

Edwin D. Freed  
*Gettysburg College*

## Some Old Testament Influences on the Prologue of John

During my days as a seminary student, it was Dr. Myers who impressed upon me the importance of a knowledge of the Old Testament for a proper understanding of the New. Ever since that time I have frequently been grateful for the wisdom Dr. Myers imparted in the classroom and my subsequent association with him as a friend. I am delighted to have this opportunity to contribute to a volume of essays in his honor.

Although influence from the OT upon a writer of the NT may be seen most clearly, perhaps, in his direct quotations, frequently the language and thought of a NT writer show familiarity with the OT more indirectly through allusion and paraphrase. This is especially true of the writer of the Fourth Gospel.

As I have shown elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> in his formal quotations the author of John, like most NT writers and the sect of Qumran, shows a preference for Isaiah and the Psalms. Quotations in John are sometimes combined and/or conflated, as, for example, in 6: 31 and 12: 15. In several places, one can detect influence on the thought of John from an OT passage or passages in addition to the one specifically quoted, as in 6: 45 and 7: 37 f. Sometimes a quotation may show influence also from the Qumran Scrolls, as, for example, in 7: 37 f. And some quotations or their contexts show acquaintance with the Synoptics or the Synoptic tradition—for example, 2: 17; 13: 18; 19: 28 f, 36 f. I should like to suggest that when the writer of the Prologue composed his verses presenting Jesus as the Light, he was influenced primarily by the poetic eschatology of Is 60: 1-3, 5, 19, especially by vss 1-3. He may also have been influenced by one or more of the passages from the Psalms quoted below, especially 36: 9 (10), where the symbols of life and light as-

sociated with God are brought together. In Jn 1: 4, both life and light are applied to Jesus and even in the same order. The writer of the Prologue was very probably influenced by the passage from Qumran quoted below, which is the closest parallel from the Dead Sea Scrolls yet known to any passage in the NT (cf Jn 1: 3). This influence coincides with that from Qumran elsewhere in the Gospel. And acquaintance with the Synoptic tradition at several points is also apparent.

Is 60: 1-3, 5a, 19cd

- 1 Arise, give light, for your light has come;  
and the glory of the Lord shines forth over you.
- 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but over you the Lord will shine forth,  
and his glory will be seen over you.
- 3 And nations shall walk by your light,  
and kings by the brightness of your shining.
- 5 Then will you see and be bright [or shine or be radiant].
- 19 The Lord will be to you a light everlasting,  
and your God will be your glory.

Ps 36: 9 (10)

For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light shall we see light.

Ps 56: 13 (14)

That I may walk before God in the light of life

Ps 27: 1

The Lord is my light and my salvation

1QS 11: 11

And by his knowledge everything was brought into being;  
and all things that are were established by his thought;  
and apart from him it is not done.<sup>2</sup>

The theme of Is 60 may be stated thus: "The light of God's glory revealed for all to see" (cf Is 40: 5). The first three verses are an introductory strophe to a chapter of prophecy complete in itself. While darkness covers the rest of the world, the light of Yahweh's glory dawns upon Jerusalem, and the nations are attracted to it.

For John, the darkness of the end of the age has settled upon the earth. But the light of salvation, so long promised yet so long expected in vain, has finally come. Jesus is "a light everlasting" (Is 60: 19 f), "the light of life" (Ps 56: 13[14]; Jn 8: 12), the light which the darkness could not overcome (Jn 1: 5). Jesus, as the eschatological and ethical Light of the world,

came to save men from the darkness of sin and death (cf Jn 3: 19-21; 8: 12; 9: 5; 11: 9 f; 12: 35 f, 46). What more fitting introduction to his Gospel could there be than a poem about Jesus as the Light?—as my reconstruction here given and supported later clearly shows.

Jn 1:3-14

Strophe 1

6 There was a man,  
sent from God,  
whose name was John.

7 He came for a witness,  
to bear witness to the light,  
that all might believe through him.

8 He was not the light,  
but [came] to bear witness to the light.

Strophe 2

9 The light, the true one,  
that gives light to every man,  
was coming into the world.

3 All things came into being through him,  
and apart from him nothing has come into being.

4 In him was life,  
and the life was the light of men.

5 The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.

10 He was in the world,  
and the world was made through him,  
but the world did not know him.

11 He came to his own,  
but his own did not receive him.

Strophe 3

12 But as many as received him,  
to them he gave power to become children of God,  
to those who believe on his name.

13 They were born not of blood,  
nor of the will of the flesh,  
nor of the will of man,  
but of God.

Strophe 4

14b And we beheld his glory,  
glory as of a unique Son from the Father.

The vocabulary common to the passages cited, especially Is 60 and the Prologue, is obvious. Not so obvious, however, are certain *ideas* common to Is 60 and the Prologue:

1. Pervading eschatological mood.
2. Repetition of the word "come" (Is 60: 1, 4bc, 5d, and Jn 1: 7, 8 [understood], 9, 11).

3. Antithesis between light and darkness.
4. Light prevails.
5. Presence of a believing community (Jerusalem in Isaiah; "those who believe on his name" in Jn 1: 12 = "we" in 1: 14).
6. Acceptance or belief is not universal (cf Is 60: 7 ff, 12 and Jn 1: 11 f). There is a contrast between Jerusalem and the world in Isaiah; in John, between the world and those receiving the Light and believing.
7. Use of "name" for the person ("the name of the Lord your God" in Is 60: 9; "believe on his name" in Jn 1: 12).
8. Idea of glory; but whereas it is central in Isaiah, light is central in John. In Isaiah, it is the glory of Yahweh, but of Christ as the Light in John, a natural transference for the writer, as elsewhere in the Gospel (cf also *ἐγὼ εἶμι*). But in both cases, it is a glory that is "seen."
9. The verbs *ʾōr* and *r'h* occur in Is 60: 1 f. In the LXX, both are translated either with *φαίνω* or *φωτίζω*. The latter occurs in the LXX of Isaiah only in 60: 1, 19. Both words appear in the Prologue; the former in 1: 5, the latter in 1: 9. The fact that *φωτίζω* occurs nowhere else in the Gospel seems to indicate influence from Is 60: 1 f in the Prologue.
10. A "coalescence of the external and physical manifestation with spiritual revelation is a central feature of the poet's eschatological representation."<sup>3</sup> Although the writer of the Prologue wants the reader to know that the Light came in human form, spiritual overtones are apparent.<sup>4</sup> "It is a mistake, therefore, to divorce the literal and material from the symbolic and spiritual. The external and internal manifestations of Yahweh's presence and his eschatological and redemptive deeds belong together."<sup>5</sup>
11. "The poet employs all the resources of terminology, repetition, word order, and grammatical construction to portray the glory of the Lord's self-manifestation."<sup>6</sup> Again an apt description of the Johannine poet as well.

Upon examination of the Prologue certain observations seem important. Light (*φῶς*), not Word (*λόγος*), is the dominant theme of vss 3–13 and 14b. Whereas the word *λόγος* occurs only four times in vss 1–14, three of which are in the first verse, the word *φῶς* is used six times in vss 4–9. Moreover, *λόγος* does not appear anywhere else in the Gospel with the same meaning—namely, in a christological sense. In the whole NT *λόγος* is used as a title for Jesus only twice, both in Johannine writings (1 Jn 1: 1; Rev 19: 13). Although Jesus never applied the title Logos to himself, he did apply the symbols light and life to himself: "I am the light of the world" (8: 12); "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (9: 5); "The light is with you for a little while longer" (12: 35; cf also 12: 46). The themes of light and darkness, with Jesus as the Light, are an inherent part of the rest of the Gospel.

The dominance of the *λόγος* concept in the Prologue has been grossly exaggerated. And since Light, not Word, is the dominant idea, we have

a Phōs (light) poem or hymn. But how, then, does this Phōs poem fit in with the rest of the Prologue (1: 1 f, 14a, 15–18) and the Gospel as a whole?

In the opinion of some scholars, the Prologue serves as a rather thorough introduction or summary or outline for the Gospel, and stands in a close relationship to it. According to others, the Prologue is scarcely related to the body of the Gospel, and thus represents an effort on the part of someone to express the coming of Jesus in Hellenistic terms in a way that would appeal to Greek readers.<sup>7</sup>

There is a wide range of opinion with respect to which verses comprised the original form of the Prologue. Of the cross section of scholarly opinions cited by Brown, all "regard vss. 6–8, and 15 as secondary additions; and many would add vss. 9, 12–13, 17–18. The only general agreement is on vss. 1–5, 10–11, and 14 as parts of the original poem."<sup>8</sup> Before presenting my own proposal, I should like to discuss here two of the more recent and perceptive studies on the Prologue.

#### J. A. T. ROBINSON ON THE PROLOGUE

J. A. T. Robinson<sup>9</sup> presupposes the literary unity of the Gospel on purely stylistic grounds, including both Prologue and Epilogue as the work of a single hand, though not written at one sitting. According to Robinson, there is "no clear line demarcating" the Prologue from the body of the Gospel, and it is difficult to determine the thought and poetic structure of the Prologue. The most obvious difficulties are vs 15—the rudest interruption—and the change of subject beginning with vs 6. The differences in subject and rhythm have "prompted numerous reconstructions . . . of what has been called a 'Wisdom hymn' or 'Logos ode.'" Robinson finds "little evidence for" and "much presumption against" such a hymn being pre-Johannine or even non-Christian in origin, taken over from Mandaeans, Alexandrians, or Gnostics. "Nor does it even fit the facts to presuppose an independent Logos poem previously composed by the same author and then forced into uneasy union with the narrative of his Gospel. It is more as though in the Prologue the themes of the Gospel are played over beforehand, as in the overture to an opera."

I am in substantial agreement with most of what Robinson says up to this point. The last sentence of the above paragraph is particularly apt, but it is even more valid if the primary feature of the Prologue is a Phōs poem and not a Logos hymn. Robinson himself notes that *λόγος* never recurs in the Gospel as a title, that "the dominant Christology of the Gospel is . . . 'the Christ, the Son of God,'" and that certain connections, such as "the most markedly 'metaphysical' language of the Gospel" (3: 13) and

the distinction between τὰ ἄνω and τὰ κάτω (3: 31), which some see as Platonic, are missing just where one might expect to find them. He also says that "in the central affirmation of the Prologue . . . 'the Word became flesh' . . . the usage of the key terms is subtly different from that of the Gospel as a whole" (cf 1: 14; 6: 14; 3: 6). For the terminology of the Word becoming flesh, we must look not to the Gospel but to the Epistles of John, in such places as 1 Jn 4: 2; 2 Jn 7; and 1 Jn 1: 1.

Noting the parallels between 1 Jn 1: 1, 2 and Jn 1: 14, 4, 2, Robinson suggests that the opening of 1 Jn "represents the first sketch for the Prologue," and that the Prologue, as well as the Epilogue, belongs to the period during which the Epistles were written. The Prologue is, therefore, "a definite addition—more like a preface to a second edition—setting the original work in a new context." The Gospel "once began—as it ended—differently." While the original ending of the Gospel is preserved in 20: 31, its original beginning cannot be reconstructed with certainty. Robinson defends the thesis that the Prologue consists "not (as has usually been suggested) . . . of a poem with prose additions, but . . . an original narrative opening around which a poetic structure (with its own prose commentary) has subsequently been built."

Starting with the poetic or rhythmic meditation portion first, Robinson says that vss 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, and 14 represent the material common to the reconstructions of J. Weiss, C. Cryer, C. F. Burney, J. H. Bernard, H. C. Green, and R. Schnackenburg.<sup>10</sup> Other verses, not so clearly poetic but dependent theologically upon the rhythmic meditation, are 2, 12, 13, 14b, 16, 17, 18. After the prose portion is detached, we are left with vss 6–9, 15, and 19, which possibly constituted the original opening of the Gospel.

If the Prologue was written after, not with, the Gospel as an addition to it, then, according to Robinson, two consequences follow: one for the historical setting of the Gospel, and the other for its theology.

First, "the Logos theology belongs to the *environment* of the Gospel rather than to its *background*." The environment "in and for which the Gospel was published was one of Greek-speaking Diaspora Judaism, but . . . the background of the author and his tradition was Aramaic-speaking Palestinian Judaism." The Logos hymn could be the product of Palestinian Judaism or more probably of Diaspora Judaism, even perhaps of Hellenism. Although Robinson does point out that "one of the most interesting correspondences in the Qumran literature is in fact with John i. 3," he says that the Qumran Scrolls provide no parallel to the Logos theology.

Second, the history of the Gospel "has its own primacy, the facts are sacred—and the theology is given only in, with and under it. This is made

crystal clear in the opening verses of the first Epistle, and the Prologue restates it by insisting upon the centrality of the Word made flesh."

It is clear that throughout his discussion, as in discussions of the Johannine Prologue by other scholars in general, Robinson is primarily concerned with the Logos, "the centrality of the Word." It is precisely this point, I think, which has to be seriously reconsidered.

In the course of his discussion, Robinson lists themes common to the Prologue and the rest of the Gospel:

The pre-existence of the Logos or Son  
 In him was life  
 Life is light  
 Light rejected by darkness  
 Yet not quenched by it  
 Light coming into the world  
 Christ not received by his own  
 Being born of God and not of flesh  
 Seeing his glory  
 The only-begotten Son  
 Truth in Jesus Christ  
 No one has seen God, except the one who comes from God's side

I should like to point out, first of all, that the list is "impressive," to use Robinson's term. But it is impressive to me because of the centrality of the Light and the things associated with it, not the Logos. In fact, the only reference to the Logos (first theme) should not be included, not just for the reason that the title Logos itself appears nowhere in the Gospel—to say nothing of its pre-existence—but because the pre-existence of the Son is not stated in the Prologue. And all the other comparisons are equally valid, or even more so, when made with Christ as the Light.

Following the suggestion of B. T. D. Smith, Robinson says there may be "a deliberate correspondence between the *structure* of the Prologue and that of the Gospel":

Christ as the agent of (the new) creation (1: 3 = 1: 35–4: 42)  
 Christ as the life of the world (1: 4 = 4: 43–6: 71)  
 Christ as the light of the world (1: 4 f = 7: 1–9: 41)  
 He came to his own and his own received him not (1: 10 f = 10: 1–12: 50)  
 But to all who believed in his name he gave power to become children of God (1: 12 f = 13: 1–20: 29)

Here again Light, with the things associated with it, not Logos, may be taken as predominate. In line one, presumably Christ as Logos is "the agent of (the new) creation," since Jn 1: 3 is given as the reference from the

Prologue. But Christ is nowhere the agent of creation in 1: 35–4: 42. It is very important to notice here that the Christ through whom the world was made (vs 10) is characterized in vs 9 as “the true light,” not as the Logos. While it is not explicitly stated elsewhere in the Gospel that Christ as the Light—or under any other title, for that matter—is the agent in creation, at least a “new creation” may be taken as implied in such passages as 6: 33; 8: 12; 9: 5 (with the whole story of the healing of the blind man); 11: 9 f, 25 f (the raising of Lazarus); and 12: 35 f, 46. Better yet, perhaps, are those passages about Jesus working—as, for example, in 4: 34; 5: 17–36; 10: 25–38; 14: 10–12; 17: 4.

#### JOACHIM JEREMIAS ON THE PROLOGUE

More recently, Joachim Jeremias has produced a chapter on the Prologue to John.<sup>11</sup> He begins with an observation with respect to the sentence structure. “The Prologue is constructed by means of parallelism, the pairing of similarly sounding clauses, constituting a kind of call and response—perhaps echoing the alternation between precentor and congregation.” He adds: “The Prologue, as everyone knows today, is a powerfully contrived song, an early Christian religious poem, a psalm, a hymn to the Logos Jesus Christ” (p. 72).

Thus Jeremias also calls the poetry of the Prologue a Logos-hymn, so the Logos remains as the center of his attention. According to Jeremias, the hymn is divided into four strophes: (1) the Logos of God (vss 1–5); (2) the witness pointing to him (vss 6–8); (3) the fate of the Logos in the world (vss 9–13); and (4) the confession of the believing community (vss 14–18).

Notice here that much of what Jeremias takes as applied to Jesus as the Logos could more aptly be applied to him as the Light. In the second strophe, John the Baptist came “to bear witness to the Light” (1: 7), not to the Logos, which is totally consistent with the portrayal of the Baptist elsewhere in the Gospel. In 5: 35, “light” is used with reference to the Baptist who, as in 1: 7, is thought of as bearing witness to Jesus: “John has borne witness to the truth . . . He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a time in his light”; and in the context of 5: 33–36, the Baptist is presented as inferior to Jesus, as in other places in the Gospel.

In the third strophe, what is described is the fate of the Light, not of the Logos, in the world (1: 9–13). The antecedent of everything that is stated in vss 10–13 is “the true light . . . that was coming into the world” (vs 9). In this strophe, things are also in perfect harmony with passages elsewhere in the Gospel. At two places in the Gospel, there is reference to Jesus as

Light having come into the world; once probably in the words of the writer, though perhaps in the words of Jesus (3: 19), once definitely in Jesus’ words (12: 46). These two passages confirm the translation in 1: 9—that is, taking *ἐρχόμενον* with *φῶς* instead of *ἄνθρωπον*.

Even in the fourth strophe, “the confession of the believing community” should be thought of as directed toward “the unique Son,” rather than toward the Logos. In vs 15, “John bears witness to him” (Son, as antecedent) finds a parallel in 1: 34: “And I have seen and I have borne witness that this is the Son of God.” At other places the Baptist is said to bear witness to Jesus, but never to him as the Logos (cf 1: 32 f; 3: 26; 5: 33). Whereas the term Logos never appears elsewhere in the Gospel, the words “unique Son” (1: 14b) occur in 3: 16.

The descriptions which Jeremias uses to summarize the strophes seem much more appropriate if the Prologue is considered as a Phōs poem rather than as a Logos hymn. Taken in this way, all the verses of the Prologue (3–13, 14b) except 1 f, 14a, and 15–18 are entirely consonant with the Gospel.

Jeremias observes that in the Prologue there is a kind of poetry well known in Hebrew literature—“a skilful elaboration of the synthetic form, namely climactic parallelism (step-parallelism). It is so named because every line takes up a word of the preceding line, as it were lifting it up a step higher.” In the Prologue, it appears in 1: 4 f, 1: 14b, and 1: 16:

In him was *life*,  
and the *life* was the *light* of men.  
And the *light* shines in the *darkness*,  
and the *darkness* has not comprehended it.  
We have beheld his *glory*,  
*glory* as of the only son from the Father,  
*full of grace* and truth,  
and from his *fulfillment* have we all received *grace* upon *grace*.

“This climactic parallelism is the dominating formal feature of the Prologue.” Jeremias points out the lack of climactic parallelism in some verses (12b, 13, 14–16). Only by taking the words “full of grace” from vs 14a and connecting them with vs 16, omitting vs 15, can he obtain a climactic parallelism in vss 14–16.

This observation corresponds to another one. Whereas the climactic parts of the Prologue differ in their vocabulary from the Fourth Gospel (such important words as “the Logos,” “grace and truth,” even “grace,” do not recur outside the Prologue), the non-climactic insertions betray the language of the Fourth Evangelist himself (vv. 6–8, 12b–13, 15 and, perhaps, 17–18).

This has led to the commonly accepted conclusion that we must distinguish between the original Prologue (*Urprolog*) and the Evangelist's comments about it. The *Urprolog* is of Christian origin and was "one of the hymns sung at the daily Eucharist . . ." (pp. 73–75).

According to Jeremias, the Christian origin of the Logos hymn is certain because it was one of many in the NT exalting Christ, including Phil 2: 6–11; Col 1: 15–20; 1 Tim 3: 16; and 2 Tim 2: 11–13, of which Phil 2: 6–11 is most nearly like the Christ hymn in Jn 1. "They are *Heilsgeschichte* in *Hymnenform*. This literary genre . . . comes from the Old Testament." The Logos hymn of John replaces the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke, but on a more exalted note (pp. 75 f, 78 f).

#### THE PROLOGUE AS A PHŌS (LIGHT) POEM

Several observations with respect to Jeremias' view should be noted. First of all, in the poetic verses which Jeremias sets off, Light is the dominating feature. There could scarcely be better evidence for the nucleus of a Phōs poem in the Prologue than that fact. Moreover, the italicized words (italics are his), with the exception of the ones in the last two lines, are among those which occur most frequently in the Gospel. So Jeremias' statement that "the climactic parts of the Prologue differ in their vocabulary from the Fourth Gospel" is correct only for the words which he takes from vss 1, 14a, and 16 f. Precisely because the vocabulary of all verses, including the climactic parts, except 1 f, 14a, and most of 15–18, *does* coincide with that of the Gospel is a major reason for concluding that vss 1 f, 14a, and most of 15–18 were probably not written by the author of vss 3–13, 14b, and the rest of the Gospel.

If it be granted at this point that Light, not Logos, is the dominant feature of the Prologue, then surely it is clear that the Logos idea has been overworked. I have suggested that the author of John, under the influence of a combination of OT passages, especially Is 60: 1–3, 5, 19, the Qumran Scrolls, and the Synoptic tradition, composed the Prologue as an introduction to his work. As in the case of many introductions, I believe his was composed after the completion of the Gospel. I also think that it originally comprised most, if not all, of vss 3–13 and 14b, and that the idea of the Logos (vss 1 f and 14a) was not a part of it. We can omit the Logos passages—and, as I will establish later, they are the only ones we can omit—without losing a single concept or theme of the Gospel.

On the other hand, the missing connection between Prologue and Gospel which Robinson points out—"the pre-existent Son of man who descends from heaven to return thither"—does not seem to be serious. As I have

shown elsewhere,<sup>12</sup> "Son of man" in John is only a literary variation for the Son, Son of God, and Jesus, and not a distinct theological concept. Although not as vividly or explicitly stated as in vss 1 and 14a, the pre-existence of Jesus may be implied from the language of vs 9—"the light . . . was coming into the world"—in the same way as from similar language elsewhere in the Gospel, rather clear statements of which are in 3: 19; 6: 51; 8: 58; and 12: 46. With the idea of pre-existence in 1: 9 and 14b, compare especially 16: 26–30, and notice the similarity of language and thought. Whether or not pre-existence is implied in 14b, it seems more appropriate to associate glory—"glory as of a unique Son from the Father"—with the concept of Jesus as the Light, as we have done, than with that of the Logos. In 17: 1–5, as in 1: 14b, glory is associated with the Son, and there it is the glory of the Son which was pre-existent (cf 17: 22). In 17: 24, as in 1: 14b, it is glory which is "beheld." Moreover, the Light and Son (of God) are synonymous in the Gospel in 3: 16–21. The connection between Prologue and Gospel is clear.

One of the difficulties which arises from including vss 1 f, 14a, (15), and 16–18 in the original Prologue is that certain terms, including such theologically important ones as *λόγος* ("word," used as a title), *σκηνώω* ("dwell"), *χάρις* ("grace"), *πλήρωμα* ("fullness"), *πλήρης* ("full"), and *ἐξηγέομαι* ("declare," "make known"), occur there but nowhere else in the Gospel. Besides these, the preposition *πρός*, in the phrase *πρός τὸν θεόν* in vss 1 and 2, is used nowhere else in the Gospel with the same meaning. In strong contrast, the only word in vss 3–13 and 14b which does not appear elsewhere in the Gospel is *φωτίζω* (1: 9) which, as I have said, may indicate influence from Is 60: 1 f. And many words, such as "life," "light," "darkness," "witness" (both the verb and the noun), "believe," "world," "come," "know," "receive" (two different words in 1: 11 f), "to be born," "will," and "glory," are key words, occurring again and again.

The Gospel as we now have it has two "endings" (20: 30 f and 21: 24 f); it appears to have two "beginnings" as well (1: 1 ff and 1: 6 ff). When one restricts the Prologue to vss 3–13 and 14b, then vss 6–8 become the natural beginning. In spite of the fact that most scholars regard vss 6–8 as secondary additions, I believe these verses are original with the Gospel writer.

Some scholars have noted that 1: 6 is a natural opening for a historical narrative and have called attention to parallels in the OT, such as Judg 13: 2 and 1 Sam 1: 1. It is, indeed, likely that the author used the OT in 1: 6 and in exactly the same way as in some other places in the Prologue and Gospel.

In having vss 6–8 first, there is no interruption in the sequence of thought. Moreover, the language and thought of the verses themselves are entirely

consonant with the writer's portrayal of the Baptist as inferior to Jesus at every turn (cf 1: 19-37; 3: 23-30; 4: 1; 5: 33-36; 10: 40-42). In contrast to the Synoptists, the writer in the Prologue is consistent with the rest of his Gospel by always referring to the Baptist as John, never as "the Baptist." I have already indicated that in Jn 5: 35 the term "light" is used with reference to the Baptist and that he bears witness to Jesus.

Robinson shows parallels between Jn 1: 6 and opening lines in the Synoptics (Mk 1: 4; Lk 1: 5; 3: 1 f). I should like to note, further, that in Jn 1: 6 the Baptist is introduced as "a man sent from God." In Jn 3: 28, the Baptist thinks of himself as being sent: "I was sent before him" (i.e., Christ). In both of these passages, the writer shows affinity with Mk 1: 2: "Behold, I send my messenger before your face." Thus it appears that the writer of John, like that of Mark, began his story of Jesus by introducing the Baptist as his forerunner (cf Jn 1: 15-34 and 3: 28). With the witness of the Baptist in the beginning of the Gospel, the sequence in 1: 19 ff is in no way disturbed.

At this point, perhaps, some comment on the poetic and rhythmic character of the Prologue should be made. The nature of much of the poetry seems to me still to be an open question. Almost all agree that most of vss 14-18 is basically prose, and many would also include some of vss 9-13 in that category. Vs 2 is difficult to fit into any poetic arrangement. While some verses do not precisely fall under any form of Hebrew poetry, there seems to be a certain rhythmic quality about them which I have tried, maybe unsuccessfully, to bring out in the translation.

The content of my proposed arrangement of the Prologue is an effective introduction or prelude which easily blends in with the rest of the Gospel. I have already indicated a number of things in it consistent with the rest of the Gospel. We turn now to additional ideas and themes and style of writing in the Prologue consonant with the Gospel.

The strophe about John (1: 6-8) is the writer's equivalent of the Synoptists' introduction of the Baptist. In addition to the parallels already noted, compare Mt 3: 1: "In those days came (*παράγινεται*) John the Baptist" with Jn 1: 7: "He came for a witness." There is also the same kind of parallel between Jesus as the Light "coming into the world" in Jn 1: 9 and the Synoptists' introduction of Jesus to the world: *καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις ἦλθεν Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ Ναζαρέθ* (Mk 1: 9; cf Mt 3: 13). In the same way, the statement in the Prologue about Jesus as the Light coming into the world reflects the Synoptists' view that Jesus' coming was regarded as the fulfillment of OT prophecy: "The people sitting in darkness saw a great light, and upon those sitting in the region and shadow of death a light has arisen" (Mt 4: 15 f, quoting Is 9: 1 f); compare also: "A light for a revelation

to Gentiles and glory of your people Israel" (Lk 2: 32 and Is 42: 6; 49: 6). All this coincides with the writer's knowledge and use of the Synoptics elsewhere in the Gospel when using OT sources as well.<sup>13</sup>

In NT thought, it was not the long-expected Logos that had come but the Light. That theme is repeated in the Gospel of John several times (3: 19; 11: 9; 12: 35 f, 46). Moreover, Jesus' followers are exhorted to believe in him so that they may become "sons of light" (12: 36)—an expression well known from the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., 1QS 1: 9; 3: 24; 1QM 1: 1, 3; and *passim*; cf Lk 16: 8; Eph 5: 8; 1 Thess 5: 5). I am familiar with the phrase "sons of light" (cf above), but I know of no place in either the Bible or the Dead Sea Scrolls where the expression "sons of the Word" occurs.

When vss 3-5 are placed after vs 9, then Jesus as the Light, not as the Logos, is their antecedent. Such an arrangement is quite defensible for the following reasons. To regard the Light as the agent in creation in vs 3 is justifiable on the basis of vs 10, where the writer of the Prologue states in a different way a point he had made earlier. (This kind of repetition and variation of language is one of the most characteristic features of the Johannine style.<sup>14</sup>) Moreover, in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus as the Light and Giver of light is also the Life and Giver of life (cf many passages from 3: 16-17: 3). The sentence, "In him [i.e., the Light] was life," is confirmed by the reference to Jesus as "the Light of life" in 8: 12, the latter itself being an OT expression (cf Ps 56: 13 [14]; Job 33: 30); so also 5: 26: "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted to the Son also to have life in himself."<sup>15</sup>

The theme of light and darkness, with the antithesis between the two but with the light not being overcome, is well known in John (cf 3: 16-12: 46). As in Is 60 and the Qumran Scrolls (for example, 1QS 3: 18-25; 4: 9-14; 1QM 13; 15: 9 f), so in the Prologue and Gospel the light is both eschatological and ethical.

The idea of Jesus coming into and being in the world, with some not knowing or receiving him, recurs in the Gospel: "I have come in the name of my Father, and you do not receive me" (5: 43); "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also" (14: 7). See also 4: 44; 8: 28; 13: 1; 15: 18; 16: 3; and many other places for Jesus' rejection by the Jews. On the other hand, those who believe in Jesus have a special relationship with him and receive special privilege, such as becoming "children of God" (1: 12) or "sons of light" (12: 36; cf also 3: 15-18, 36; 5: 24; 6: 35, 40, 47; 11: 25 f, 40; 14: 12-17). The expression "believe on his name" (1: 12) is consistent with usage elsewhere in the Gospel (2: 23; 3: 18).

Vs 13 also has its counterpart in the Gospel: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (3: 6; cf 3: 3); and "It is the spirit which gives life; the flesh does not do any good in any

way" (6: 63). The obvious antithesis between these verses and 6: 51–58 (where the bread which came down from heaven and gives life to the world is Jesus' flesh) need not concern us here, since variation of thought, even to the point of contradiction, is an inherent part of the writer's style.<sup>16</sup>

The glory and glorification of Jesus are among the main themes of the Gospel. Jesus' glory was pre-existent (12: 37–41), was currently evident through his works (2: 11; 11: 4), and, though already observed, was still anticipated in the future (12: 20–23). A combination of two or three of these ideas occurs in 12: 20–33; 13: 30–32; 17: 1, 4f, 10, 22, 24). Jesus' ultimate glorification came through the crucifixion and/or resurrection (in addition to the above, cf 7: 39; 12: 16; and 2: 22). Compare "glory as of a unique Son from the Father" (1: 14b) with "and do not seek the glory from the only God" (5: 44). Just as the glory of the Son is associated with that of the Father in 1: 14b, so it is in 5: 44 and most of the above passages also.

After one has compared the ideas of the Prologue and Gospel, the fact remains that the only idea in the Prologue which has no counterpart in the Gospel is Jesus as the Logos. Certainly this fact is crucial to any argument for a Logos hymn. On the other hand, when one takes the Prologue as a Phōs poem, then all the ideas which are there associated with Jesus as the Light recur as basic themes of the Gospel.

It remains only for us to point out some basic similarities in style between Prologue and Gospel. The following are some examples:

Synonymous words or expressions within the same sentence or context (many times in Gospel): *πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο . . . ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο* (1: 3, 10); *οὗτος . . . ἐκεῖνος* (1: 7; both words, especially the latter, are favorites of the Gospel); *ἄνθρωπος . . . ἀνὴρ* (1: 9, 13; same words in 6: 10); *τὰ ἴδια . . . οἱ ἴδιοι* (1: 11); and *παρέλαβον . . . ἔλαβον* (1: 11 f).

*ἵνα* with finite verb as telic, instead of *τοῦ* with infinitive: *ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ* (1: 7; especially frequent in Gospel).

Preposition *εἰς* with accusative to denote purpose: *εἰς μαρτυρίαν* (1: 7; 9: 39; cf 3: 11).

Words with double meanings: *καταλαμβάνω* (1: 5; cf 3: 3, 7, 31; 3: 8; 3: 20; 8: 28; 12: 32, 34).

*Καί* adversative (1: 5; 17: 1).

Elliptical use of *ἀλλ' ἵνα* (1: 8; 9: 3; 11: 52).

*γεννάω* and *ἐκ* (1: 13; 3: 5; 6: 1; 8: 41; cf 3: 3, 7).

*Casus pendens*: *ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς* (1: 12) and *δς ἦν μετὰ σοῦ . . . ᾧ σὺ* (3: 26).

*εἰμί* in imperfect with participle in present (1: 9; 2: 6; 3: 23; 10: 40).

*πιστεύω* and *εἰς* with accusative (1: 12; very frequent in Gospel but rare elsewhere in NT).

Pronominal subject of verb sometimes expressed, sometimes not (1: 7 f, 11; many times in Gospel).

*ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος . . . ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης* (1: 6) and *ἦν δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων, Νικόδημος ὄνομα αὐτῷ* (3: 1)

*Καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβον* (1: 5) and *ἵνα μὴ σκοτία ὑμᾶς καταλάβῃ* (12: 35; this passage confirms the translation "overcome" in 1: 5).

Climactic parallelism:

In him was life,

and the life was the light of men (1: 4).

And you will know the truth,

and the truth will make you free (8: 32).

I am the good shepherd,

the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep (10: 11; cf also 11: 25; 16: 7).

Because of the writer's technique of repeating his main themes with variations throughout the Gospel, no outline of the structure of his composition can be wholly accurate. There is bound to be some overlapping of ideas in any proposed outline, but I believe that the following comparative outline of the structure of the Prologue and Gospel, in which only the second part overlaps the first to any significant degree, is not a wholly inaccurate one:

Strophe 1: The superiority of Jesus to John the Baptist (1: 6–8 = 1: 19–5: 47).

Strophe 2: Jesus' work of giving light and life to the world rejected by the world (1: 9, 3–5, 10 f = 3–12).

Strophe 3: Jesus' withdrawal from the world into the company of those who did receive him (1: 12 f = 13–16).

Strophe 4: Jesus' ultimate glorification and exaltation through his death and resurrection (1: 14b = 17–20[21]).

As valid as any other I have seen proposed, this structural outline of the Gospel comes little short, it seems to me, of confirming my arrangement of the Prologue as something more than the mere figment of my imagination.

I submit that the evidence presented here warrants these conclusions: After the body of the Gospel was completed, the author wrote the Prologue to serve as an introduction or prelude to his entire composition. It is a creative, succinct composition, and was comprised originally of poetry and rhythmic prose dealing with Jesus as the Light. Like many other passages of similar length in the Gospel, it shows acquaintance with and influence from the OT, Qumran, and the Synoptic tradition.

The original poetic and rhythmic section consisted of vss 3–13 and 14b, most likely, though not necessarily, in the order we have given them—that is, 6–8; 9; 3–5; 10–13; 14b. The Prologue conceived as a Phōs (light) poem is entirely consonant with the Gospel, and serves as a genuine introduction to its basic content and structure.

There may have been a Logos hymn, fragments of which may be extant in vss 1 f, 14a, and some or all of vss 15–18. But since vss 1 f, 14a, and



most of 15–18 (particularly with respect to vocabulary) are not consonant with the rest of the Gospel, they are best regarded as supplied by a later hand.

In strong contrast to the original Prologue in vss 3–13 and 14b and the rest of the Gospel, where we do find parallels from a number of sources, there has as yet been no true parallel to the Logos theology provided from any source, Palestinian or Hellenistic Judaism or any other known to me. This can only mean, it seems to me, that some editor(s), seemingly unfamiliar with the basic vocabulary of the Gospel, in an effort to make the Gospel appeal to readers in an environment different from the one in which it was originally written, wrote an introduction (vss 1 f) and a conclusion (vss 14a and some or all of 15–18) to the Phōs (light) poem to tie the whole in with 1: 19 ff, and probably rearranged the verses in between.

The relationship between the Gospel and First Epistle of John, including the relationship between the prologues of each, still remains an enigma. The "obvious and striking" parallels which Robinson sets out (p. 123; the ones involving Jn 1: 4 seem a bit forced) may all be accounted for by the view of C. H. Dodd proposed more than thirty years ago, assuming, of course, that the author of the First Epistle was familiar with the Gospel in a form very similar to the one we have:

I conceive the First Epistle of John . . . to have been written by an author who was quite possibly a disciple of the Fourth Evangelist, and certainly a diligent student of his work. He has soaked himself in the Gospel, assimilating its ideas and forming his style upon its model. He sets out to develop, commend and apply certain of these ideas to meet the particular needs of the situation.<sup>17</sup>

The view of Dodd is for me a preferable alternative to that of Robinson. But in view of the likenesses and differences between the two writings, I must confess that neither view is completely satisfactory to me. Unfortunately, however, I have no better solution to offer.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See my *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), especially pp. 127–30.

<sup>2</sup> Passages from the OT are translated from the MT by me. For Is 60, there are no substantial differences among MT, LXX, or 1QIs<sup>a</sup>. In general, the language of the Prologue is closer to MT than to LXX. Cf also Is 9: 1: "The people that walk in darkness have seen a great light . . . a light shines over them"; and Is 2: 5; 42: 6; Job 29: 3; 33: 28, 30. I am not unaware of possible influence on the writer of the Prologue also from Jewish wisdom literature (or even Philo), an influence also apparent in some formal quotations in Jn (1: 23; 7: 37 f; 17: 12), such as Prov, Wis, Sir, Bar, and others, as J. R. Harris (*The Origin of the Prologue to St John's Gospel* [Cambridge: University Press, 1911]) and others

have shown. The general reader will find convenient summaries of such influences in R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John i–xii in AB* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 29, pp. 519–24, and William Barclay, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), I, pp. 2–14.

<sup>3</sup> With reference to Isaiah, so James Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah" in *IB* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), V, p. 698.

<sup>4</sup> The humanity of Jesus in neither the Prologue nor the Gospel is dependent upon the vivid "The Word became flesh." Comparison of Jesus with the Baptist, Jesus' coming into the world and to his own, and his being received or not are sufficient to establish Jesus' humanity in the Prologue.

<sup>5</sup> So Muilenburg of Isaiah (*ibid.*).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> See the treatment of the Prologue with a summary of views and bibliography in R. E. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 1–37.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> "The Relation of the Prologue to the Gospel of St John," *NTS* 9 (1962–63), 120–29.

<sup>10</sup> For references see Robinson, *ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>11</sup> "The Revealing Word" in his book, *The Central Message of the New Testament* (New York: Scribners, 1965).

<sup>12</sup> See my "The Son of Man in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 86 (1967), 402–9.

<sup>13</sup> See my *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* for comments on 1: 23; 7: 42; 12: 13, 15, 39 f; 19: 24.

<sup>14</sup> See my "Variations in the Language and Thought of John," *ZNW* 55 (1964), 167–97.

<sup>15</sup> Such a rearrangement in the Greek text causes no grammatical problems. Placing vss 3–5 after vss 6–9 causes no problems with the grammar because the use of *αὐτός* as a personal pronoun in every instance can be taken as a neuter in agreement with its antecedent *φῶς*. However, placing vss 10–12 after vss 3–5 may result in a shift in gender to a masculine accusative pronoun (*αὐτόν*) with a neuter antecedent (*φῶς*). But this shift may already be made in the Greek text as it now stands since the subject antecedent of vs 10 is by no means clear and could presently be taken as *τὸ φῶς*. So *αὐτόν* in vs 10 would already represent a shift in gender to a masculine personal pronoun with a neuter antecedent. But our rearrangement requires such a shift in gender by reading the present *αὐτόν* (translated "him" in vss 10, 11, and 12) instead of the normally expected *αὐτό* with a neuter antecedent such as *τὸ φῶς* (as in vs 5). At any rate, it should be observed that, if one reads vss 10–12 after vs 9, as in the present text, or after vs 5, as in our suggested rearrangement, the shift in gender is entirely consonant with the style of the writer in at least two passages elsewhere in the Gospel. In 14: 26 and 15: 26 the neuter antecedents *τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον* and *τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας* are followed by the masculine demonstrative *ἐκεῖνος*, presumably because the writer thought of the spirit in personal terms (see J. H. Bernard, *The Gospel According to St. John [ICC]* [New York: Scribners, 1929], II, pp. 499 f and C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* [London: S.P.C.K., 1955], p. 402). Obviously in the text as it now stands the writer has thought of the Light in personal terms. So our rearrangement is entirely in keeping with both the letter and spirit of the text of the writer both in the Prologue and elsewhere (cf, for example, also 16: 13 f; 1 Jn 5: 6). These arguments, though perhaps not entirely convincing to some, seem to me much more preferable than the simpler suggestion to emend the text from *αὐτόν* to *αὐτό* in vss 10–12.

<sup>16</sup> See note 14.

<sup>17</sup> C. H. Dodd, "The First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel," *B/RL* 21 (1937), 30.