

# LOGOS Definitions

## The Author's (Robert Schmid) Definition of the Logos in John 1:1-5,14

In the beginning was the **LOGOS** (the Word of God),

And the **LOGOS** (the Word of God) was with (in) God,

And the **LOGOS** (the Word of God) was (the) **GOD**.

**It (the LOGOS, the Word of God)** was in the beginning with God; Or  
**He (Jesus – as the LOGOS, the Word of God)** was in the beginning with God;

All things were made through **it (the LOGOS, the Word of God)**; Or  
All things were made through **Him (Jesus – as the LOGOS, the Word of God)**,

And without **it (the LOGOS, the Word of God)** was not anything made that was made. Or  
And without **Him (Jesus – as the LOGOS, the Word of God)** was not anything made that was made.

In **Him (Jesus)** was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

And the **LOGOS (it - the Word of God)** BECAME **flesh** (BECAME **He the Son of God**) and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld **His (Jesus')** glory, glory as of the only SON from the FATHER.

## John 1:1-5,14 (KJV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same (Word) was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him (it – the Word); and without him (it – the Word) was not any thing made that was made.

In him (Jesus) was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehend it not.....

And the Word (of God) was made flesh (the Son of God), and dwelt among us, and we beheld his (Jesus') glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

## John 1:1-5, 14 (J. B. Phillips)

At the beginning God expressed himself.

That personal expression, that word, was with God and was God, and he (it – that personal expression) existed with God from the beginning.

All creation took place through him (it – that personal expression), and none took place without him (it – that personal expression).


In him (Jesus) appeared life and that life was the light of mankind. The light still shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out.

So the word of God (the Logos) became a human being and lived among us. We saw his (Jesus') glory, the glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

### Strong's Concordance


**Logos** (3056) **Word** something said (including the thought): also reasoning (mental faculty) or motive; by extension a computation; the Divine Expression (i.e. Christ); cause, utterance communication, mouth, preaching, question, reason, say, speaker, speech, talk, tidings, treatise.

### Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

Main Entry: **Lo·gos** 

Pronunciation: 'lO-"gäs, -"gOs

Function: *noun*

Inflected Form(s): *plural Lo·goi* /"goi/

Etymology: Greek, speech, word, reason -- more at [LEGEND](#)

**1** : the divine wisdom manifest in the creation, government, and redemption of the world and often identified with the second person of the Trinity

**2** : reason that in ancient Greek philosophy is the controlling principle in the universe


### Webster's Dictionary

**Logos** n. < Gr, a word: see Logic **1** Gr. Philos. reason, thought of as constituting the controlling principle of the universe and as being manifested by speech **2** Christian Theol. the eternal thought or word of God, made incarnate in Jesus Christ: John 1

### The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible

#### **The Word - Logos**

In the Old Testament, the characteristic means whereby God makes his will known to men in law and prophecy, and achieves his purpose in the providential guidance of the world. By it, indeed, he created the heavens and the earth. In the New Testament, the Word is also important; in some places it still has its O.T. connotation, but in others shows a development from it. The word of the Lord is frequently, in fact, the Word of Christ, the gospel which he first preached, and of which later he became the principal theme. A further development appears in John and Revelation, where the Word or the Word of God is a title of Christ, proclaiming him God's agent both in creation and in revelation.

Lo·gos (lō'gōs', lōg'ōs') 

*n.*

1. *Philosophy.*
  - a. In pre-Socratic philosophy, the principle governing the cosmos, the source of this principle, or human reasoning about the cosmos.
  - b. Among the Sophists, the topics of rational argument or the arguments themselves.
  - c. In Stoicism, the active, material, rational principle of the cosmos; nous. Identified with God, it is the source of all activity and generation and is the power of reason residing in the human soul.
2. *Judaism.*
  - a. In biblical Judaism, the word of God, which itself has creative power and is God's medium of communication with the human race.
  - b. In Hellenistic Judaism, a hypostasis associated with divine wisdom.
3. *Christianity.* In Saint John's Gospel, especially in the prologue (1:1–14), the creative word of God, which is itself God and incarnate in Jesus. Also called *Word*.



logos

(Greek: “word,” “reason,” “plan”) In Greek philosophy and theology, the divine reason that orders the cosmos and gives it form and meaning. The concept is found in the writings of [Heracleitus](#) (6th century BC) and in Persian, Indian, and Egyptian philosophical and theological systems as well. It is particularly significant in Christian theology, where it is used to describe the role of [Jesus](#) as the principle of God active in the creation and ordering of the cosmos and in the revelation of the divine plan of salvation. This is most clearly stated in the Gospel of [John](#) the Apostle, which identifies Christ as the Word (Logos) made flesh.



Logos (lō'gōs) [Gr.,=word], in Greek and Hebrew metaphysics, the unifying principle of the world. The central idea of the Logos is that it links God and man, hence any system in which the Logos plays a part is monistic. The Greek [Heraclitus](#) held (c.500 B.C.) that the world is animated and kept in order by fire—this fire is the Logos; it is the power of order in the world and the order itself. It thus became the unifying feature of the Heraclitean system. The Stoics (see [Stoicism](#)) were influenced in part by Platonism and Aristotelianism in their conception of the Logos. To them God was immanent in the world, its vitalizing

force, and God as the law guiding the universe they called Logos; with the additional idea that all things develop from this force, it is called the Spermaticos Logos. The Logos reappears in Greek philosophy in a much restricted form in the system of emanations of [Neoplatonism](#). Certain books of the Old Testament present a principle called the Wisdom of God active in the world. At the same time there was a very ancient Hebrew idea of the Word of God, also active in the world. Thus the Wisdom and the Word of God, sometimes quasi-distinct from Him, coalesced. [Philo](#), in his synthesis of Judaism and Greek thought, naturally hit upon the Logos as a union between the systems; hence his Logos retains qualities both of the Stoic Logos and the Hebrew Word of God. Philo's God is remote, unaffected by the world, without attributes, unmoving; hence He must have mediation to connect Him with the world. At times Philo's Logos is independent of God (because of God's remoteness); at other times the Logos is simply the Reason of God (because Philo's monism obliges God to act in the world through His mediating forces). St. John in his Gospel adapted the term to his purpose. In the prologue of 14 verses the idea of the Gospel is stated clearly and simply. The Logos, which is the eternal God, took flesh and became man, in time. The Logos is Jesus. The impersonal, remote God of Philo is not there; the intermediate Logos, neither God nor man, has been replaced by a Logos that is both God and man. This explanation of the relation of God and man became an abiding feature of Christian thought.



Wikipedia

logos

*This article is about logos (logoi) in ancient Greek philosophy, rhetoric, and Christianity. For other uses of the term, see [Logos \(disambiguation\)](#).*

The [Greek](#) word λόγος or *logos* is a word with various meanings. It is often translated into [English](#) as "Word" but can also mean thought, speech, [reason](#), principle, standard, or [logic](#), among other things. It has varied use in the fields of [philosophy](#), [analytical psychology](#), [rhetoric](#) and [religion](#).

Use in ancient philosophy

In [ancient philosophy](#), *Logos* was used by [Heraclitus](#), one of the more eminent [Pre-Socratic Greek](#) philosophers, to describe [human knowledge](#) and the inherent order in [The Absolute universe](#), a background to the essential change which characterizes day-to-day life. *Logos* as the inherent [rationality](#) of the universe is also something of a precursor to the concept of the [collective unconscious](#), described by [Carl Jung](#), as these two fragments from Heraclitus suggest:

One must follow what is common; but, even though the Logos is common, most people live as though they possessed their own private wisdom. (Fr.2) The common is what is open to all, what can be seen and heard by all. To see is to let in with open eyes what is open to view, i.e. what is lit up and revealed to all. The dead (the completely private ones) neither see nor hear; they are closed. No light (fire) shines in them; no speech sounds in them. And yet, even they participate in the cosmos. The extinguished ones also belong to the continuum of lighting and extinguishing that is the common cosmos. The dead touch upon the living sleeping, who in turn touch upon the living waking. (Fr. 26)

By the time of [Socrates](#), [Plato](#), and [Aristotle](#), *logos* was the term used to describe the faculty of human [reason](#) and the knowledge men had of the world and of each other. Plato allowed his characters to engage in the conceit of describing *logos* as a living being in some of his dialogues. The development of the [Academy](#) with [hypomnemata](#) brought *logos* closer to the literal [text](#). Aristotle, who studied under Plato and who was much more of a practical thinker, first developed the concept of [logic](#) as a depiction of the rules of human rationality.

The [Stoics](#) understood Logos as the animating power of the universe, which further influenced how this word was understood later on (in [20th century psychology](#), for instance).

### Use in rhetoric

In [rhetoric](#), *logos* is one of the three [modes of persuasion](#) (the other two are [pathos](#), emotional appeal, and [ethos](#), the qualification of the speaker). Logos refers to logical appeal, and in fact the term *logic* evolves from it. Logos normally implies numbers, polls, and other mathematical or scientific data.

Logos has many advantages:

- Data is hard to manipulate, meaning that it is harder to argue against a logos argument.
- For the same reason, it may sway cynical listeners to the speaker's opinion.
- Logos enhances ethos by making the speaker look prepared and knowledgeable to the audience.

Logos also has many disadvantages:

- Numbers may not be obvious to many listeners, so the argument may pass unheeded.
- Logos asks the question, "But why should I care?" because they are not as involving as emotional appeal.
- Logos can be downright confusing in some instances.

The best way to present an argument is to combine logos with the other forms of appeal.

## Use in Christianity

In [Christianity](#), the [prologue](#) of the [Gospel of John](#) calls [Jesus](#) the Logos (usually [translated](#) as "the Word" in English bibles such as the [KJV](#)) and played a central role in establishing the [doctrine](#) of Jesus' [divinity](#) and the [Trinity](#). (See [Christology](#).) The opening verse in the KJV reads: "In the beginning was the Word [*Logos*], and the Word [*Logos*] was with God, and the Word [*Logos*] was God."

Some scholars of the [Bible](#) have suggested that John made creative use of double meaning in the word "Logos" to communicate to both [Jews](#), who were familiar with the [Wisdom tradition](#) in [Judaism](#), and [Hellenists](#), especially followers of [Philo](#). Each of these two groups had its own history associated with the concept of the Logos, and each could understand John's use of the term from one or both of those contexts. Especially for the Hellenists, however, John turns the concept of the Logos on its head when he claimed "the *Logos* became flesh and dwelt among us" (v. 14). Similarly, some translations of the Gospel of John into [Chinese](#) have used the word "[Tao \(道\)](#)" to translate the "Logos" in a provocative way.

[Gordon Clark](#) famously translated *Logos* as "Logic" in the opening verses of the Gospel: "In the beginning was the Logic, and the Logic was with God and the Logic was God." He meant to imply by this translation that the [laws of logic](#) were contained in the Bible itself and were therefore not a [secular](#) principle imposed on the Christian [worldview](#).

On [April 1, 2005](#), Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (who would later become [Pope Benedict XVI](#)) referred to the Christian religion as the religion of the *Logos*:

*"From the beginning, Christianity has understood itself as the religion of the Logos, as the religion according to reason...It has always defined men, all men without distinction, as creatures and images of God, proclaiming for them...the same dignity. In this connection, the Enlightenment is of Christian origin and it is no accident that it was born precisely and exclusively in the realm of the Christian faith....It was and is the merit of the Enlightenment to have again proposed these original values of Christianity and of having given back to reason its own voice... Today, this should be precisely [Christianity's] philosophical strength, in so far as the problem is whether the world comes from the irrational, and reason is not other than a 'sub-product,' on occasion even harmful of its development -- or whether the world comes from reason, and is, as a consequence, its criterion and goal...In the so necessary dialogue between secularists and Catholics, we Christians must be very*

*careful to remain faithful to this fundamental line: to live a faith that comes from the Logos, from creative reason, and that, because of this, is also open to all that is truly rational."* [1]

"Silva Rhetoricae" ([rhetoric.byu.edu](http://rhetoric.byu.edu))

Logos names the appeal to reason. Aristotle wished that all communication could be transacted only through this appeal, but given the weaknesses of humanity, he laments, we must resort to the use of the other two appeals. The Greek term *logos* is laden with many more meanings than simply "reason," and is in fact the term used for "oration."

### Sample Rhetorical Analysis: LOGOS

When Descartes said, "I think; therefore, I am," his statement reflected in its pure concision and simple logical arrangement the kind of thought and being he believed to be most real. He did not claim, as Pascal would later do, that our being has as much to do with feeling as it does thinking. Descartes here equates pure rationality and pure being, persuading us of the accuracy of this equation by the simplicity of his statement. There is no room for the clouds of emotion in this straightforward formula; it makes a purely logical appeal.

### Etymology

In ordinary, non-technical Greek, *logos* had a [semantic field](#) extending beyond "word" to notions such as, on the one hand, language, talk, statement, speech, conversation, tale, story, prose, proposition, and principle; and on the other hand, thought, reason, account, consideration, esteem, due relation, proportion, and analogy.<sup>[1]</sup>

Despite the conventional translation as "word", it is not used for a [word](#) in the grammatical sense; instead, the term *lexis* (λέξις) was used.<sup>[5]</sup> However, both *logos* and *lexis* derive from the same verb *legō* (λέγω), meaning "to count, tell, say, speak".<sup>[1][5]</sup>

In English, *logos* is the root of "logic," and of the "-ology" suffix (e.g., geology).<sup>[6]</sup>

1. <sup>a b c</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*: logos, 1889.
5. <sup>a b</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*: lexis, 1889.
6. <sup>a</sup> [Oxford Dictionary definition](#): -logy repr. F. -logie, medL. -logia, Gr. -logiā, which is partly f. *lógos* discourse, speech, partly f. *log-*, var. of *leg-*, *légein* speak; hence derivs. In -logia mean either

## The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume IX

The word *Logos* is the term by which [Christian](#) theology in the Greek language designates the Word of [God](#), or Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Before St. John had consecrated this term by adopting it, the Greeks and the Jews had used it to express religious conceptions which, under various titles, have exercised a certain influence on [Christian](#) theology, and of which it is necessary to say something.

### I. THE LOGOS IN HELLENISM

It is in Heraclitus that the theory of the Logos appears for the first time, and it is doubtless for this reason that, first among the Greek philosophers, Heraclitus was regarded by [St. Justin](#) (Apol. I, 46) as a [Christian](#) before Christ. For him the Logos, which he seems to identify with fire, is that universal principle which animates and rules the world. This conception could only find place in a materialistic monism. The philosophers of the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ were dualists, and conceived of [God](#) as transcendent, so that neither in Plato (whatever may have been said on the subject) nor in [Aristotle](#) do we find the theory of the Logos.

It reappears in the writings of the Stoics, and it is especially by them that this theory is developed. [God](#), according to them, "did not make the world as an artisan does his work, but it is by wholly penetrating all matter that He is the demiurge of the universe" (Galen, "De qual. incorp." in "Fr. Stoic.", ed. von Arnim, II, 6); He penetrates the world "as honey does the honeycomb" ([Tertullian](#), "Adv. Hermogenem", 44), this [God](#) so intimately mingled with the world is fire or ignited air; inasmuch as He is the principle controlling the universe, He is called *Logos*; and inasmuch as He IS the germ from which all else develops, He is called the *seminal Logos* (*logos spermatikos*). This Logos is at the same time a force and a law, an irresistible force which bears along the entire world and all creatures to a common end, an inevitable and holy law from which nothing can withdraw itself, and which every reasonable man should follow willingly (Cleanthus, "Hymn to Zeus" in "Fr. Stoic." I, 527-cf. 537). Conformably to their exegetical habits, the Stoics made of the different gods personifications of the Logos, e. g. of Zeus and above all of Hermes.

At Alexandria, Hermes was identified with Thoth, the god of Hermopolis, known later as the great Hermes, "Hermes Trismegistus", and represented as the revealer of all letters and all religion. Simultaneously, the Logos theory conformed to the current Neoplatonistic dualism in Alexandria: the Logos is not conceived of as nature or immanent necessity, but as an

intermediary agent by which the transcendent **God** governs the world. This conception appears in Plutarch, especially in his "Isis and Osiris"; from an early date in the first century of the **Christian** era, it influenced profoundly the Jewish philosopher Philo.

## II. THE WORD IN JUDAISM

Quite frequently the Old Testament represents the creative act as the word of **God** (**Genesis 1:3**; **Psalms 32:9**; **Sirach 42:15**); sometimes it seems to attribute to the word action of itself, although not independent of Jahveh (**Isaiah 55:11**, **Zechariah 5:1-4**; **Psalms 106:20**; **147:15**). In all this we can see only bold figures of speech: the word of creation, of salvation, or, in Zacharias, the word of malediction, is personified, but is not conceived of as a distinct Divine hypostasis. In the Book of Wisdom this personification is more directly implied (xviii, 15 sq.), and a parallel is established (ix, 1, 2) between wisdom and the Word.

In Palestinian Rabbinism the Word (*Memra*) is very often mentioned, at least in the Targums: it is the Memra of Jahveh which lives, speaks, and acts, but, if one endeavour to determine precisely the meaning of the expression, it appears very often to be only a paraphrase substituted by the Targumist for the name of Jahveh. The Memra resembles the Logos of Philo as little as the workings of the rabbinical mind in Palestine resembled the speculations of Alexandria: the rabbis are chiefly concerned about ritual and observances; from religious scruples they dare not attribute to Jahveh actions such as the Sacred Books attribute to Him; it is enough for them to veil the Divine Majesty under an abstract paraphrase, the Word, the Glory, the Abode, and others. Philo's problem was of the philosophic order; **God** and man are infinitely distant from each other, and it is necessary to establish between them relations of action and of prayer; the Logos is here the intermediary.

Leaving aside the author of the Book of Wisdom, other Alexandrian Jews before Philo had speculated as to the Logos; but their works are known only through the rare fragments which **Christian** authors and Philo himself have preserved. Philo alone is fully known to us, his writings are as extensive as those of Plato or Cicero, and throw light on every aspect of his doctrine; from him we can best learn the theory of the Logos, as developed by Alexandrian Judaism. The character of his teaching is as manifold as its sources:

- sometimes, influenced by Jewish tradition, Philo represents the Logos as the creative Word of **God** ("De Sacrific. Ab. et Cain"; cf. "De Somniis", I 182; "De Opif. Mundi", 13);
- at other times he describes it as the revealer of **God**, symbolized in Scripture by the **angel of Jahveh** ("De Somniis", I, 228-39, "De Cherub.", 3; "De Fuga", 5; "Quis rer. divin. haeres sit", 201-205).

- Oftener again he accepts the language of Hellenic speculation; the Logos is then, after a Platonistic concept, the sum total of ideas and the intelligible world ("De Opif. Mundi", 24, 25; "Leg. Alleg.", I, 19; III, 96),
- or, agreeably to the Stoic theory, the power that upholds the world, the bond that assures its cohesion, the law that determines its development ("De Fuga", 110; "De Plantat. Noe," 8-10; "Quis rer. divin. haeres sit", 188, 217; "Quod Deus sit immut.", 176; "De Opif. Mundi", 143).

Throughout so many diverse concepts may be recognized a fundamental doctrine: the Logos is an intermediary between **God** and the world; through it **God** created the world and governs it; through it also men know **God** and pray to Him ("De Cherub.", 125; "Quis rerum divin. haeres sit", 205-06.) In three passages the Logos is called **God** ("Leg. Alleg.", III, 207; "De Somniis", I, 229; "In Gen.", II, 62, cited by **Eusebius**, "Praep. Ev.", VII, 13); but, as Philo himself explains in one of these texts (De Somniis), it is an improper appellation and wrongly employed, and he uses it only because he is led into it by the Sacred Text which he comments upon. Moreover, Philo does not regard the Logos as a person; it is an idea, a power, and, though occasionally identified with the **angels** of the Bible, this is by symbolic personification.

### III. THE LOGOS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The term *Logos* is found only in the Johannine writings: in the Apocalypse (19:13), in the Gospel of St. John (1:1-14), and in his First Epistle (1:1; cf. 1:7 - Vulgate). But already in the Epistles of St. Paul the theology of the Logos had made its influence felt. This is seen in the Epistles to the Corinthians, where Christ is called "the power of **God**, and the wisdom of **God**" (**1 Corinthians 1:24**) and "the image of **God**" (**2 Corinthians 4:4**); it is more evident in the Epistle to the Colossians (1:15 sqq.); above all in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the theology of the Logos lacks only the term itself, that finally appears in St. John. In this epistle we also notice the pronounced influence of the Book of Wisdom, especially in the description which is given of the relations between the Son and the Father: "the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance" (cf. **Wisdom 7:26**). This resemblance suggests the way by which the doctrine of the Logos entered into **Christian** theology; another clue is furnished by the Apocalypse, where the term *Logos* appears for the first time (19:13), and not apropos of any theological teaching, but in an apocalyptic vision, the content of which has no suggestion of Philo but rather recalls Wisdom 18:15.

In the Gospel of St. John the Logos appears in the very first verse without explanation, as a term familiar to the readers, St. John uses it at the end of the prologue (i, 14), and does not mention it again in the Gospel. From this Harnack concludes that the mention of the Word was

only a starting-point for the Evangelist, and that he passed directly from this Hellenic conception of the Logos to the [Christian doctrine](#) of the only Son ("Ueber das Verhältniss des Prologs des vierten Evangeliums zum ganzen Werk" in "Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche", II, 1892, 189-231). This hypothesis is proved false by the insistence with which the Evangelist comes back on this idea of the Word, it is, moreover, natural enough that this technical term, employed in the prologue where the Evangelist is interpreting the Divine mystery, should not reappear in the sequel of the narrative, the character of which might thus suffer change.

What is the precise value of this concept in the writings of St. John? The Logos has not for him the Stoic meaning that it so often had for Philo: it is not the impersonal power that sustains the world, nor the law that regulates it; neither do we find in St. John the Platonistic concept of the Logos as the ideal model of the world; the Word is for him the Word of [God](#), and thereby he holds with Jewish tradition, the theology of the Book of Wisdom, of the Psalms, of the Prophetic Books, and of Genesis; he perfects the idea and transforms it by showing that this creative Word which from all eternity was in [God](#) and was [God](#), took flesh and dwelt among men.

This difference is not the only one which distinguishes the Johannine theology of the Logos from the concept of Philo, to which not a few have sought to liken it. The Logos of Philo is impersonal, it is an idea, a power, a law; at most it may be likened to those half abstract, half-concrete entities, to which the Stoic mythology had lent a certain personal form. For Philo the incarnation of the Logos must have been absolutely without meaning, quite as much as its identification with the Messiah. For St. John, on the contrary, the Logos appears in the full light of a concrete and living personality; it is the [Son of God](#), the Messiah, [Jesus](#). Equally great is the difference when we consider the role of the Logos. The Logos of Philo is an intermediary: "The Father who engendered all has given to the Logos the signal privilege of being an intermediary (*methorios*) between the creature and the creator . . . it is neither without beginning (*agenetos*) as is [God](#), nor begotten (*genetos*) as you are [mankind], but intermediate (*mesos*) between these two extremes "(Quis rer. divin. haeres sit, 205-06). The Word of St. John is not an intermediary, but a Mediator; He is not intermediate between the two natures, Divine and human, but He unites them in His Person; it could not be said of Him, as of the Logos of Philo, that He is neither *agenetos* nor *genetos*, for He is at the same time one and the other, not inasmuch as He is the Word, but as the Incarnate Word (St. Ignatius, "Ad Ephes.", vii, 2). In the subsequent history of [Christian](#) theology many conflicts would naturally arise between these rival concepts, and Hellenic speculations constitute a dangerous temptation for [Christian](#)

writers. They were hardly tempted, of course, to make the Divine Logos an impersonal power (the Incarnation too definitely forbade this), but they were at times moved, more or less consciously, to consider the Word as an intermediary being between [God](#) and the world. Hence arose the subordinationist tendencies found in certain Ante-Nicene writers; hence, also, the [Arian heresy](#) (see NICAENA, COUNCIL OF).

#### IV. THE LOGOS IN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

The Apostolic Fathers do not touch on the theology of the Logos; a short notice occurs in St. Ignatius only (Ad Magn. viii, 2). The Apologists, on the contrary, develop it, partly owing to their philosophic training, but more particularly to their desire to state their faith in a way familiar to their readers (St. Justin, for example, insists strongly on the theology of the Logos in his "Apology" meant for heathens, much less so in his "Dialogue with the Jew Trypho"). This anxiety to adapt apologetic discussion to the circumstances of their hearers had its dangers, since it was possible that in this way the apologists might land well inside the lines of their adversaries.

As to the capital question of the generation of the Word, the orthodoxy of the Apologists is irreproachable: the Word was not created, as the [Arians](#) held later, but was born of the very Substance of the Father according to the later definition of Nicaea (Justin, "Dial.", 128, Tatian, "Or.", v, Athenagoras, "Legat." x-xviii, Theophilus, "Ad Autolyc.", II, x; Tertullian "Adv. Prax.", vii). Their theology is less satisfactory as regards the eternity of this generation and its necessity; in fact, they represent the Word as uttered by the Father when the Father wished to create and in view of this creation (Justin, "II Apol.", 6; cf. "Dial.", 6162; Tatian, "Or.", v, a corrupt and doubtful text; Athenagoras, "Legat.", x; Theophilus, "Ad Autolyc.", II, xxii; Tertullian, "Adv. Prax.", v-vii). When we seek to understand what they meant by this "utterance", it is difficult to give the same answer for all Athenagoras seems to mean the role of the Son in the work of creation, the *syncretism* of the Nicene Fathers (Newman, "Causes of the Rise and Successes of Arianism" in "Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical", London, 1902, 238), others, especially Theophilus and Tertullian (cf. Novatian, "De Trinit.", xxxi), seem quite certainly to understand this "utterance" as properly so called. Mental survivals of Stoic psychology seem to be responsible for this attitude: the philosophers of the Portico distinguished between the innate word (*endiathetos*) and the uttered word (*prophorikos*) bearing in mind this distinction the aforesaid apologists conceived a development in the Word of [God](#) after the same fashion. After this period, St. Irenaeus condemned very severely these attempts at psychological explanation

(Adv. Haeres., II, xiii, 3-10, cf. II, xxviii, 4-6), and later Fathers rejected this unfortunate distinction between the Word *endiathetos* and *prophorikos* [Athanasius (?), "Expos. Fidei", i, in P. G., XXV, 201-cf. "Orat.", II, 35, in P. G., XXVI, 221; Cyril of Jerusalem "Cat.", IV, 8, in P. G., XXXIII, 465-cf. "Cat.", XI, 10, in P. G., XXXIII, 701-cf. Council of Sirmium, can. viii, in Athan., "De Synod.", 27-P. G., XXVI,

As to the Divine Nature of the Word, all apologists are agreed but to some of them, at least to [St. Justin](#) and Tertullian, there seemed to be in this Divinity a certain subordination ([Justin](#), "I Apol.", 13-cf. "II Apol.", 13; [Tertullian](#), "Adv. Prax.", 9, 14, 26).

The Alexandrian theologians, themselves profound students of the Logos doctrine, avoided the above mentioned errors concerning the dual conception of the Word (see, however, a fragment of the "Hypotyposes", of Clement of Alexandria, cited by Photius, in P. G., CIII, 384, and Zahn, "Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutest. Kanons", Erlangen, 1884, xiii 144) and the generation in time; for Clement and for Origen the Word is eternal like the Father (Clement "Strom.", VII, 1, 2, in P. G., IX, 404, 409, and "Adumbrat. in Joan.", i, 1, in P. G., IX, 734; Origen, "De Princip.", I, xxii, 2 sqq., in P. G., XI, 130 sqq.; "In Jer. Hom.", IX, 4, in P. G., XIII, 357, "In Jo.", ii, 32, in P. G., XIV, 77; cf. Athanasius, "De decret. Nic. syn.", 27, in P. G., XXV, 465). As to the nature of the Word their teaching is less sure: in Clement, it is true, we find only a few traces of subordinationism ("Strom.", IV, 25, in P. G., VIII, 1365; "Strom.", VII, 3, in P. G., IX, 421; cf. "Strom.", VII, 2, in P. G., IX, 408); elsewhere he very explicitly affirms the equality of the Father and the Son and the unity ("Protrep.", 10, in P. G., VIII 228, "Paedag.", I, vi, in P. G., VIII, 280; I, viii, in P. G., VIII, 325 337 cf. I, ix, in P. G., VIII, 353; III, xii, in P. d., V\*1, 680). Origen, on the contrary, frequently and formally defended subordinationist ideas ("De Princip.", I, iii, 5, in P. G., XI, 150; IV, xxxv, in P. G., XI, 409, 410; "In Jo." ii, 2, in P. G., XIV, 108, 109; ii, 18, in P. G., XIV, 153, 156; vi, 23, in P. G., XIV, 268; xiii, 25, in P. G., XIV, 44144; xxxii, 18, in P. G., XIV, 817-20; "In Matt.", xv, 10, in P. G., XIII, 1280, 1281; "De Orat.", 15, in P. G., XI, 464, "Contra Cels.", V, xi, in P. G., XI, 1197); his teaching concerning the Word evidently suffered from Hellenic speculation: in the order of religious knowledge and of prayer, the Word is for him an intermediary between [God](#) and the creature.

Amid these speculations of apologists and Alexandrian theologians, elaborated not without danger or without error, the Church maintained her strict dogmatic teaching concerning the Word of [God](#). This is particularly recognizable in the works of those Fathers more devoted to tradition than to philosophy, and especially in St. Irenaeus, who condemns every form of the Hellenic and [Gnostic](#) theory of intermediary beings (Adv. Haer., II, xxx, 9; II, ii, 4; III, viii, 3; IV,

vii, 4, IV, xx, 1), and who affirms in the strongest terms the full comprehension of the Father by the Son and their identity of nature (Adv. Haer., II, xvii, 8; IV, iv, 2, IV, vi, 3, 6). We find it again with still greater authority in the letter of Pope St. Dionysius to his namesake, the Bishop of Alexandria (see Athan., "De decret. Nic. syn.", 26, in P. G., XXV, 461-65): "They lie as to the generation of the Lord who dare to say that His Divine and ineffable generation is a creation. We must not divide the admirable and Divine unity into three divinities, we must not lower the dignity and sovereign grandeur of the Lord by the word creation, but we must believe in **God the Father omnipotent**, in **Christ Jesus** His Son, and in the Holy Ghost, we must unite the Word to the **God** of the universe, for He has said: 'I and the Father are one', and again: 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me'. Thus we protect the Divine Trinity, and the holy avowal of the monarchy [unity of **God**]." The Council of Nicaea (325) had but to lend official consecration to this dogmatic teaching.

## V. ANALOGY BETWEEN THE DIVINE WORD AND HUMAN SPEECH

After the Council of Nicaea, all danger of Subordinationism being removed, it was possible to seek in the analogy of human speech some light on the mystery of the Divine generation; the Greek Fathers especially refer to this analogy, in order to explain how this generation is purely spiritual and entails neither diminution nor change: Dionysius of Alexandria (Athan., "De Sent. Dion.", 23, in P. G., XXV, 513); Athanasius ("De decret. Nic. syn.", 11, in P. G., XXV, 444); Basil ("In illud: In principio erat Verbum", 3, in P. G., XXXI, 476-77); **Gregory of Nazianzus** ("Or.", xxx, 20, in P. G., XXXVI, 128-29) Cyril of Alexandria ("Thes." iv, in P. G., LXXV, 56; cf. 76, 80; xvi, *ibid.*, 300; xvi, *ibid.*, 313; "De Trinit.", dial. ii, in P. G., LXXV, 768-69), John Damasc. ("De Fide Orthod.", I, vi, in P. G., XCIV, 804).

St. Augustine studied more closely this analogy between the Divine Word and human speech (see especially "De Trinit.", IX, vii, 12 sq., in P. L., XLII, 967, XV, x, 17 sq., *ibid.*, 1069), and drew from it teachings long accepted in Catholic theology. He compares the Word of **God**, not to the word spoken by the lips, but to the interior speech of the soul, whereby we may in some measure grasp the Divine mystery; engendered by the mind it remains therein, is equal thereto, is the source of its operations. This doctrine was later developed and enriched by St. Thomas, especially in "Contra Gent.", IV, xi-xiv, opusc. "De natura verbi intellectus"; "Quaest. disput. de verit." iv, "De potent.", ii-viii, 1, "Summa Theol.", I-I, xxvii, 2; xxxiv. St. Thomas sets forth in a very clear way the identity of meaning, already noted by St. Augustine (De Trinit., VII, ii, 3), between the terms *Son* and *Word*: "eo Filius quo Verbum, et eo Verbum quo Filius" ("Summa

Theol.", I-I, xxvii, 2, "Contra Gent.", IV, xi). The teaching of St. Thomas has been highly approved by the Church especially in the condemnation of the Synod of Pistoia by [Pius VI](#) (Denzinger, "Enchiridion", 1460). (*See* [JESUS CHRIST](#); [TRINITY](#).)