

God. And hence we might infer that the love and fidelity of Ruth would, in due time, meet with their reward. But we are not left to inference and conjecture. The last verse of the Chapter tells us that it was "*in the beginning of barley-harvest*" that Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem. And we know that, before the harvest was over, the mercy of God to these two loving women rejoiced over the judgments with which He had afflicted them. It was in the harvest-field that Ruth met Boaz, and with Boaz that "asylum" of honour and freedom which Naomi had thought it impossible for her to meet among the sons of Israel. The night of weeping is passed; a morning of joy is about to break upon them. How, and how wonderfully, this new day dawned on their sad but faithful hearts we shall see as we study the succeeding Chapters of the Book.

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THE PROLOGUE OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

II.—THE LOGOS.

THE three questions which we have to answer are these: Whence did the Evangelist derive his notion of the Logos? What is the origin of this unusual term? What the motive which led to its employment here?

First of all, it is of importance to establish one fact, that the Prologue does not contain a single thought which goes beyond the testimony of Christ in the Fourth Gospel and the teaching of the Old Testament read by this light. B. Weiss<sup>1</sup> mentions

<sup>1</sup> "Johanneischer Lehrbegriff," 1862.

two principal points in which the Prologue appears to him to go beyond the testimony of Christ: 1. The notion of the Word, by which John expresses the ante-historic existence of Christ; 2. The creative function which he attributes to this being. Weizsäcker<sup>1</sup> adds to these two points the pre-existence of Christ. This theologian can only make this at all plausible by distinguishing in the discourses of Jesus between what the Master really said and what must be put down to the Evangelist. That the discourses of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel contain the idea of his pre-existence is positively certain. "*What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*" (vi. 62).—"Verily, verily I say unto you, *Before Abraham was born, I am*" (viii. 58).—"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (xvii. 5).—"For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (xvii. 24). Nobody thinks, at the present day, of disputing the natural meaning of such words. By frankly rejecting the authority of Scripture, existing Rationalism has at the same time set itself free from the sad necessity of weakening the force of its statements. This is one of the advantages of the present state of things.

Let us, in the first place, attentively compare the contents of the Prologue with the discourses of Christ in the Fourth Gospel.

The first two propositions of verse 1 follow directly from the words of Christ which we have just quoted. For where could the Word have been prior to the

<sup>1</sup> "Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie," t. vii, fourth edition.

creation, and when nothing as yet existed, if not with God? Jesus says Himself, "*With thee, before the world was.*" The third proposition, "*The Word was God,*" is only a corollary from the preceding propositions, and from the saying "*I am,*" in contrast with "*Before Abraham was born,*" literally, "*became.*" Jesus there expressly attributes to Himself the essence, the mode of being of Him who said, "*I am that I am.*" As to the creative function attributed to the Logos (verse 3), should it not be sufficient to recall the idea of the eternal and divine existence of the Logos contained in the words: "*Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world,*" to see that He who spoke thus could not have been a stranger to the work which brought the world out of nothing, and to discern in the plural of Gen. i. 26, "*Let us make,*" the fact affirmed by John of the participation of the Word in the creative act? The testimony of Jesus concerning Himself in the Fourth Gospel does not permit of our seeking his presence, in the first chapter of Genesis, anywhere else than in the very bosom of Elohim.

The other passages of the Prologue are no less certainly deductions from the discourses and acts of Jesus in the Gospel; verse 4: "*In him was life;*" comp. v. 26: "*For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;*" verse 9: "*That was the true Light;*" comp. viii. 12 and ix. 5: "*I am the light of the world;*" . . . . "*He that followeth me shall have the light of life;*" verse 7: "*John came to bear witness;*" comp. i. 34: "*And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God;*" v. 33: "*Ye sent unto John,*

and he bare witness to the truth." The Prologue expresses the important idea of the activity of the Logos within the theocracy and even amongst mankind at large, prior to his incarnation: verses 5 and 11. This idea is necessarily implied in what Jesus says, in chap. x., of the way in which the Shepherd's voice is *known* by his sheep, and this not only by those belonging to the fold of the old covenant (verse 3), but also by those who are not of this fold (verse 16), by those children of God, not belonging to the nation, which were scattered abroad throughout the world (xi. 52). As to the contrast between the birth of the flesh and being born of God, which fills such a prominent place in the Prologue (verse 13), it is taken from this saying of Jesus: "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*" (iii. 6). The reality of Christ's humanity is asserted in the Prologue no less strongly than his divinity: verse 14. In no Gospel, perhaps, so much as in the Fourth, is the human side of the Saviour's person and affections so fully brought out. He is worn with fatigue (iv. 6); He is thirsty (iv. 7); He weeps for his friend (xi. 35); He is moved, even troubled (iv. 33; xii. 27). At the same time, his earthly glory as the Only Begotten, so admirably set forth in the Prologue, is displayed in the Gospel in the perfectly *filial* character of all the manifestations of Jesus, both in word and deed; his complete dependence (vi. 38 *et seq.*); his absolute docility (v. 30, &c.); his unrestricted fellowship with the Father (v. 20); the greatness of the works which He receives power to do—to quicken, to judge (v. 21, 22); his perfect assurance of being

heard, whatever He might ask (xi. 41, 42); the worship which He accepts (xx. 28), which He even claims, as equal with the Father (v. 23). The testimony of John the Baptist cited in verse 15 is taken to the letter from the subsequent narrative (i. 27, 30). The idea of the gift of the law as a preparation for the Gospel (verse 17) appears also in v. 46, 47. The 18th verse, which closes the Prologue, is almost a verbal reproduction of vi. 46: "*Not that any one hath seen the Father, save he which is of God: he hath seen the Father.*" Lastly, the terms *Son* and *only Son* are taken from vi. 40: "*This is the will of the Father, that every one which seeth the Son;*" . . . . and iii. 16 (which John certainly puts into the mouth of Jesus): "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son;*" and iii. 18: "*Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*"

If anything is demonstrable, it is, then, this fact, that the words attributed to Jesus in the narrative contain all the ideas expressed in the Prologue, or at least their immediate premisses. We cannot, with Weiss, except from this statement the idea of creation by the Word. There only remains now the term *Logos* chosen by John to characterize the Son. Unquestionably it is the employment of this philosophical term which has given occasion for the author of the Prologue to be regarded as a disciple of the Gnostics or of Philo, rather than as a simple disciple of his Master.

But all the expressions of which the Evangelist avails himself in the Prologue admit of a simply religious natural meaning, quite appropriate to the

context, whilst in Gnosticism they are employed in a forced, artificial, mythological sense.<sup>1</sup>

As to the Alexandrian School and Philo, no one at the present day fails to apprehend the fundamental and essential differences which separate them from John. M. Reuss<sup>2</sup> himself says: "Modern authors who hold that the Logos of John is not the same as that of Philo are unquestionably right." But he finds, nevertheless, "in the perfect similarity which exists between the expressions of the Apostle and those of philosophy" the proof of "a relation of dependence between the two systems, at least, as to their form and chronological succession."

The chief differences which appear to us to exist between John and Philo, as far as the present subject is concerned, and which, notwithstanding the common use of the word *λόγος*, argue two different and even opposed doctrines, are these:<sup>3</sup>

1. They both make use of the word *λόγος*, but with totally different meanings. In John it signifies, as in the language of the Bible generally, *Word*. In Philo it has the philosophical sense of *reason*. It is, as

<sup>1</sup> Hilgenfeld finds in *ζωή* (verse 4) the mythological person who, with the Gnostics, was the syzygy of the Logos; in *σκοτία* (verse 5) the principle eternally opposed to Light in the dualist system; in the expression, *come into the world* (verse 9), an allusion to the time during which, according to the Valentinians, Jesus was preparing to receive into Himself the divine Logos; in verses 12 and 13, the Gnostic principle that the believer only *becomes* what *he* already *is* by nature; in the grace and truth (verse 14), a Valentinian syzygy, &c. These pretended discoveries will excite a smile at some future day, just as we are amused now by the allegorizings of the Fathers.

<sup>2</sup> "Hist. de la Théol Chrét.," t. ii. p. 354.

<sup>3</sup> Philo survived Jesus by at least ten years (Rénan, "Vie de Jésus," p. ix.). His writings are therefore certainly older than the Gospel of John.

Grossman<sup>1</sup> says, "*Vis divina in ratione posita et universæ naturæ animo atque mente, divinæ mentis fusio universæ.*" When Philo wishes to give to the term λόγος the sense of *word*, he expressly adds ῥήμα. "God makes one thing and another," he says, by his λόγῳ ῥήματι.<sup>2</sup> He attributes creation to the ῥήμα θεοῦ.<sup>3</sup> The use of the word λόγος in St. John is in accordance, therefore, with the meaning of this expression in the LXX. and throughout Scripture, but in no way with its meaning in Philo.

2. The nature of the being thus designated is also conceived of in an entirely different manner by the two writers. The Logos of John is a person. "He is," says Baur, "a Divine being, existing for Himself, who is drawn, in some way, towards the heart of God, seeking to lose in unity that which separates and distinguishes Him from God. . . . This implies a consciousness in Him of his personal distinction."<sup>4</sup> The Logos of Philo possesses no real personality. Grossmann<sup>5</sup> says: "Just as the theology of Philo is made up of different elements, so the notion of the Divine Logos which we find in him assumes different colours, reflecting the different authors with whom he associates." Writing under the influence of Jewish documents, he calls the Logos the *archangel*. When he is explaining himself as a Platonist, he designates it the *idea of ideas* (ἰδέα ἰδέων). At other times, adopting the Stoic doctrine of the soul of the world, he describes it as the *impersonal*

<sup>1</sup> "Quæstiones Philonææ," ii. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Hælemann, "De Evangelii Joh. Introitu," p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> "Das Christ. und die Christl. K. der drei ersten Jahrb.," p. 323.

<sup>5</sup> "Quæst. Phil.," ii. 69.

*reason* diffused throughout all existences (ὁ κοινὸς λόγος ὁ δια πάντων ἐρχόμενος). Niedner also sums up his investigation of this question by saying: "There is not a passage which requires, whilst there are several which exclude, the hypostatical distinction of God from the Logos."<sup>1</sup> There is, therefore, no connection between this confused, indefinite, complex notion, the result of an evident syncretism, and the clear and original idea of the Word found in John.

3. The function of the Logos, in Philo, is confined to the creation and preservation of the universe. It never entered the thoughts of this philosopher to connect this being with the person of the Messiah, still less to identify them. In John, on the contrary, the idea of the Logos is only mentioned in view of his appearing as the Messiah, and of his incarnation.

4. Lastly, the origin of the two notions is altogether different. In Philo its origin is metaphysical. God being conceived of as an absolutely undefined and impersonal being, as pure existence, it was impossible to pass from such a being to the finite and infinitely varied creation; and since this creation was a fact which had to be explained and harmonized with a rational conception of God, it was necessary to interpose an inferior agent, a *second God*, the Logos. In John the premisses are altogether different. God, so far from being an impersonal and abstract principle, is a Father (i. 18), whose essence is love (iii. 16). He is in direct relations with the world, since He loves and desires to save it. The

<sup>1</sup> "De subsistentiâ τῷ θεῷ λόγῳ apud Philonem tributa."—"Quæst. Phil.," ii. p. 3.



Logos of John is not, therefore, a mediator metaphysically necessary between God and the world. His existence belongs to the sphere of love (i. 18; xvii. 24), not of logical necessity.

Now is it possible to conceive two ideas more completely opposed than the God of Philo and the God of John, and, consequently, than their respective notions of the Logos? The two writers have nothing in common but the term, and even this they use in different senses. Let us hear no more of John's being of the school of Philo, or of Philo's disciples. Evidently his thought and even his vocabulary are derived from another source.

We have already observed that the term *λόγος*, and the conception involved in it, are the only things in the Prologue not derived directly from the discourses which St. John puts into the mouth of Christ. If he has not borrowed them either from this sacred source or from the philosophy of his time, whence did he get them? From his private conversations with his Master, or from some special revelation? It is impossible to say that he did not, but equally impossible to prove that he did, derive it from either of these sources. One thing, however, is certain, that this doctrine of the Creative Logos, who became our Saviour in Jesus Christ, had the same authority, in his eyes, as the teaching which he puts into the mouth of Jesus Himself. Otherwise, he would not have mixed it up, as he does in the Prologue, with the substance of that teaching. On the other hand, it is probable that he never heard this expression fall from the lips of his Master; or why, if it had been

derived from Him, should he have omitted it in his account of the discourses of Jesus? We are led, by this twofold consideration, to this result—that the notion of the Logos, although not directly forming part of the teaching of Jesus, had, nevertheless, exactly the same authority for the religious consciousness of John as the words of Jesus Himself. How is this fact to be explained?

Only in one way. In John's view, there existed an authority equal to his Master's, because it had been sanctioned by Him. This was the Old Testament; and it was from this source that John, following a path pointed out in the discourses of Jesus, obtained the notion of the Logos and even the very term. Three lines, in fact, in the Old Testament, converge towards the notion and towards the term for the meaning of which we are in search:

1. The appearances of the Angel of the Lord. In the Old Testament we find a Divine messenger (Maleach), sometimes distinct from Jehovah and sometimes identified with Him. Comp. Gen. xvi. 7: "*The angel of the Lord found her,*" with xvi. 13: "*the Lord that spake unto her.*" God says of this mysterious being (Exod. xxiii. 21), "*My name* [that is to say, the knowledge and possession of my inmost hidden essence] *is in him.*" In Hosea xii. 4, 5, this being with whom Jacob wrestled, who (Gen. xxxii. 28-30) is called God (*El*), receives the names of *Elohim* and *Maleach*. In Zech. xii. 8 it is said that the house of David shall be *as Elohim*, and then, by way of climax, *as the angel of the Lord*. Lastly, in Mal. iii. 1 it is positively declared that the Messiah

will be none other than that person, at once Divine and distinct from God, who had long been worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem: "*The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger [Maleach] of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he cometh.*" In Zech. xii. 10, the Messiah, who is to be pierced by his people, is Jehovah Himself: "*They shall look on me, saith Jehovah, whom they have pierced.*" Thus, according to the Old Testament, this Divine Being, who was from the beginning the agent of all the theophanies, was to complete his mediatorial work by Himself fulfilling the functions of Messiah.

2. We may regard the description of *Wisdom* in Prov. viii. as certainly nothing more than a poetical personification of the Divine Intelligence. When combined, however, with the notion of the Angel of the Lord, this idea of Wisdom assumes the character of a real personality. "*The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old*" (verse 22). "*When he prepared the heavens, I was there*" (verse 27). "*Then I was with him as a worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him: rejoicing in the earth, and my delights were with the children of men*" (verses 30 and 31). The analogy of these expressions with those of the first four verses of the Prologue is obvious. What particularly characterizes this passage is the participation of Wisdom in the work of creation. This feature does not appear in the doctrine of the Maleach.

3. A third intermedium between God and the world to which the Old Testament still more fre-

quently attributes the greatest importance is the *Word of the Lord*. Its part commences with creation. Later on it becomes the ordinary agent of the prophetic revelations. There are some passages which tend to personify it. It is a physician sent from heaven to heal Israel (Psa. cvii. 20); a Divine messenger, who runs swiftly through the world (Psa. cxlvii. 15); an agent, who executes without fail the mission entrusted to him (Isa. lv. 11). After the Babylonish captivity, the Jewish doctors identified this living Word of God with the mysterious personage called the Angel of the Lord; and, combining into one view the theophanies, prophetic revelations, and manifestations of Jehovah generally, they attributed them to one and the same organ, which they called by the name of the Word of the Lord (מִיְמַרָא דִּי יְהוָה). They regarded this *Memra* as acting throughout the ancient economy, even where God alone is named. It was He who was with Joseph in prison. It is to the *Memra* that God says, in Psa. cx. 1: "*Sit thou on my right hand.*" He is the destroying Angel, and He dwells in the cloud in the desert. (See Lücke, t. i. p. 285.)

Of these three organs of Divine action and revelation,—the *Maleach*, *Wisdom*, and the *Word*,—the last was certainly the fittest to include and denote the other two. Owing to its intelligible contents, the Divine word is wisdom. Regarded as an act, it is a power, a personal agent, such as the *Maleach* was. There is, however, this difference between the term employed in the Chaldean paraphrases and that used by St. John, that the former always says *Memra of Jehovah*, whilst John says absolutely *the*

*Word.* Further, it is impossible to say whether, according to the notions of the Jewish doctors, there was any connection between what they called the Word of the Lord and the person of the Messiah.

We possess now all the elements required for the explanation of the notion and of the term Logos in the Prologue of John, without going away from the sphere of the theocratic revelations and forsaking that sacred soil in which the roots of the Apostle's religious thought and life were imbedded.<sup>1</sup>

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THE EPISTLES TO  
THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

INTRODUCTORY (*concluded*).

THE words in which the writer of the Apocalypse describes himself, and the process by which the messages he is about to write came to him, are every way significant. "Tribulation" had come upon those Churches, and he was a "fellow-sharer" with them in the sufferings which it brought; but through the tribulation he and they were alike gaining their place "in the kingdom." He repeats, *i.e.*, the lesson which the Churches in that region had heard at the outset from St. Paul, that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22). But he is their partner also in the patience or "endurance," not *of* (I follow the better reading), but "*in* Jesus." The thought expressed is not, as it is perhaps in 2 Thess. iii. 5 (if we accept our English rendering), that of "the patient waiting for

<sup>1</sup> A Dissertation from GODET'S "Commentary on the Gospel of St. John," translated from the French by the Rev. E. W. SHALDERS, B.A.