wherein the faithful Logos manifests the kindness of God our Saviour through the renewing of the Holy Spirit and the work of Jesus Christ our Saviour in justification, and its fruition in making us heirs of eternal life.

Says Bernhard Weiss, "It is an established fact, that the essential fundamental features of the Pauline doctrine, of sal-

vation are, even in their specific expression, reproduced in our Epistles [the Pastoral Epistles] with a clearness such as we do not find in any Pauline disciple, excepting perhaps Luke or the Roman Clement.”¹ And not the least characteristic of these essential fundamental features (if the interpretation given be the correct one) is this expression, “Faithful is the Word.” If it is simply faith in the verbal utterance, however important, which is inculcated, then the Logos is ignored; and this looks much like taking the fiducial underpinning from beneath these weighty utterances. If, on the other hand, the Logos is set forth in the relation of Personal activity touching some of the most profound doctrines of the gospel, such activity illustrates and vindicates in a unique manner the ever-to-be-remembered faithfulness of God in the Person of the Son, to his one supreme promise in Gen. iii. 15, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. This interpretation of Paul’s words, that the promise of the Saviour proclaimed in this protevangelium has been fulfilled in the Logos, is consonant with and anticipative of John: “For this purpose the Son of God [the Saviour proclaimed in the protevangelium] was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil”; and with the gracious statement of our Lord, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matt. ix. 13).

We conclude that the Logos of the Pastoral Epistles is identical, as the Saviour of sinners, with the Logos of John.

¹ Introduction to N. T., vol. 1. p. 410.