

## Durham E-Theses

---

### *The doctrine of the word of God in the New Testament and in the theology of Karl Barth*

Frost, George

#### How to cite:

---

Frost, George (1960) *The doctrine of the word of God in the New Testament and in the theology of Karl Barth*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online:  
<http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/9833/>

#### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author.  
No quotation from it should be published without  
his prior written consent and information derived  
from it should be acknowledged.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORD OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT  
AND IN THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH

A Thesis presented for the Degree of Master of Arts in  
The University of Durham.

25th September, 1960.

George Frost, B.A.,  
Hatfield College,  
Durham.

## C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction and Bibliography	i
CHAPTER ONE	
The Synoptic Gospels	1
CHAPTER TWO	
Saint Paul	21
CHAPTER THREE	
Pastorals, James, Jude, 2 Peter, 1 Peter, Acts, Hebrews.	38
CHAPTER FOUR	66
Revelation, Johannine Epistles, The Gospel According To Saint John.	
CHAPTER FIVE	87
The Gospel According to Saint John 1.1-18	
CHAPTER SIX	106
The Word of God in the written Bible	
CHAPTER SEVEN	120
The Word of God in the theology of Karl Barth	

## INTRODUCTION AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Take thou Authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy Sacraments in the Congregation, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto." With this charge every Anglican Bishop sends the priests whom he has just ordained out to their lives' work; for this reason it is a most solemn charge and one to be treated thoughtfully and energetically. Yet in the modern Anglican scene, while there is much constructive thinking about 'the holy Sacraments', there is little understanding of what is placed first - 'the Word of God'. Moreover, in view of the modern popularity of Biblical theology, it is surprising to notice that, although the Bible has been searched diligently and fruitfully for help in understanding the Sacraments, there is to be found no extended discussion in English of the Biblical doctrine of the Word of God. This is a most serious omission, for not only is the conception of the ministry in the Anglican church thereby weakened, and surely, with it, the ministry itself, but also ecumenical conversations with other confessions who regard the Word of God as fundamental to their Church life are bound to come to grief. Ought not, therefore, the Church of England more than others, to ponder afresh the meaning of this doctrine and its relevance to her life?

In this thesis, which is primarily a New Testament study we try to determine what the New Testament authors meant by  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\rho\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha$ . There are two general points to be made before we begin. First there is the great importance in the thought and life of ancient peoples of 'hearing' and 'speaking'. The importance of 'hearing' in the New Testament is evident from such places as Rom. 10.14 or Gal. 3.2, it is an activity of the whole person, and an activity which has far reaching consequences. "When the ear was engaged in hearing the whole psychical activity was acting in and through it ... Hebrew has no specific word for obey: the word of the Lord is uttered that it may be obeyed, and to speak of hearing it is to speak of obeying it (Jer. 17.24). In the hearing of God or of the word of God the whole personality is therefore brought into play" (L.H. Brockington, TWB, p. 104). 'Hearing' implies 'speaking', and the importance of 'speaking', the use of words to communicate between people, is also to be treated quite seriously when considering such people as the New Testament authors: L.H. Brockington again writes, "Speaking is an effective activity according to Hebrew thought ... the word and the thing are to the Hebrew mind, one and the same thing, and the same word is used for both ... the spoken word is charged with the personal power of the

speaker (Deut. 5.25,26)" (TWB, p. 232). We can, therefore, only be true to the life and culture of the New Testament authors if we take seriously what they have to say about 'words' and 'the word', and what they say about the attitude which should be taken up towards this 'word'.

Secondly we must realise that the words *λόγος* and *ῥῆμα* are very common, mundane words, and even discussing them can lead to confusion of language. When, therefore, the philological sense of *ῥῆμα* and *λόγος* is meant, it is in this thesis called the 'ordinary use of *λόγος*'. Since, also, they are such common words we are obliged to consider their every occurrence in the New Testament and consider them most carefully before coming to any conclusions.

Naturally these words are used very often in the ordinary way, and when this is so only a list of such examples is given - but where there is any doubt the example must be examined with more care. The aim throughout this thesis has been to follow the advice of Sir E.C. Hoskyns when he wrote, - the New Testament authors "loaded the simplest words with the most far reaching meaning, and were capable of using them diversely within the boundaries of a single sentence. Therefore, while the critic must beware of forcing a particular meaning upon every ~~meaning~~ <sup>meaning</sup> of a word or phrase, he must be equally careful not to overlook an

allusion because it may seem undefined ... it is necessary (therefore) ... to keep all possible allusions constantly at hand, by tabulating examples of every diverse use." (Riddle, pp. 22f.) It is hoped that this advice has been followed.

We begin by trying to see from the Synoptic Gospels if Jesus used the expressions  $\delta$  λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ or ῥῆμα in any particular way, and continue by taking the other New Testament authors in turn to see how they used λόγος or ῥῆμα in the context of their own writings. Only when this has been done are we in a position to discuss the use of it in the New Testament as a whole and particularly in John 1.1-18.

In the last chapter a very brief precis is given of Karl Barth's exposition of the Word of God in its threefold form, and of the nature of the Word of God. This is done, not only because Barth's is the finest exposition of this New Testament subject in modern theology, but also because the Word of God is for Barth the foundation of all his dogmatic work - a work which is without any doubt one of the very great theological achievements of this century. The challenge of Barth's work is paid little attention in England, not only because of its extent - which is fortunately considerable - but also because of this foundation

stone, this strange doctrine of the Word of God. It ought not to be a strange doctrine for Anglicans since, as T.H.L. Parker has commented, it is writ large in the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible. Yet Hooker wrote, "We therefore have no word of God but the Scripture. Apostolic sermons were unto such as heard them his word, even as properly as to us their writings are. Howbeit not so our own sermons" (1). Parker's comment is that these "words must be regarded as a private opinion and un-Anglican at that" (2). It must be admitted, however, that this 'private opinion', although inconsistent with the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible, is one shared by many Anglicans and not only of Hooker's day. Indeed Hooker's seems to be the representative voice of the Anglican Church. But in current Anglicanism there is a great interest in New Testament studies, and this thesis is presented in the hope that this particular aspect of New Testament thought may be paid the attention it deserves by modern Anglicans.

(1) Parker, p. 177.

(2) Parker, p. 177.



## Bibliography

There are many books in English on Greek philosophy and many commentaries on the Fourth Gospel, in all of which we are told much about the Greek and Hebrew understanding of  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  but very rarely anything about the specifically Christian understanding. In his commentary on the Pastoral Epistles (Cambridge, 1899) J.H. Bernard has a short note on the complete phrase  $\delta\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ . Sir E.C. Hoskyns in his commentary on The Fourth Gospel (London, 1940) has an instructive, extended note on 'The Word of God' (F.G., p. 154-163). The concept of the Word of God in the New Testament is discussed by Harnack in his The Constitution and Law of the Church (London, 1910), and by Bultmann in his Theology of the New Testament (London, 1952, 1955), but, of course, these are translations from the German. W.H. Cadman has a short chapter on the subject in Christian Worship (ed. N. Micklem Oxford, 1936), and there is the all too brief but quite excellent article by R.H. Fuller in Theology, XLVII, No. 294. The article in TWB is not impressive. It is astonishing that it has been thought fit to translate articles from the T.W.N.T. on subjects already well documented in English, but none on subjects we know little of: we must apparently wait for the American translation of the complete T.W.N.T. for the translation of the excellent article on  $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega$ .

I must here acknowledge my very great debt to my wife, who made available for me translations of parts of articles from the T.W.N.T., and in particular prepared in a remarkably short time a translation of section D of Kittel's article; <sup>on λέγω</sup> I must also thank Mr. J. Bowden for helping with this latter at certain points.

In the first list of books the majority of the commentaries named were consulted only ad loc.; in the second will be found a list of books useful for understanding this particular aspect of Karl Barth's theology, but only where an abbreviation has been given is the book cited in the text.

CHAPTERS I - VI

- Abbott T.K. Abbott, The Epistles To The Ephesians And Colossians. Edinburgh, 1909.
- Arndt and Gingrich W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature. Cambridge, 1957.
- Barrett, H.S.G.T. C.K. Barrett, The Holy Spirit And The Gospel Tradition. London, 1947.
- Barrett, John C.K. Barrett, The Gospel According To Saint John. London, 1955.
- Barrett, Documents C.K. Barrett (Ed.), The New Testament Background, Selected Documents. London, 1956.
- Barrett, Romans C.K. Barrett, A Commentary On The Epistle To The Romans. London, 1957.
- Beare, Peter F.W. Beare, The First Epistle Of Peter. Oxford, 1947.
- Beare, Philipians F.W. Beare, A Commentary On The Epistle To The Philipians. London, 1959.
- Bernard, Pastorals J.H. Bernard, The Pastoral Epistles. Cambridge, 1899.
- B.F.B.S., 1958 Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ, Second Edition, London, 1958, Ed. by G.D. Kilpatrick (British and Foreign Bible Society).
- Blackman E.C. Blackman, The Epistle Of James, London, 1957.
- Bultmann, Jesus R. Bultmann, Jesus And The Word, (Tr. from the second edition, 1934, by L.P. Smith and E. Huntress), London, 1935.
- Bultmann, Theology I R. Bultmann, Theology Of the New Testament I (1948, Eng. Tr. by K. Grobel) London, 1952.
- Bultmann, Theology II R. Bultmann, Theology Of the New Testament II (1948, Eng. Tr. by K. Grobel) London, 1955.

- Bultmann, Gnosis R. Bultmann, Gnosis. (Tr. from T.W.N.T., I pp. 696 ff by J.R. Coates) London, 1952.
- Cadman W.H. Cadman, "The Word of God in The New Testament" in Christian Worship, Ed. by N. Micklem, Oxford, 1936.
- Calvin J. Calvin, Commentary On The Gospel According To Saint John (1-10), (Tr. from the Latin (Geneva, 1553) by T.H.L. Parker). Edinburgh, 1959.
- Clarke W.K. Lowther Clarke, Divine Humanity (pp. 87-100). London, 1936.
- Charles R.H. Charles, The Revelation of Saint John. (Two Volumes) Edinburgh, 1920.
- Clavier "Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ Dans l'Épître aux Hébreux" in New Testament Essays. Ed. by A.J.B. Higgins (q.v.).
- Cranfield C.E.B. Cranfield, St. Mark 4.1-34 in S.J.T. 4/4 pp. 398-414, and 5/1 pp. 49-66.
- Cranfield, Mark C.E.B. Cranfield, The Gospel According To Saint Mark. Cambridge, 1959.
- Creed J.M. Creed, The Gospel According To Saint Luke. London, 1930.
- Cullmann, Church O. Cullmann, The Early Church. (Tr. by A.J.B. Higgins and S. Godman: ed. A.J.B. Higgins). London, 1956.
- Cullmann, Worship O. Cullmann, Early Christian Worship. (Tr. by A.S. Todd, and J.B. Torrance) London, 1953.
- Davies, Paul W.D. Davies, Paul And Rabbinic Judaism. London, 1948, Sec. ed. 1955.
- Dix, Liturgy Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of The Liturgy. London, 1945.
- Dodd, Romans C.H. Dodd, The Epistle Of Paul To The Romans. London, 1932.
- Dodd, Preaching C.H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching And Its Developments. London, 1936.

- Dodd, Epistles C.H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles. London, 1946.
- Dodd, Scriptures C.H. Dodd, According To The Scriptures. London, 1952.
- Dodd, I.F.G. C.H. Dodd, The Interpretation Of The Fourth Gospel. Cambridge, 1953.
- Easton, Pastorals B.S. Easton, The Pastoral Epistles. London, 1948.
- E.R.E. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Ed. by James Hastings. Edinburgh, 1908 ff.
- Evans, Tradition C.F. Evans, The Beginnings Of The Gospel Tradition, in Theology, Vol. LXI, No. 459, September 1958, pp. 355-362.
- Flemington W.F. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine Of Baptism. London, 1948.
- Flew R.N. Flew, Jesus And His Church. London, sec. ed. 1943.
- Fuller, Mission R.H. Fuller, The Mission And Achievement Of Jesus. London, 1954.
- Fuller, Word R.H. Fuller, The Word of God, article in Theology Vol. XLVII, No. 294, December 1944, pp. 267-271.
- Harnack, Church A. Harnack, The Constitution And Law Of The Church In The First Two Centuries. London, 1910.
- Higgins New Testament Essays. Ed. by A.J.B. Higgins, Manchester, 1959.
- Hort, Peter F.J.A. Hort, The First Epistle Of Saint Peter 1.1 - 2.17. London, 1898.
- Hort, Apocalypse F.J.A. Hort, The Apocalypse Of Saint John 1-3. London, 1908.
- Hoskyns, Riddle Sir E.C. Hoskyns and N. Davey, The Riddle Of The New Testament. London, 1931.
- Hoskyns, Epistles Sir E.C. Hoskyns, The Johannine Epistles, article in A New Commentary On Holy Scripture, ed. C. Gore, H.L. Goudge, A. Guillaume. London, 1928.

- Hoskyns, F.G. Sir E.C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel,  
(ed. by F.N. Davey) London (1940)  
Second Edition, Revised and Re-set 1947.
- Jackson, Beginnings F.J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake,  
The Beginnings Of Christianity, Part I  
Vol. 4, London, 1933.
- Jeremias J. Jeremias, The Parables Of Jesus.  
(Tr. by S.H. Hooke from 3rd. German ed.)  
London, 1954.
- J.T.S. Journal Of Theological Studies.
- Kittel G. Kittel, "Wort" und "Reden" im Neuen  
Testament, being section D of the article  
on Λόγος in T.W.N.T., Band IV. pp. 100 ff.  
(Stuttgart, 1942). The translation used  
in the text is by Mrs. G. Frost and  
J. Bowden: no English translation has  
been published. References are given  
to the page and the line of the German  
Text.
- Lightfoot, Philippians J.B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle To  
The Philippians, 6th ed. London, 1881.
- Lightfoot, Colossians J.B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles To  
The Colossians And Philemon. 5th ed.  
London, 1880.
- Lightfoot, Galatians J.B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle To  
The Galatians. 10th ed. London, 1890.
- Lightfoot, John R.H. Lightfoot, St. John's Gospel.  
(Ed. C.F. Evans) Oxford, 1956.
- Lock W. Lock, The Pastoral Epistles.  
Edinburgh, 1924.
- Manson, Sayings T.W. Manson, The Sayings Of Jesus.  
London, 1949.
- Mayor, James J.B. Mayor, The Epistle Of St. James.  
2nd ed. London, 1897.
- Mayor, Jude J.B. Mayor, The Epistle Of St. Jude And  
The Second Epistle Of St. Peter.  
London, 1907.
- McNeile A.H. McNeile, The Gospel According To  
St. Matthew. London, 1915.

- McNeile, Introduction A.H. McNeile, An Introduction To The Study Of The New Testament. London, 1927, Second Edition revised by C.S.C. Williams, 1953 (corrected 1955, 1957).
- Moffatt, Hebrews J. Moffatt, The Epistle To The Hebrews. Edinburgh, 1924.
- Moule, Colossians C.F.D. Moule, The Epistles To The Colossians And Philemon. Cambridge, 1957.
- Nineham D.E. Nineham, "The Order Of Events in St. Mark's Gospel", an essay in Studies In The Gospels. Ed. D. E. Nineham, Oxford, 1955.
- Plummer A. Plummer, The Second Epistle Of Saint Paul To The Corinthians. Edinburgh, 1915.
- Plummer, Luke A. Plummer, The Gospel According To Saint Luke. Edinburgh, 1896.
- Preston and Hanson R.H. Preston and A.T. Hanson, The Revelation Of Saint John The Divine. London, 1949.
- Rackham R.B. Rackham, The Acts Of The Apostles. London, 1901, 14th edition 1951.
- Ramsey, Glory A.M. Ramsey, The Glory Of God And The Transfiguration Of Christ. London, 1949.
- Ramsey, Lambeth Michael Ebor (A.M. Ramsey), The Lord Archbishop of York, "The Holy Bible Its Authority And Message" in The Lambeth Conference 1958. London, 1958.
- Richardson, Introduction A. Richardson, An Introduction To The Theology Of The New Testament. London, 1958.
- Richardson, Miracles A. Richardson, The Miracle Stories Of The Gospels. London, 1941.
- Riesenfeld, Beginnings H. Riesenfeld, The Gospel Tradition And Its Beginnings. London, 1957.
- Robinson J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle To The Ephesians. 2nd ed. London, 1914.
- Robertson A. Robertson and A. Plummer, The Second Epistle Of Saint Paul To The Corinthians. London, 1932.

- Sanday and Headlam W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, The Epistle To The Romans. Edinburgh, 1900.
- Scott, Paul C.A.A. Scott, Christianity According To Saint Paul. Cambridge, 1927.
- Selwyn E.G. Selwyn, The First Epistle Of Saint Peter. London, 1946.
- S.J.T. Scottish Journal Of Theology.
- Stauffer, Caesar E. Stauffer, Christ And The Caesars. (Tr. by K. and R. Gregor Smith from 3rd German ed., 1952) London, 1955.
- Stauffer, Theology E. Stauffer, New Testament Theology. Tr. by J. Marsh from the 5th German ed.) London, 1955.
- Strachan, John R.H. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel Its Significance And Environment. 3rd ed. London, 1951.
- Taylor V. Taylor, The Gospel According To Saint Mark. London, 1952.
- Torrey, Apocalypse C.C. Torrey, The Apocalypse Of John. New Haven, 1958.
- TWB A. Richardson, A Theological Word Book Of The Bible. London, 1950.
- T.W.N.T. Theologisches Wörterbuch <sup>Zum</sup> ~~des~~ Neuen Testament. Ed. G. Kittel, continued by G. Friedrich, Stuttgart, 1933f.
- V.B. The Vocabulary Of The Bible. Ed. by J.-J. Von Allmen (Tr. from French, 1954). London, 1958.
- Westcott, Epistles B.F. Westcott, The Epistles Of Saint John. London, 1883.
- Westcott, John B.F. Westcott, The Gospel According To Saint John. London, 1890.
- Westcott, Hebrews B.F. Westcott, The Epistle To The Hebrews. London, 1906.
- Westcott, Ephesians B.F. Westcott, Saint Paul's Epistle To The Ephesians, London, 1906.



Williams, Acts

C.S.C. Williams, A Commentary On The Acts Of The Apostles. London, 1957.

Young

R. Young, Analytical Concordance To The Holy Bible. London, 1879.

CHAPTER VII.

- K. Barth, The Word Of God And The Word Of Man. (Tr. by D. Horton from Das Wort Gottes und Die Theologie, Munich, 1924) London, 1929.
- K. Barth, Credo, (Tr. by J.S. McNab from Credo, Munich, 1935) London, 1936.
- I. 1 K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, I. 1, (Tr. by G.T. Thomson from Kirchliche Dogmatik I. 1, Munich, 1932). Edinburgh, 1936.
- I. 2 K. Barth, Church Dogmatics I. 2, (Tr. by G.T. Thomson and H. Knight from Kirchliche Dogmatik I. 2, Zurich 1938) Edinburgh, 1956.
- Christmas K. Barth, Christmas, (Tr. by B. Citron from Weihnacht, Gottingen, 1957) Edinburgh, 1959.
- Dogmatics In Outline K. Barth, Dogmatics In Outline, (Tr. by G.T. Thomson from Dogmatik im Grundriss, Munich, 1947) London, 1949.
- K. Barth, A Shorter Commentary On Romans (Tr. by D. H. van Daalen from Kurze Erklärung des Römerbriefes, Munich, 1956)
- Revelation K. Barth, "The Christian Understanding Of Revelation" an essay in Against The Stream (Tr. from the German by Mrs. E.M. Delacour and S. Godman) London, 1954, pp. 203-240.

G.C. Berkouwer, The Triumph Of Grace In The Theology Of Karl Barth, (tr. by H.R. Boer from De Triomf Der Genade In De Theologie Van Karl Barth, Kampen) London, 1956.

D. Bonhoeffer, The Cost Of Discipleship (Tr. by R.H. Fuller from Nachfolge, Munich, 1937) London, 1948, Revised edition 1959.

D. Bonhoeffer, Letters And Papers From Prison, (Tr. by R.H. Fuller from Widerstand Und Ergebung, (Ed. E. Bethge), Munich) London, 1953.

R. Birch Hoyle, The Teaching Of Karl Barth, London, 1930.

J. McConnachie, The Significance Of Karl Barth, London, 1931.

J. McConnachie, The Barthian Theology And The Man Of Today, London, 1933.

Parker

T.H.L. Parker (Ed.) Essays In Christology For Karl Barth. London, 1956.

J.K.S. Reid, The Authority Of Scripture, London, 1957.

Weber

O. Weber, Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics (Tr. by A.C. Cochrane from Karl Barth's Kirchliche Dogmatik sec. ed. Neukirchen, 1952) London, 1953.

C. West, Communism And The Theologians, London, 1958.

## Chapter One

### The Synoptic Gospels

Both **λόγος** and **ῥῆμα** are found in their ordinary meanings in the synoptic gospels. **ῥῆμα** is so used at Matt. 12.36; 18.16; 26.75; 27.14. Lk. 1.65; 2.17; 2.19; 2.50; 2.51; 5.5; 7.1; 9.45; 18.34; 20.26; 22.61; 24.8; 24.11. Mk. 9.32; 14.72. That the ordinary use of **λόγος** has the same meaning is most obvious from Lk. 20.20 and 20.26, or Matt. 12.36 and Matt. 12.37. **λόγος** has also the ordinary meaning in Matt. 5.37; 7.24; 7.26; 7.28; 10.14; 12.32; 12.37; 15.12; 15.23; 19.1; 19.9; (some MSS): 19.11; 19.22; 22.15; 22.46; 24.35; 26.1; 26.44; 28.15. Lk. 1.4; 1.20; 1.29; 3.4; 4.22; 6.47; 9.26; 9.28; 9.44; 12.10; 20.20; 21.33; 22.61; 23.9; 24.17; 24.44. Mk. 5.36; 7.29; 8.38; 10.22; 10.24; 12.13; 13.31; 14.39. **ῥῆμα** has the sense of 'thing' or event' at Lk. 2.15. **λόγος** has the sense of 'account' at Matt. 12.36; 18.23; 25.19; Lk. 16.2; of 'question' at Matt. 21.24; Lk. 20.3, Mk. 11.29, of 'reason' at Matt. 5.32, of 'report' at Lk. 7.17, and of 'matter' at Mk. 9.10.

In some of the editorial passages of the synoptics, **λόγος** is used to describe the preaching of Jesus, and in the longer (and non-Markan) ending of Mark it is used for the preaching of the apostles (Mk. 16.20). The main question

facing us in the synoptics is, therefore, the question of Jesus' speech. What does Jesus, himself, say about his own speech? Does he, himself, use the expression  $\delta$  λόγος to describe his own speech? What is the nature of his speech? Why (if it is the case) do the synoptics never name Jesus  $\delta$  λόγος (του Θεού) as the Fourth Gospel does?

The first question to be asked is, "How did Jesus talk of his own words?" It is in fact on only two occasions that Jesus explicitly mentions his own λόγοι .

- 1) "For whoever will save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it ... whoever is ashamed of me and my λόγοι ... of him will the Son of Man be ashamed." (Mk. 8.35-8 = Lk. 9.26).

Even here it is to be noted that the λόγοι (λόγους in the text) is missing from some MSS, so that we are left with τούς ἐρούς meaning "my companions" (1). If the reading is accepted we find a close connection between λόγοι and εὐαγγελίον (v.35), a connection made almost certainly not by Jesus but by Mark (2). The main theological point of the passage is the cost of discipleship, but for our <sup>pur</sup>poses we may notice the close connection between Jesus himself and his λόγοι - cf. Lk. 12. 8-9.

(1) Taylor, p. 383.  
 (2) Cranfield, p. 283.

- 2) "Heaven and earth will pass away but my **λόγοι** will not pass away." (Mk.13.31 = Matt. 24.<sup>3</sup>5 = Lk.21.33).

The general opinion is that this is an authentic saying, but to what do the **λόγοι** refer? As it stands it refers to the immediately preceding prophecies in the apocalyptic discourse (so McNeile p. 355, Taylor p. 521), but more probably it is an interpolation between vv. 30 and 32 and in its original setting referred to Jesus' teaching as a whole (so Manson, Sayings, p. 334, cf. Cranfield, Mark p. 410). The phrase is reminiscent of the saying about the Law in Matt. 5.18, and McNeile calls the teaching in this verse (i.e. **λόγοι**) an **ὄντως νόμος**. These two examples suggest that Jesus is aware of the authority of his speech, but does not refer to it very often.

There are two singular examples of Jesus using the expression **ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ** apparently with the meaning of his own teaching or preaching; both of these occur in Luke.

- 1) "My mother and my brothers are those who hear **τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ** and do it." (Lk. 8.21).

This is significant because Luke uses the phrase for the message of Jesus more than Mark - Matthew (apart from the interpretation of the parable of the sower) does not so use it - and in the second book of Luke/Acts the phrase

is nearly always preferred to εὐαγγελίον (which only occurs twice in Acts). The Marcan parallel runs, "whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mk. 3.35), and Matthew keeps the expression "the will of God" (Matt. 12.50). Is Luke thus providing an example of the early church adapting sayings of Jesus? What Luke says is not untrue, but is the expression genuinely dominical? In its context it fittingly concludes the parable of the sower - at least as understood by the early church - but its authenticity is most doubtful, it may be a genuine saying from another source used by Luke, but this is highly unlikely and Taylor's pleading can scarcely be paid serious attention; rather we must say, "Luke ... appears to place the saying in the context of Christian experience." (1)

- 2) "Blessed are those who hear τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ  
and keep it." (Lk. 11.28)

Creed considers this is probably a variant of Lk. 8.21 (2). While there are no explicit grounds for doubting its authenticity, it remains dubious and is far more likely to be Luke than Jesus. The point is "an historical conclusion from these two examples from Luke, that Jesus himself used the term and applied it to his preaching, cannot be drawn" (3).

(1) Barrett, H.S.G.T. p. 65, cf. Taylor 245 f.  
(2) Creed, p. 162  
(3) Kittel, p. 123/23

We are left with the use of *λόγος* in the interpretation of the parable of the sower. (Matt. 13.9-23; Mk. 4.14-20; Lk. 8.11-15). To this, therefore, we now turn. For very many scholars it is an assured result of modern New Testament criticism that the interpretation of this parable is the work of the early church and not of Jesus. The history of this begins with Adolf Jülicher (1) and continues in the conclusions of the majority of major New Testament scholars since then. The most modern and complete discussion is by C.E.B. Cranfield in S.J.T. Vol. 4 No. 4 pp.398-414 and Vol. 5 No. 1 pp. 49-66 (a more brief discussion is also found in his more recent commentary on Mark, pp. 158-161). This is a very careful piece of work which calls a good many previously firmly held convictions into question. In view of it there would be little good served by even summarising it here - suffice it to say that it must now be agreed that "while it would be unwise to claim that the authenticity of (Mk.4) vv. 14-20 has been proved, it would be equally unwise to assume that the unauthenticity of these verses is an assured result of modern criticism" (Cranfield, Mark p. 161). For our purposes we have to go a little further. The strongest argument against the authenticity of the interpretation is that

(1) A. Jülicher, Die Gleichnisreden Jesu, see Jeremias, p. 16

of the language used in it, and here one of the questions involved is the absolute use of *λόγος*. Cranfield is unable to come to any definite conclusion whatever on this point, and leaves the matter entirely open (Mark pp. 161-2). It seems to me that when we have taken into account all that Cranfield has to say on this point (even in S.J.T. 4/4 p.410) we nevertheless must take full cognizance of the fact that this is the final possibility in the synoptics of the use of *λόγος* by Jesus to designate his message, and the fact that in the other once possible places we have eventually had to say it is an editorial usage. We conclude, therefore, that the great weight of probability is against the authenticity of the use of *λόγος* in this passage, while agreeing with Cranfield's general conclusions on the authenticity of the whole passage. It will be seen later that in the thinking of the early church *λόγος* is used both for the message of Jesus and for the apostolic preaching, indeed it is a most important category in New Testament thought. So important, in fact, that if Jesus had used the expression at all we would certainly have heard about it somewhere in the New Testament record. As it is, we do not. We conclude, therefore, that there are no good grounds for assuming that Jesus himself ever used *λόγος* (or, obviously, its Aramaic equivalent) to describe



in an absolute way his own message, but that when it is apparently so used it is an assimilation to the usage of the early church. And when this has been said a difference must be drawn between ὁ λόγος as the message preached by Jesus, and ἡ λόγος as the message preached by the church about Jesus. But we do have this fact that the early church both used λόγος for the preaching of Jesus, and for its message about Jesus, a message whose fulness was not known until after Pentecost, although in as far as it is a message of the salvation wrought by Jesus, the Christ, perhaps it is hinted at already in Mark 1.45 (pace Taylor p. 190, but see Barrett, H.S.G.T. p. 70). Is this double use possible because the apostles knew that the same event which occurred in the λόγος of Jesus was also occurring in the λόγος of the church? Before deciding this, we must try to define more closely the relationship between the message and the person of Jesus.

The speech of Jesus is authoritative. There is here no subservience as must characterise all other human speech - even that of the Rabbis - here is authority, "because by its ἐξουσία it bears witness not to the Rabbi but to the Son" (1). Ingenious, though the oral tradition of the Rabbis may be they must explain it (however superficially) as

(1) Kittel, p. 107/5 cf. Barrett, H.S.G.T., P. 68

deriving from the written Torah - but not so with Jesus. With him it is "you have heard it said ... but I say unto you" (1). This authority may be perceived by his hearers (2), and when it is, it is realised that "something greater than the temple is here" (3), "something greater than Jonah is here" (4), "something greater than Solomon is here" (5). Within themselves his hearers know what authority they are faced with, however loth they are to express it, and it is something quite new (6). In his book "The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition", Dr. Barrett has summarised an article by D. Daube, in which Daube discusses the Hebraic understanding of *ἐξουσία* in Mk. 1.21-27 (7). Daube explains that there are two different concepts of *ἐξουσία* which may be understood here.

a) First there is the authority which is handed from one Rabbi to another, which differed in power according to the grade of the Rabbi. Thus whereas the Jews in Galilee who heard Jesus were for the most part only used to the teaching of the lowest grade Rabbis, in Jesus' teaching they perceive the authority of the highest grade Rabbis. The Form critics, however, have shown the difficulty of extracting from the gospels

- (1) Matt. 5.33, 28, 32, 34, 39-43, 44; cf. 19.9. This word of command can be paralleled in Rabbinic and Greek writers, see Barrett, H.S.G.T. p. 95 f.
- (2) Matt. 7.28-9; 13.54; Mk. 1.22; cf. Lk. 4.16-22; 20.21, 39f.
- (3) Matt. 12.6 (4) Matt. 12.41
- (5) Matt. 12.42, Lk. 11.3 f. (6) Matt. 21.23-27; Mk. 1.21-27;
- (7) Barrett, H.S.G.T. p. 79-82 Lk. 20.1-9

any exact chronology or topography of Jesus' ministry and here Mark is using ἐξουσία in the general approach to the whole of Jesus' ministry rather than an isolated episode in Galilee.

b) This general approach is accounted for in Daube's second concept of ἐξουσία as referring to the "domain, the government of God, or even to God himself." This is all the more important in view of the understanding that "teaching and action (especially in the case of exorcisms) were not so widely separated in old Jewish thought as they are in modern minds" (1). Now, of course, there is a distinction between the imperative speech which performs miracles, and the speech which proclaims the message, and it is one of the faults of Kittel's article that this distinction is obscured with the result that his final emphasis on the connection between 'speech' and 'action' comes with less force. Before the different types of Jesus' speech are looked at more closely we may briefly point out the importance of Daube's article. The significance of the imperative speech is the close relation of speech and action so characteristic of the Old Testament, and the meaning of authority in this speech described by Barrett as the authority of the 'pneumatic' Jesus.<sup>(2)</sup> But Jesus is still the 'pneumatic' Jesus when he is preaching his message, and the evangelists clearly understood this second form of speech to

(1) Barrett, H.S.G.T. p. 79-82, esp. p.81.

(2) Barrett, H.S.G.T., pp. 69-93

<sup>also</sup>  
~~also~~ contain the authority described by Daube as concept (b) - namely the authority of the sovereignty of God, for Jesus' authority is not <sup>ἐξ ἀνθρώπων</sup> as is the Rabbis' (even the highest Rabbis - cf. Cranfield, Mark p. 74) but is indeed from God alone as is implied quite definitely by Jesus himself in Matt. 21.23-7 - and as the Fourth Gospel stresses with characteristic clarity (1).

The imperative in the speech of Jesus is full of authority. We are close here to that Old Testament understanding of the Word having a power of its own. "Only <sup>εἶπε</sup> λόγῳ and my servant shall be healed"; Jesus "cast out the spirits <sup>λόγῳ</sup> and healed all who were sick" (2). By speaking he healed the woman with the haemorrhage (3), and restored Bartimaeus' sight (4). His word is one having power, he has only to call the disciples and they come (5), he speaks and the elements (6) and the demonic spirits (7) yield. Speech demands and is action, there is here no contrast of words and deeds. There is of course authority in the speech of the centurion (Lk. 7.8) which Jesus acknowledges, but the power of Jesus' word is over the creation - as Luke himself seems to say inadvertently in the last words of v.43 in Lk. 9.42-3. Richardson puts the matter well when he says: "to anyone familiar

- (1) Barrett, H.S.G.T. p. 82, the whole of chapter five of H.S.G.T. is of course very important here.  
 (2) Matt. 8.8-13,16: cf. Lk.4.36; John 4.50<sup>53</sup>; 5.8-9; 18.9,32.  
 (3) Matt. 9.22 = Mk. 5.34 = Lk. 8.48.  
 (4) Mk. 10.52  
 (5) Matt. 4.19  
 (6) Matt. 8.26  
 (7) Matt. 8.32

with the Old Testament it is immediately obvious that the power of Jesus' word demonstrates His participation in the creative power of God, Who both made and rules the world by the word of his mouth (cf. Gen. 1.3,6,9, etc.; Ps. xxxiii. 6,9; cxlvii. 18, etc.)" (1).

The message in the speech of Jesus is also full of authority. There is, incidentally, no distinction between the use of εὐαγγελίου, διδασχῆ and λόγος by the evangelists. "Preaching the gospel of God" in Mk. 1.14 and "preaching the word" in Mk. 2.2 are identical in meaning, both εὐαγγελίου and λόγος are the object of the almost technical verb κηρύσσειν and in both cases Jesus is the subject. Nor is there any difference between these and the "λόγος (λόγον) of the kingdom" (2) and the "gospel of the Kingdom" (3) in Matthew. Furthermore both the preaching and the teaching have the same effects - the distinction drawn by C.H. Dodd (4) between 'preaching' and 'teaching' in <sup>the</sup> apostolic church, is not found in the apostles' editorial passages of the gospels: these three words simply describe Jesus' speech and in his speech lies the authority. While his words cause astonishment, it is the authoritative teaching in the words - "and when Jesus finished these λόγους the crowds were astonished at his διδασχῆ, for he taught them as one who had ἐξουσίαν and not as the scribes" (5), and "coming into his own country ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοῦς

(1) Richardson, Miracles, p.53. Note also Richardson's denial of possible accretions from Hellenism, the accounts are essentially Hebraic in nature.

(2) Matt. 13.19 (3) Matt. 4.23; 9.35; 24.14; 26.13.

(4) C.H. Dodd, "The Apostolic Preaching And Its Developments"

(5) Matt. 7.28 (London, 1936)

in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?" (1). The reason for all the astonishment is because the teaching is new and self-authenticating, unlike that of the scribes and pharisees: "And they were all amazed ... saying, what is this? a new teaching: with authority he commands ..." (2). But the reaction to the teaching is sometimes offence and sometimes open hostility: "And he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard were astonished ... and they took offence at him" (3), "and they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill ... that they might throw him down headlong" (4), "and he taught ... and the chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought a way to destroy him" (5). It is clear that the teaching and the preaching are one and the same, and together form the offence which is embodied in him himself. Matthew will distinguish between (i) instruction, and (ii) preaching and teaching (6), perhaps this is the difference which in the current church life of the evangelists was (i) διδασχί and (ii) κήρυγμα; if this is so it only emphasises the lack of distinction made between teaching and preaching in the synoptics - "and when Jesus had finished instructing (διδάσσειν) his twelve disciples, he went on from there

- (1) Matt. 13.54
- (2) Mk. 1.27 cf. Matt. 7.29.
- (3) Mk. 6.2-3
- (4) Lk. 4.38-9
- (5) Mk. 11.18
- (6) Matt. 11.1

διδάσκειν and κηρύσσειν in their cities" (1). Whatever the word used to describe it, and in whatever form it is found, the speech of Jesus is always with authority. Nor is it simply the speech which is with authority, the effects of the teaching are often identical with the effects of the miracles. This is perhaps most immediately clear in Lk. 4.32-6, where we read:

(a) "they were astonished at his teaching for his word was with authority" (Lk. 4.32).

(b) "What is this word? for with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out" (Lk. 4.36 cf. Lk. 9.1-2, Mk. 3.14 f.)

It is the ἐξουσία powerful in this speech and action, which forces us behind the actions to the speech, behind the λόγος to the person of Jesus himself, behind the person of Jesus himself to the domain, the government of God. What is the relationship between Jesus and the λόγος ?

At this point a reference ought probably to be made to the attempt of H. Riesenfeld<sup>(2)</sup> to prove that Jesus taught a 'Holy Word' which was to be solemnly handed on ( παραδίδόναι ) by his disciples. As against the Form critics Riesenfeld asserts this Holy Word as the cradle of the New Testament, and denies any possibility of the apostolic preaching or teaching being such a cradle. He puts very pertinent questions to the Form critics and if he does nothing else at least reminds us that the person and teaching of Jesus himself have to be

(1) *ibid.*

(2) Riesenfeld, The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings (London, 1957)

taken seriously! Unfortunately so extreme is his reaction to the Form critics that his result is equally unscientific and far more fantastic than anything produced by Bultmann.

We need comment upon only three points (1).

(1) For Riesenfeld to be right the Holy Word must have been markedly formative, but the use of Mark by Matthew and Luke shows no obeisance to such a formative agent. (ii) There is nothing secretive about ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ preached by the apostles - cf. the very use of the word κηρύσσειν (iii) λόγος in Acts is most definitely used for the apostolic preaching and is so used purposefully instead of εὐαγγελίον (see below on Acts), and the primary content of the λόγος is the account of the birth, baptism, miracles, death and resurrection of Jesus, and "Jesus can hardly be held to be the originator of the narratives ... since he is the subject and not the narrator of the events". (2).

We find in the New Testament that only once does the expression - often found in the Old Testament (3) - occur, "The Word of God came to ...". This sole occasion is in Luke at 3.2. Here we have all the wealth of (at least intended) precise detail of placing and dating which generally accompanies this phrase in the Old Testament.

- (1) A good and discriminating appraisal of Riesenfeld's thesis is given by C.F. Evans in *Theology*, Vol.LXI, No.459, pp.355-362  
 (2) Evans, p. 358  
 (3) e.g. Gen. 15.4, Numbers 23.5, Joshua 14.10, 1 Kings 13.20 and in many other instances, see Young pp. 1068-70.



"In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontious Pilate being Governor of Judaea, and Herod being Tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip Tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias Tetrarch of Abilene, in the Highpriesthood of Annas and Caiaphas ἐγένετο ῥῆμα Θεοῦ to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness; and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Lk. 3.1-3).

John is clearly understood by the evangelists as the Old Testament prophet in the New Testament (1), he is the last of that line of men to whom at different, precise times and in various, distinct places the Word of God came; John is the immediate precursor of the Christ. It is here that Kittel makes the important point that on no single occasion at all do the evangelists write "The Word of the Lord came to Jesus" - not once. "We are not told," writes Kittel, "that in any particular place one particular single communication revealing the will of God has been entrusted to him." (2) He continues by suggesting that the reason why "the idea of a single Word of God uttered to Jesus himself has never penetrated the account can only be that its connotations were felt to be unsuitable and an inadequate

(1) Barrett, H.S.G.T. pp. 28-9.

(2) Kittel, p.114/34, and 115/12.

description of the nature of the relationship between Jesus and God ... the πάντα μοι παρεδόθη <sup>ἐπὶ</sup> τοῦ πατρός μου the τον Πατέρα ἐπιγινώσκω of the υἱός places the unity of Jesus with the Father and also with the divine word on a basis of a completely different sort lying beyond all single communications." (ibid). What then are we to say of Jesus and ὁ λόγος?

To speak in terms of 'function', it seems fairly clear that Jesus in his own person performs just that which his message (ὁ λόγος) also performs - as T.W. Manson writes, "the teaching of Jesus in the fullest and deepest sense is Jesus himself." (1). We may see how closely the teaching, action and person of Jesus are held together in the following passage:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has annointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Lk. 4.18-19, cf. vv.32 and 36).

At the request of the disciples of John to know if Jesus was the one who should come, he replied,

(1) Manson, Sayings, p.9

"Go and tell John what you hear and see, the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the good news preached to them. And blessed is he that takes no offence at us." (Matt. 11.4-6).

These are the signs of the irruption of the Kingdom, yet this is the burden of Jesus' teaching in the parables, "Jesus not only proclaimed the message of the parables, but ... he lived it and embodied it in his own person. 'Jesus not only utters the message of the Kingdom of God, he himself is the message'." (1). "The relation in which Jesus Himself thus stands to the Kingdom prompts the reflection that whilst his preaching did indeed interpret the meaning of the Divine action, it was not in the first place interpretation; it was the action itself, a mode of its operation; the preached word was itself the Kingdom becoming present." Jesus "was that of which He was the bearer. Word and action of Jesus, word and action - or Kingdom - of God, and the person of Jesus merge in an inseparable unity." (2). In casting out demons Jesus demonstrates publicly what in the temptations occurred privately, namely that he has bound 'the strong man of the house' - the miracles, this power over

(1) C. Maurer, Judaism, 4(1948), p.147 cited, Jeremias, p.158  
 (2) Cadman, p.54

the demons, is a sign of the Kingdom (1). Yet the person of Jesus is the person of Jesus crucified and Jesus risen from the dead. The first open indication of the passion in Mark is 8.31. "and he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed and rise again," this is immediately followed by *καὶ παρησία τὸν λόγον ἐλάλει*. Hoskyns takes this to signify that the "final context of the gospel or Word is defined in the death and resurrection of Jesus" (2). This is because it is "in his *λόγος* that his claim and therefore his dangerousness becomes visible." (3). The early church regarded Jesus as the *σκανδάλον*, yet it also used the corresponding verb *σκανδαλίω* to describe the effect of *ὁ λόγος* on the world (4). Luke begins his gospel with a description of the disciples as those who were *αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται... τοῦ λόγου* (Lk. 1.2). At the beginning of the second volume of Luke/Acts we find that the qualifications of a witness are the witnessing of Jesus in his Life, Death and Resurrection (Acts 1.21-5). Similarly the beginning of Mark reads - "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." - and here the genitive in *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* is as much objective as subjective, not only is the gospel preached by Jesus, but Jesus (Jesus the Christ) is the gospel.

(1) Bultmann, Jesus p. 173, Barrett, H.S.G.T. p. 57

(2) Hoskyns, F.G., p. 160

(3) Kittel, p.106/41

(4) Mk. 4.12 and Rom. 9.32; 1 Cor. 1.23; 1 Peter 2.4-8, cf. Matt. 15.12.

Hoskyns puts the matter well in the words:

"Since, therefore, no evangelist could divorce the gospel or the Word of God from Jesus himself both the gospel and the Word of God are drawn into the orbit of his person. It is not that abstract ideas are being personified, it is rather that the revelation of the power of God is being brought into the very closest possible relationship with the person of Jesus." (1).

May we then say in view of the material here presented that for the Synoptists  $\delta$  λόγος is Jesus? The evangelists did not say this: why not? Perhaps a clue may be found here in comparing the New Testament use of λόγος with that of πνεῦμα, both are frequent in the rest of the New Testament (including John) but rare in the synoptics, and both are very much to do with the relationship of God to men. The rarity of these words in the synoptics does suggest an attempt of fidelity to the facts, yet their presence in the editorial passages, though slight, is so definite that it hints at something else, namely as Kittel suggests, that "the first three evangelists are conscious of the circumstances to which the Johannine account is meant to give witness." (2). Mark writing first is fairly conservative in his choice of wording, Matthew writing for Jews needs to

(1) Hoskyns, F.G. p. 160

(2) Kittel, p. 122/38

beware of misunderstandings, but Luke rather more removed from Palestine may use them that much more freely. His use of λόγος seems quite decided, he changes θέλημα to λόγος and generally refers to Jesus' message as ὁ λόγος, and in the Acts uses this word to the virtual exclusion of εὐαγγέλιον!

(1). His use of λόγος is strangely similar to his use of πνεῦμα (2). This hesitancy among the evangelists to explicitly name Jesus ὁ λόγος is found in most of the early writing of the New Testament, but there also the tension is found, to all intents and purposes Jesus is ὁ λόγος - what God does in Jesus, God does in ὁ λόγος: Jesus is the one in whom ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ decisively encounters man (3).

(1) 'gospel' occurs only twice in Acts.

(2) Barrett, H.S.G.T. pp. 140-162

(3) cf. for a synoptic evangelist what Luke writes in Acts 10.34-35, and then, of course, John 1.14.

Chapter 2ST. PAUL

1. Both λόγος and ῥῆμα are used in the letters of St. Paul (1), but apart from the ordinary use, neither is used very frequently. It is important to notice how easily Paul can pass from one meaning of λόγος to another, e.g. 1 Cor. 2.4; 1 Thess. 2.13, there is nothing particularly special about the word as such, on each occasion its meaning has to be decided from its context (2). It is with the more special uses of ῥῆμα and λόγος that we are here concerned.

2. Other than in the ordinary sense ῥῆμα is used six times in Paul. At Rom. 10.17, in the phrase διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ, Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive - Christ is the content of the preaching. The meaning of ῥῆμα in Rom. 10.8-9 is debated (3), but we probably have here neither a baptismal formula nor the confession made by the person about to be baptised. It is more probably 'the preaching' as in v.17 - it is the message preached by the apostles, which is so well known to the readers

- (1) Hebrews is not included among the letters of Paul, but is discussed later; Ephesians and Colossians, however, are included because whatever opinion we have about their authorship, the theology of these two letters is certainly Pauline.
- (2) λόγος is used in the ordinary sense at: Rom. 3.4; 13.9; 15.18; 1 Cor. 1.5,17; 2.1,4,13; 4.19,20; 14.9,19; 15.54; 2 Cor. 1.18; 8.7; 10.10,11; 11.16; Gal. 5.14; Eph. 4.29; 5.6; Col. 2.23; 3.17; 4.6; 1 Th. 1.5; 2.5,13; 4.15,18; 2 Th. 2.2,15,17; 3.14. λόγος means 'promise' in Rom. 9.9, and 'account' in Rom. 14.12; Phil. 4.15,17.
- (3) For a discussion of this point see Barrett, Romans, p.200; Barrett takes ῥῆμα as "the gospel message itself, not the summary of this message in a symbol."

both because they have heard it often, and also because it has created their faith. In v. 9 ῥῆμα is omitted from most texts, but if it is included it should be understood from the previous verse - this is the assent to the preaching, the confession of Jesus as Lord (1). The two examples in Ephesians are rather more difficult. In Eph. 6.17 we have, "take the sword of the spirit, which is ῥῆμα θεοῦ", as in Heb. 4.12 this probably means the apostolic preaching (2), but in 5.26 the meaning of ἐν ῥῆματι is contested (3). It is generally taken as a Baptismal symbol, but this may be doubted:

(i) on the other three (or four) occasions it relates to the preaching of the apostles.

(ii) that the word purifies and creates faith is almost a commonplace in the New Testament, we may compare such passages as John 15.3; 1 Pet.1.23-5; 3.21.

If in fact ῥῆμα does refer to the preaching here, we have a good example of the connection between preaching and baptism, and then the saying of Augustine is perfectly admissible: "Detrahe verbum et quid est aqua nisi aqua? Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum, etiam ipsum tamquam visibile verbum." (4)

Bernard claimed that ῥῆμα meant "a special utterance for a

(1) cf. Chr. Senft, V.B., p.337.

(2) So Abbott, p. 168, and Robinson, p.206, but cf. the latter's references on p. 216, and see Kittel's uncertainty, p.113/29 ff and n.184.

(3) Abbott, pp. 168-9, Robinson, pp. 206-7.

(4) Quoted by Westcott, Ephesians, p. 85: see also below on the relationship between baptism and the word.



special purpose" as against the meaning of λόγος being "the whole revealed message of God to the world" (1), but as we have seen this is not the case with ῥῆμα in Paul - both ῥῆμα and λόγος can have the same meanings and both can mean the preaching of the apostles.

3. The word λόγος is used for the senseless gabble of "the wise", against whom Paul would oppose the word of the cross, as in 1 Cor. 1.17-18: "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For ὁ λόγος ..... τοῦ σταυροῦ is folly to those who are perishing," or as in 1 Cor. 2.4 "my λόγος and my κήρυγμα were not in πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις" (cf. 2.13). Paul can use λόγος quite pejoratively as in 1 Cor. 4.20, "The Kingdom of God does not consist ἐν λόγῳ, but ἐν δυνάμει." (cf. 1 Th. 1.5), but this of course is the λόγος ἀνθρώπων and in 1 Th. 2.13 this is clearly contrasted with the power of the Word of God.

4. "Our word" (2 Cor. 1.18), "The Word of the Lord" (1 th.1.8), and "God's Word" (2 Cor. 4.2) are the same as "The Word of the Cross" (1 Cor. 1.18), and signify the apostolic preaching - this is the most important use of λόγος (2). It is often used in this way with the genitive of other nouns.

(1) Bernard, p. 74.

(2) λόγος is used for the preaching of the apostles at: Rom.9.6; 9.28; 1 Cor.1.18; 2.4; 12.8; 14.36; 15.2; 2 Cor. 1.18; 2.17; 4.2; 5.19; 6.7; Gal.6.6; Eph. 1.13; 6.19; Phil.1.14; 2.16; Col.1.25; 1.24; 3.16; 4.3; 1 Th. 1.6; 1.8; 2.13; 2 Th. 3.1.

We find the expressions "word of the cross" (1 Cor.1.18), "word of wisdom", "word of knowledge" (1 Cor. 12.8, cf. 1 Cor. 1.5), "word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5.19), "word of truth" (2 Cor. 6.7; Eph. 1.13; Col. 1.8), and "word of life" (Phil.2.16). In all these expressions it is the "word" which determines the content of the expression. The genitives are objective and may properly be translated - "which brings", "which proclaims", or "which creates". The word itself in its proclamation actually brings reconciliation, because here is the presence of God who when he comes to men reconciles them to himself. Although there is no article in 2. Cor.6.7 the genitive is better not taken qualitatively (as R.S.V.) but in the sense of "presents the truth" - it is "the declaration of the truth, the teaching which told the truth of the good tidings, the preaching of the gospel" (1). The word brings life, and in the midst of a perverse and crooked generation those who hear the word "shine as lights in the world", for to them, and to them alone, the word has brought life (2). In all these examples, therefore, there is not an unconnected variety of qualities such as 'truth' and 'life', nor is there a number of different 'words', but the genitives only yield their meaning by thrusting us back to the 'word', which is one. And while it is one, truth and life

(1) Plummer, p. 197. Bultmann takes the genitive as qualitative (Theology I, p.88), but he agrees in the case of Col.1.5.

(2) Phil.2.14,16; cf. Jn.6.38; 1 Jn.1.1 ff; 2 Tim. 1.11

are not two of manifold expressions of it in any Stoic sense, it is itself one message, so that when proclaimed, The Truth is present, Reconciliation is effected and Life is given. (1)

5. In view of the expression ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου we must briefly examine the Pauline use of εὐαγγελίον (2). Paul twice uses the expression "my gospel" (3) and three times the phrase "our gospel", when he does this, the context shows he simply means "the gospel which I preach". If there is any emphasis on the "my" then it is in contrast either to the Judaising party or to the eloquence of the Gnostic parties in the church - there is no doubt that Paul means "The Gospel" - that men must (and that men may) acknowledge Jesus as Lord. (4) "My gospel" is the "preaching of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 16.25), and Jesus Christ called the Thessalonians to be saved "through our gospel" (2 Th. 2.14). The emphasis is not on 'me', or on 'us', but on the content of the gospel itself, for "the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel ("I did not learn it as one learns a painful study" (5))... but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal.1.11) (6). As there is only

- (1) cf. Kittel: the word "is not only part of grace, salvation and life, but it brings about grace, salvation, life, because it is grace, salvation, life." (p.120/1 ff.): Chr. Senft, the Word is the "actively present manifestation of salvation" (V.B., p.337)
- (2) cf. Kittel, p.118/3ff.
- (3) Rom. 2.16; 16.25. The fact that both sole occasions are in Romans suggests he is assuring a church he did not know of the authenticity of his gospel.
- (4) Sanday and Headlam, p.62; Barrett, p.54
- (5) Lightfoot, Gal. p.79.
- (6) cf. Richardson, T.W.B., p.100

one Lord, one faith, one baptism so there is also only one gospel (2 Cor. 11.4, Gal.1.6).

6. The genitives in the expression "the gospel of peace" (Eph. 4.15) and "the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1.13) are objective as are those used with λόγος: the gospel brings peace and salvation. Apart from these two cases εὐαγγελίου either stands alone, or is qualified by Χριστοῦ or θεοῦ: there is no difference between these three uses. In Rom. 15 the "Gospel of God" (v.16) with which Paul has been entrusted is the "Gospel of Christ" (v.19) - i.e. the proclaiming of Christ (v.20). In Phil. 1.27 the readers are exhorted to walk worthily of the "gospel of Christ", and to be of one mind" in the faith of the gospel" - there is no difference between the two. In 1 Thessalonians Paul speaks of the determination needed to speak the "gospel of God", because he had been "approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel" (1 Th. 2.2 & 4). These quotations from three quite different letters shows that (as with λόγος) there is no difference whether εὐαγγελίου stands alone or with θεοῦ or Χριστοῦ - the gospel is the apostolic preaching.

It becomes clear that εὐαγγελίου and λόγος mean the same thing for Paul. "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" cried Isaiah, what Paul's hearers had heard from him was the gospel, but what was heard was διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ (Rom. 10.17). In Ephesians what has been heard can be termed both the "gospel of your salvation" and the "word

of truth" (Eph. 1.13) - a very similar equivalence of gospel and word is seen in Col. 1.5. In 1 Th. 2.9 and 2.13 the "gospel of God" and the "Word of God" are identical.

7. In 1 Cor. 1.18 Paul claims that it is the power of God in the word of the cross which effects salvation, but in v. 21 he says it is by "the foolishness τοῦ κηρύγματος" that God saves men. κήρυγμα is not a frequent word in Paul (1) but it is clear that it has the same meaning as ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ - "κήρυγμα ... stands practically for the "word of the cross" (v.18), or the Gospel, but with a slight emphasis upon the presentation" (2). The Word of God becomes an event in the act of the kerygma, the content of which is simply Jesus Christ (Rom. 16.25).

8. In his Theology of the New Testament Vol.1, Bultmann has a very fine exposition of Paul's theology, in which he draws out the doctrine of the Word (3). He shows that when the Word is proclaimed there occurs an act of grace in which God encounters the hearer presenting him with the decision for faith or disobedience. "In the Word", he writes, "the salvation occurrence is present. For the proclaimed word is neither an enlightening Weltanschauung flowing out in general truths, nor a merely historical account which, like a reporter's story,

- (1) Rom. 16.25; 1 Cor. 1.21; 2.4; 15.14. only four times elsewhere.  
 (2) Robertson, p. 21: cf. also p. 32 on λόγος .  
 (3) Bultmann, Theology 1, p. 303 ff.

reminds a public of important but bygone facts. Rather it is kerygma - herald's service - in the literal sense - authorised plenipotent proclamation, edict from a sovereign. Its promulgation demands authorised messengers, "heralds", "apostles" (= sent man) (R.10. 13-17). So it is, by nature, personal address which accosts each individual throwing the person himself into question by rendering his self understanding, problematic, and demanding a decision of him (1).

9. The content of the proclamation is Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Lord, "we preach/<sup>Christ</sup> crucified ... the power and wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1.23-4), nothing "except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1.Cor.2.2) - yet not simply crucified, "Jesus who died, yes", but also "who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us" ( Rom. 8.34), for if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain" (1 Cor. 15.14). He whom "the rulers of this age" crucified but who was risen from the dead was the "lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2.8).

10. "Paul evidently looked to the proclamation of the 'word of the Lord', the message about Christ, the Gospel, as able in itself and by itself to evoke faith" (2). When the word is preached there exists the possibility of life in the

(1) *ibid.* p. 307

(2) Scott, Paul, p. 99

decision for faith, and of death in the refusal to believe. In this way the Word is the Judgement of the world, it is upon "those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" that the vengeance will be inflicted (1). The preaching of the Word bears fruit and grows, for its hearers have the opportunity to hear and understand the grace of God (Col. 1.5,6), thus they may be saved (1 Cor. 1. 18-21). It is through the gospel that the Corinthians were begotten to God - "the whole process first and last, is ἐν Χριστῷ . That was the sphere while the gospel was the means" (2). "How are men to call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher ... so faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ." (Rom. 10.14-17 cf. Col.1.5). Those who have made the decision for faith know that "what we preach is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord ... because the God who said 'Out of darkness light shall shine', is He who shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (3). Here is the new creation: out of complete negation, God has created in Christ. In the Word is present the acceptable time, the 'day of salvation' - and

(1) 2 Th. 1.8; cf. 2 Th. 1.10; 2 Cor. 6.2.

(2) Robertson, p. 90: cf. 1 Cor. 4.15; 1 Th. 1.6-8. 2 Th. 2.14.

(3) 2 Cor. 4.6: Plummer's translation, Plummer, p.119

it is now (2 Cor. 6.2). This is not so because the man Paul speaks - man's word as such has no such power. It was not because it was 'the word of men' that the Thessalonians accepted the preaching (1 Th. 2.13) - though of course it was preached by men - for the gospel "is not man's gospel" (Gal. 1.11) and "the Kingdom of God does not consist in talk" (2 Cor. 4.20), but because here GOD addresses the world. "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the Word of God which you received from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the Word of God, which is at work in you believers" (1 Th. 2.13). The Gospel comes by revelation, and exists in Power (Gal. 1.12; 2 Cor. 4.20). It is God who works through the apostles (Gal. 2.8 cf. 2.20) through them God the Holy Spirit speaks (1), he who plants and he who waters is nothing" but only God who gives the growth" (1 Cor. 3.6-8; 2 Cor. 4.6-7) Reconciliation is effected, because God speaks in this word. (2 Cor. 5.20; 13.3). In the catalogue of Christian equipment in Eph. 6 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' is reminiscent of Heb. 4,12 and Rev. 19,21, the genitive in Πνεύματος claims Abbot, means - "which is given by the Holy Spirit" (2). God will make man's word to be His Word, as in Christ he made man's flesh to be his flesh, and when men

(1) 1 Cor. 2.13; cf. Jn.14.26; 16.13; 2 Cor. 1.21-2.

(2) Abbott, p. 187



hear this word and believe there God's new mankind, his church, is created (1). The preaching of the word, as Chr. Senft puts it, is "an element in the very purpose of God in that movement through which God draws near to man to save him: God is the author of the work of redemption and at the same time of the preaching which proclaims this work" (2).

11. The New Testament understanding of the church is that communion of people called out from the world by God who, in the power of the Holy Spirit live ἐν Χριστῷ. There are two ways of receiving this gift of the Spirit, or incorporation into Christ by the Word and by Baptism. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, "you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1 Th. 1.6), and in Ephesians we read, "in Him you also who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (Eph. 1.13), with this we may compare Rom. 6.3-11 and 8.9-11. The relationship between these two ways of entering the Christian ecclesia is nowhere exactly defined by Paul, but we have already drawn attention to the affinity between the content of the preaching and the formal Baptismal confession (3) in Romans 10,9 the confession made by the person about to be

(1) cf. Flew, p. 154-5  
 (2) Chr. Senft, V.B., pp. 335-6.  
 (3) see paragraph 2 on ῥῆμα .

Baptised is exactly that which the proclaimed word demands from its audience. What Paul shows is "how Baptism is, as it were, the Kerygma in action", "the rite itself (is) an embodiment of the apostolic preaching" (1). The objective force of Baptism is in its certification to the believer of his "participation in the salvation occurrence, the death and resurrection of Jesus. It, then, makes the salvation occurrence present for him just as the proclaimed word also does, only this time with especial reference to him, the one being baptised as one being valid for him" (2).

12. There is a similar affinity between the preaching of the word and the eucharist (3). The fact that in 1 Cor. 11.26 Paul can say to the Corinthians that at the eucharist τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε, ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ shows that the eucharist is simply another part of the proclamation, for the proclaiming of the death of Christ is the function of the preaching of the word also (4). This indicates that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is also coordinate with the word-proclamation and ultimately only a special mode of it. Besides this it has the special effect of constituting fellowship among the celebrants (1 Cor. 10.16 ff.) an effect

(1) Flemington pp. 73, 75.

(2) Bultmann, Theology I, p. 313.

(3) Scott, Paul, p. 177 ff.

(4) cf. 1 Cor. 2.1 f. We here assume that καταγγέλλετε is indicative, because this is the more probable; if, however, it is imperative we have an interesting example of the two parts of the eucharist, the breaking of the bread and the preaching of the word. See further on Acts 20.7.

not explicitly emphasised in the case of word-proclamation or Baptism" (1). Or as Robertson and Plummer have said, "The eucharist is an acted sermon, an acted proclamation of the death which it commemorates" (2). The effect of and the response to the Word and the eucharist is the same, "in the Lord's Supper too - as the name κυριακόν δεῖπνον itself implies - the Lordship of the Lord is set up over believers and acknowledged by them" (3).

13. The question now remains - what is the salvation occurrence and how does it take place in the proclaimed word?

The only systematically arranged presentation of Paul's thought that we have is in the letter to the Romans. Here he begins by depicting the plight of mankind in the disastrously misgoverned and misguided world of the first century - a mankind which desperately needed a saviour (4) - a mankind which is actually under the condemnation of God. Those who are not under this condemnation are those who are "in Christ Jesus ... who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit" (Rom. 8.1-4). This sphere of life is the realm of the grace of God, Who in His grace justifies the man who believes. God's justification is shown

(1) Bultmann, Theology I, p. 313

(2) Robertson, p. 249

(3) Bultmann, Theology I, p. 314

(4) cf. Stauffer, Caesar, pp. 15 f. and 36 ff.

in Jesus Christ and may be appropriated by all those who have faith in Jesus Christ. Faith or disobedience are the only possibilities open to man - and these possibilities exist when man hears the "Word of the Cross" - when the εὐαγγέλιον or λόγος or κήρυγμα is preached to him. The difficulty for the hearers lies in what is preached - Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Crucified and Risen Lord: this is a σκάνδαλον and to be accepted demands a total review of one's own position, for now man sees himself as living not under his own efforts but under the grace of God. Every time the Word is preached man is faced with this decision - "will you be reconciled?" The Word itself brings reconciliation because in it God is appealing through his ambassadors making the man who believes a new man (2 Cor. 5.17-21). "St. Paul simply assigns those who reject and those who receive 'the Word of the Cross' to the two classes corresponding to the issues of faith and unbelief" (1). This is the function of the Word: "the Word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is the word of faith which we preach), because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved" (Rom. 10.8-9).

(1) Robertson, p. 18

14. The last question that arises here is how far if at all Paul considers that Jesus is himself the Word of God.

"In determining the meaning of logos in Paul," said Harnack, "we must always keep in mind 1 Cor. ii, 12, 'I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified'." (1).

The point about Jesus for Paul is primarily that he is the reconciler between God and men. Now only God himself is able to redress the evil status quo for men, to give to them reconciliation: it is because Christ brings redemption that in Him dwells the whole fulness of God (Col. 2.4), he is the "power of God and the Wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1.24). This work of reuniting all men at one with Himself is God's mystery:

*μυστήριον* in Paul nearly always refers to the act of the new creation (2) where it is very closely connected to the person of Jesus Himself - especially for example in Romans 16,25, but in Col. 2,2 "God's Mystery" is Christ. The use of *μυστήριον* emphasises just how closely the revelation of God and the forming of the new creation is all bound up in the person of Jesus:

*μυστήριον* "denotes the secret Purpose of God in his dealings with men," it "is the unification of humanity in the Christ, the new human hope, a hope for all men of all conditions, a hope not for men only but even for the universe" (3). In Col. 4,3 the

(1) Harnack, Church, p. 34

(2) cf. Rom. 16.25; 1 Cor. 2.7; 4.1

(3) Robinson, pp. 238-9

the mystery is 'of Christ' and because the preaching of this mystery has resulted in Paul's imprisonment he exhorts his readers to "pray also, that God may open to us a door for the Word, to declare the mystery of Christ." At the beginning of the same letter "the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to his saints" is the "Word of God". "The content of this λόγος and this μυστήριον can be nothing other than the Christ event which is now expressly uttered in the relative clause in apposition ὅς ἐστίν Χριστός ; this Christ event is the "Word of God", the word spoken by God "to his saints"... But all these sayings do not originate from an idea of "word" ... if one understands them in the abstract, then they are completely and totally distorted. They always obtain and achieve their life in the event which occurs in the Person of Jesus" (1). It is the person Jesus of Nazareth who is revelation, in him the saving and creating God is revealed to men, but now it is the word - the gospel - which in itself brings this revelation - where Jesus crucified and risen is preached there God is revealed. "A mystery is not a thing which must be kept secret. On the contrary it is a secret which God wills to make known and has charged his apostles to declare to those who have ears to hear it" (2). Although

(1) Kittel, p. 127/9 ff.

(2) Robinson, p. 240, cf. Mk. 4.11.

Paul never explicitly names Jesus 'The Word of God', there is this remarkable similarity between what Paul says God performed in Jesus and what he says God performs in the Word of preaching. When man hears the Word preached to him, he is there confronted with the same demand which God made in Jesus Christ - both are the Word of God.

### Chapter 3

#### The Pastoral Letters.

That the Pastoral Letters were not written by St. Paul is now generally agreed, but that their theology is close to some of the strands of Pauline theology even Bultmann admits. (1). In these letters we see an interpretation of the faith which has affinities both with the Johannine literature and with 1 and 2 Peter, Hebrews and James; they do therefore provide a useful connection between Paul and the rest of the New Testament yet to be considered. *ῥῆμα* does not occur in the Pastorals and *λόγος* is used in various ways.

It has sometimes the ordinary sense (2), it is used similarly to *διδασχῆ* (3), and is also connected with the *εὐαγγέλιον*, the preaching of God's great acts in Jesus Christ (4). It is a message which must be told to the world whether they will hear or not (2 Tim. 4.15-17). This word is entrusted to God's messengers (2 Tim. 4.2-5), who will tell the world about "Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David as preached in (the) Gospel," for which the Pastor is now suffering and wearing fetters like a

- (1) Bultmann, *Theology II*, p.183. It is to be noted that so eminent a scholar as Jeremias defends the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals in his commentary in Das Neue Testament Deutsch.
- (2) 1 Tim. 4.6,12; 6.3; 1 Tim.4.5 probably means a 'blessing' in the sense of a 'grace' - so Lock p. 49. Easton writes, "since God's Word has already made all things 'good', the effect of the thanksgiving is higher and makes the foods 'holy'" (Easton, *Pastorals*, p. 140).
- (3) 1 Tim. 5.17; Titus 1.9; 2 Tim. 1.13.
- (4) 1 Tim. 1.15; 2 Tim. 2.9 cf. 4.17. Tit. 1.3.



criminal (2 Tim. 2,8-9). Yet this word is not dependent on the success or failure of the preachers, because although they may be in prison there are others who will preach - "the Word of God is not fettered" (2 Tim. 2.9), for it is God himself who originates this word (2 Tim. 4.17). The difficulty in defining precisely the meaning of λόγος is found as much here as anywhere else in the New Testament - it is no easy task. Lock in a note on the phrase πιστὸς ὁ λόγος in Titus 3.8 refers to an article on the use of λόγος in the Pastorals by Ernest Walder (1). Walder suggests that the Pastorals are post-Johannine, as well as post-Pauline, because of the similarity of the use of ἐπιγινώσκειν τὴν ἀλήθειαν φανερώ, ἐπιφάνεια, φωτίσω, ἡ ἀϊώνιος and the personal use of Logos. This method of argument tends to rely far too much on the apparent necessity of direct literary dependence without realising that these words were common currency in the world of the first two centuries and would have been used by all sorts of people - the fact that the same word occurs in different letters is no argument for direct literary dependence. However, the study of the personal use of λόγος and its connection with the revelation of God is useful. Lock objects to the argument, urging that the interpretation

(1) Lock p. 155 f.: Walder in J.T.S. April 1923 pp. 310-315.

is tautologous in 1 Tim. 1.15. (1) and is forced in Titus 1.3, 1.9 and 1 Tim. 3.1 - and demands the meaning, 'a saying' throughout. Walder's interpretation of Titus 1.3 is perhaps difficult since 'eternal life' is not identical with the *λόγος* and Walder does not really deal properly with Tit. 1.9. On the other hand the Pauline use of *πιστός* with *ὁ Θεός* and Walder's arguments about the use of the phrase *πάσης ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος* (1 Tim. 1.15; 4.9) outside the New Testament, and the comparison of 2 Tim. 2.13 with the Johannine concept of the *λόγος* abiding do not allow us to take quite such a simple decision as Lock does. The way in which we are pressed here from *λόγος* in the sense of 'the preaching of God' to *λόγος* in the sense of Jesus Christ is highly significant in the study of *λόγος* in the New Testament.

#### The Letters of James, Jude and 2 Peter.

The difficulty of precisely defining the meaning of *λόγος* is no less acute in the letter of James, where *λόγος* occurs three times (*ῥῆμα* does not occur). In 3.2 it is the ordinary sense, but 1.18 and 1.21-23 are more difficult. In 1.18 Bultmann takes the *ἀληθείας* as qualitative as in Phil. 2.16 (2), but more probably it is objective. In the same

- (1) 1. Tim. 1.15 almost certainly means the kerygma as the following summary of the kerygma indicates.
- (2) Bultmann: Theology I p.89.

verse we have ἀποκυέω, this is late Greek and occurs here and at 1.15 only in the New Testament. The more common γεννάω is used in Matthew (Matt. 1.1-17) and Acts (Acts 7.8,29) in the sense of human procreation; it is also used when Psalm 2 is cited in Acts 13.33 and Heb. 1.5; 5.5; and in 1 John it is used of Christians begotten of God (1 Jn. 5.1,18). (γεννάω) is used in Paul in two places in a rather curious sense: in 1 Cor. 4.15 he says "Ἐγέννησα ὑμᾶς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον", in Philemon 10 he says "Ἐπικαλοῦμαι ὑμᾶς ὑπὲρ τοῦ παιδὸς μου Ἐγέννησα ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς". Both of these expressions use γεννάω metaphorically, perhaps the second one is a case of adoption (spiritual or legal) during Paul's imprisonment. In these uses of γεννάω therefore we have the idea of God begetting Christians as sons, and of Christians being begotten through the gospel: both of these ideas are reproduced here with ἀποκυέω. There is possibly here an allusion to the creative word in Gen. 1., or to the Torah (cf. 2.8), most commentators however prefer to take λόγος here in the New Testament sense of 'gospel'. Mayor suggests it is "the declaration of the truth, viz. of God's love revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1), this of course is the Gospel, and this is the meaning given by Selwyn - "The description of the Gospel as 'the truth' is characteristic of all the (Christian

(1) Mayor, James, p.60

catechetical) traditions and served to differentiate Christianity both from Judaism which had rejected it and from the heathenism which had not known it," Selwyn also refers pertinently to the uses of *λόγος* in 1 Peter 2.3, Col. 1.5, Eph. 1.13 (1).

In 1.21-3 the use of *ἐμφυτος* is unparalleled elsewhere in the New Testament - "it is a good classical word in the sense of innate, natural" (2). Blackman is right in suggesting that James misunderstood *ἐμφυτος* and meant "implanted"; there is an interesting parallel here to the sowing or planting of the *λόγος* in the hearts of men in Mk. 4, this in fact strengthens Blackman's rejection of Hort's interpretation, for the sower stands over against the ground, and the Word stands over against men. "We really profit when the Word of God takes root in us, so that it is fixed in our hearts and has a sure hold there" (Calvin, p. 138). The possibility of 'doing the word' is at first sight strange, but we may compare Lk. 6.47; 8.21; 11.28; Matt. 7.21-7; Jn. 3.21; 1 Jn. 1.6 and the similarities between *λόγος* and *ἐντολή* in John 13-16. The Word of God demands action: if it is John the Baptist he must immediately

(1) Selwyn, p. 389  
 (2) Blackman, p. 62

leave the desert and preach to the people (Lk. 3.2-3), if it is the pagan he must make up his mind about Jesus Christ, if it is the believer he must look away from himself to his neighbours, and it is precisely this latter topic in particular which is James' concern in this letter.

In Jude v.17 ῥήματα has the ordinary meaning, but there is the idea that what the prophets said will in fact happen - their predictions will not fail. λόγος is used in the ordinary sense in v. 15 (omitted in B.F.B.S. 1958), as it is in 2 Pet. 2.3. The ῥήματα (2 Pet. 3.2) or the λόγος (2 Pet. 1.19) of the Old Testament prophets, "the whole body of declaration of the coming glory of the Messiah" (1) - is "attested, made more secure, by the experience of the Transfiguration" (2). Whatever our decision on the authorship this is certainly what the author intended to convey. In 3.5,7 the δ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος (τῷ....λόγῳ) is the creative word of Gen. 1.1, which was also spoken through the prophets to forecast an apocalyptic end of the world (3). There is no specifically Christian understanding of λόγος in these two letters.

(1) Mayor Jude, p. 108

(2) Mayor, ibid.

(3) e.g. Joel 2.30, 31; Ps. 50.3; Isaiah 29.6; 30.30; 34.34; Nahum 1.5,6. Mal. 4.1. Dan. 7,9,10.

1. Peter.

Affinities have already been mentioned between James and 1. Peter, notably between James 1.18 and 1. Peter 1.23.

ῥῆμα occurs in this letter only at 1.25, it is unlikely that any real difference is meant here between λόγος and ῥῆμα, though Selwyn suggests that λόγος is "the ῥῆμα, the promise of Yahweh, fulfilled and therefore (v. 25) preached" (1).

λόγος does refer to the preaching, and is sometimes almost equivalent for εὐαγγέλιον (2). The pun on the word λόγος in 3.1 nicely distinguishes the two meanings, and also suggests that fine and godly conduct (the doing of the Word) may convert should the apostles' preaching fail. The two most important texts are 1.23 and 2.4-8 - and both are difficult.

1. "You have been born<sup>e</sup> anew ... διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος (1.23). Selwyn gives an adequate discussion of the difficulties involved in translating this last phrase (3). Are we to translate "through the Word of the living and abiding God" or "through the living and abiding Word of God"? Selwyn (Selwyn, p. 151) claims it is the latter, while Beare (Beare, Peter, p. 86) demands the former. Since the λόγος is so closely connected with the ῥῆμα which "abides for ever" it is likely that the adjectives ζῶντος and μένοντος should go

(1) Selwyn, p. 152

(2) cf. 2.4-8; 4.17; 1.23. (λόγος also = 'account' in 3.15 and 4.5)

(3) Selwyn, p. 151.

with λόγου - the quotation is likely to corroborate the previous statement! (cf. also Heb. 4.12) To emphasise that it is the Word which is here the main topic, ῥῆμα is isolated as "that word" and further explained as "the good news which was preached to you". The closely-knit construction however illustrates the difficulty in attempting to isolate λόγος or θεός - they must be considered closely together. God speaks this word - now in the gospel. The gospel points backwards to Jesus while the Word which God spoke at the creation and through the prophets pointed forward to Jesus (1). As against the frailty of the world God's word abides. "It is in effect God Himself speaking, speaking not once only, but with renewed utterance, kindling life not by a recollection but by a present power" (Hort, Peter, p.92).

We cannot say the λόγος is simply the preaching however, we have to go further. It is not only by the Word that Christians are reborn but "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (2) - "in interpreting St. Peter we have no right to limit λόγος to the tidings preached ... It is God's whole utterance of himself in his incarnate son." (3). Beare is rash in suggesting the possible reference here to the λόγος of the Greek religions (Beare, Peter, p. 86) - the precise description of it as ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ allows only of the Hebraic understanding.

- (1) 1 Peter 1. 10-13.  
 (2) 1 Peter 1.3.  
 (3) Hort, Peter, p. 93

2. "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame. To you therefore who believe, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, "The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner", and "A stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall"; for they stumble τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθοῦντες, as they were destined to do." 2.4-8.

The Word divides the world into those who believe and those who disbelieve; men stumble because they disobey the λόγος, yet here also it is the stone which makes men stumble, a stone which once rejected by the builders has now become the head of the corner; whereas it was the very presence and life of Jesus which during his Ministry was a σκάνδαλον to the world culminating in the crucifixion, NOW - 2 Cor. 6.2 - it is the preaching of the word which causes men to stumble. "There is no real force in the difficulty which some have felt in the transition from stumbling at the Stone to stumbling at "the Word". The primary subject matter of the word, the primary occasion of stumbling which it contained, was Christ or the cornerstone. Each form of speech implies the other." (1) Again we may find it difficult to hear the " Heraclitean Stoic ring" which sounds

(1) Hort, Peter, p. 123



for Beare, but he puts the matter neatly when he says, "λόγος here as in 1.23 means more than 'the Gospel message', though it includes this, as the critical point of the divine human encounter at which a decision must be made in response to the revelation of the Divine" (1).

We are still unable to define λόγος precisely - we are forced to vacillate between the sense of λόγος as the preaching and as Jesus Christ.

(1) Beare, Peter, pp. 99-100.

ACTS

## Introduction.

- 1) Both *λόγος* and *ῥῆμα* are found in their ordinary meanings, and here there is no difference between them. This may be seen most clearly at 16.36 and 16.38, where it is probably for stylistic reasons that one word is not used twice. *λόγος* has the ordinary meaning at 16.36; 2.22; 2.40; 5.5; 5.24; 6.5; 7.22; 7.29; 14.12; 15.6; 15.15; 15.24; 15.27; 15.32; 18.15; 20.2; 20.35; 20.38; 27.32. *ῥῆμα* has this ordinary meaning at 2.14; 6.11; 6.13; 10.22; 10.44; 11.14; 11.16; 13.42; 16.38; 26.25; 28.25. It is probable that the *λόγος* of 13.15 should also be included here, since the speakers are "the rulers of the synagogue" and therefore unlikely to use it in the specifically Christian sense. If, on the other hand, the rulers had heard of the word of the apostles and were genuinely interested (as is quite possibly the case, see vv. 42, 43) they may have intended this technical meaning; or if Luke is assimilating the wording of their request to Christian usage, then this use of *λόγος* should come under paragraph 4.
- 2) Other ordinary meanings of *λόγος* such as "matter" (8.21; 18.14; 20.24); "cause", "reason" (10.29, 19.40); "complaint" (19.38), or "report" (11.22) are found also. In 5.32 *ῥήματα* means "matters" or "things".

3) In 10.37  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$  seems to mean the message Jesus preached during his life time. By  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  in 5.20 the Angel clearly means 'the message which brings life', i.e. the preaching of the apostles, and this is also the meaning which it has in Peter's account of the message of the angel in Cornelius' vision (11.14). It is possible that this could also be the sense of  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  in 13.42 though this is unlikely. It is, then, difficult to see any clearly marked difference between the use of  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ , though it is possible to make one comment. This is that at 10.44  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  is used for the ordinary words used by Peter in his speech, but for that which, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them, Cornelius' family was able to hear through Peter's words, for the 'word' (of God),  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  is used. This is important in view of the similar practice elsewhere, e.g. John 12.48, and because Luke uses  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  so often for the message of the apostles that he is clearly using it in a special way, a way in which he does not use  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ .

The use of  $\delta\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  (τοῦ Θεοῦ) for the message of the apostles.

$\delta\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  is used by itself to describe the preaching 14 (17) times, e.g. "But many of those who heard τὸν λόγον believed" (1), what this word consisted of was "proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (4.2); this is the kernel of the kerygma of the apostles, which is given in a

(1) Acts 4.4, so also 2.41, 4.29, 6.4, 8.4, (10.36), 10.44, 11.19, 13.26, 14.3, 14.35, 15.7, 16.6, 17.11, 18.5, (20.7), (20.32).

slightly more extended form in the defence of Peter before the high priests on the next day (vv. 10-12). ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ is used 13 times to describe the preaching, e.g. "The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered together to hear τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ ." (1) By implication what they came to hear was what they had previously heard in 13.16b-41, this latter is the longest exposition in Acts of the kerygma of the Apostles. ὁ λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου is used 7 times to describe the preaching, e.g. "And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, 'Come, let us return and visit the brethren in every city where we proclaimed τὸν λόγον τοῦ Κυρίου'" (2). This is the same as the λόγος of 14.25; in fact there is no difference in meaning between these three phrases.

Generally λαλέω is used for speaking the word (6 times) (3), but εὐαγγελίζεσθαι is also used, (twice) (4), and καταγγέλλω (3 times) (5), and διδάσκω (twice) (6) and διαλέγομαι (7).

1. The word is spoken by the apostles to the whole world, first to the Jews and then, generally after rejection by them, to the Gentiles also.

- (1) 13.44, so also 4.31, 6.2, 6.7, 8.14, 11.1, 12.24, 13.5, 13.7, 13.46, 13.48, 17.13, 18.11. (cf. 4.29).
- (2) 15.36, so also 8.25, 13.49, 15.35, 16.32, 19.10, 19.20, N.B. 13.48 has Κυρίου in some texts, and 16.32 has Θεοῦ in some texts.
- (3) 4.29, 4.31, 11.19, 13.46, 14.25, 16.6, 16.32, cf. 10.44
- (4) 8.4 and 15.35
- (5) 13.5, 15.36, 17.13
- (6) 15.35 and 18.11
- (7) 20.7

"It was necessary that  $\delta$  λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ be spoken first to you" said Paul to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia, but "since you thrust it from you and hold yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the Gentiles" (1), and indeed the Gentiles were to hear and believe. (2) The word met with considerable opposition as it was preached throughout Asia Minor so that Peter and John prayed, "and now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak τὸν λόγον σου with all boldness" (3).

2. This word is a word of grace, and a word of salvation. The graciousness of this word is that it brings salvation, and this Paul knows even if he is going up to Jerusalem (20.22-24, 32; cf. 14.3) The message of salvation (13.26) is that "God raised (Jesus) from the dead" (13.30): that God gives life is not true for Jesus only, but because it is true in him it is also true for the Jews and the Gentiles (cf. 11.14, 5.20).

In a typically Hebraic fashion this word is closely connected with actions. The signs or miracles of the apostles were held to be the actual working out of the word:

"The Lord ... bore witness to the word ... granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (14.3); and again in the prayer of Peter and John,

- (1) 13.46, cf. 11.19, 13.5, 28.25-27, but 17.11
- (2) 10.44-48, 11.1-20, 13.7, 15.7-9, 28.28
- (3) 4.29, cf. 13.44 ff.

"Lord, ... grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus." (4.29-30). This is important because it is sometimes due to the miracles as much as the word that people believe (1).

3. When the word is heard its hearers can believe and be filled with the Holy Ghost (2). It is not possible from Acts to suggest a regular sequence of events in the phenomenon of conversion. From 10.44-8 it appears that when the Gentiles believed the word, they next received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then were able to be baptised, but from 8.14 it appears that the Samaritans received the word, and were "baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus" before receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. In 2.41 the gift of the Spirit is not mentioned, and in 15.7-8 baptism is not mentioned. The difficulty in these four instances is generally held to be over the primacy of baptism or the Gift of the Spirit

(1) 13.7-12. Another place where the λόγος is associated with an accompanying action is in Acts 20.7: "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul διελάλεστο ... and he prolonged τὸν λόγον until midnight." Whether this verse relates to an early eucharist is debated. Bultmann (Theology I, p. 145) is dubious, so are C.S.C. Williams (Acts, p. 230) and Jackson (Beginnings, p. 255f.) Gregory Dix thinks it "is clearly liturgical" (Liturgy, p.63), and Strachan (John, p.275) and Rackham (Rackham, p.377f.) agree. If this is an account of a eucharist we have here an early reference to the two parts of the eucharist, namely the action of the breaking of the bread and the ministry of the preaching of the word (cf. Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, (London, 1953) esp. 29 ff).

(2) 10.44, 8.14, 15.7-8, cf. 2.41.

but that question is irrelevant here: what we need to observe is that apparently Luke considers the gift of the Holy Spirit follows the decision of belief in the word, whereas Paul suggests that it is the Holy Spirit which gives even the possibility of belief in the first place (1). It could be held that Paul has thought more deeply about this matter than Luke (as is probably the case) and seen through the question more carefully. But a more useful suggestion is that by 'the gift of the Spirit' Luke is generally referring to the visibly obvious gifts of the spirit, and probably 'speaking with tongues' - and it may well take time before the effect of the Holy Spirit upon a man is seen to have its visible effects.

The gospel" is a revelation of God in action, and cannot be separated either from the historical salvation which it declares or from the action of the spirit in the very moment in which it is proclaimed" (Flew, p.154). Although the question of the primacy of Baptism or the gift of the Holy Spirit is irrelevant here it is important to notice the close connection between baptism and the word:

"they that received τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ were baptised" (Acts 2.41)

"And they spoke τὸν λόγον τοῦ Κυρίου unto him ... and (he) was baptised." (Acts 16.32-33; cf. also 2.37-8; 8.12,13; 8.35-6; 16.14-15; 18.8; 19.5)

(1) 1 Cor. 2.12, but cf. Acts 13.48b.

"It is clear that for the disciples baptism in some vivid way connoted and "symbolised" the Gospel message. It was what might be called an embodiment of the kerygma" (Flemington, p.49). Flemington rightly connects the word and baptism in a later passage: "the rite of baptism with water in Acts both embodies the kerygma in a "symbolic" act and at the same time expresses man's response to that message of salvation", they are "intimately associated." (op. cit. p.109)

The word is not only preached to convert, but also to build up the faithful, as Paul said to the Ephesian elders, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ), which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (20.32). One of the effects of hearing the word of God is joyful worship (13.48) (1), another is the desire to tell it to others (4.31), though for some the task of preaching God's word soon became a full time occupation (6.2-4). It is this desire to tell the word to others that explains such

- (1) The ἰδοξαζον, however, in this verse is very difficult. How can one glorify a word, or a sermon? One may glorify a person or God, but it is scarcely possible to solve the difficulty that way, and say that λόγος is here personified, the text will not bear it. Ramsey translates "they glorified God" (Ramsey, Glory p.95) which is free, to say the least. Probably we should read ἰδέξαντο with the Western text; there are good parallels to this in 8.14, 11.1, 17.11, and Luke 8.13



phrases as "the word of God increased" - more people began believing and preaching i.e. the Word of God was actually creating the church - "the growth of the Word of God is used as a synonym for the growth of the ecclesia" (1).

4. What is the content of  $\delta$  λόγος (τοῦ Θεοῦ)? The word which is generally used for "preaching" is κήρυγμα, or we may have "gospel", or we may have λόγος. In Acts, however, one of whose main purposes is to illustrate the spread of the preaching of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, we find that not once does κήρυγμα occur, and εὐαγγέλιον only twice (2) - and then in close dependence upon λόγος, whereas  $\delta$  λόγος (τοῦ Θεοῦ Κυρίου) is used 34 (37) times. Lowther Clarke suggests that the reason for the rare use of εὐαγγέλιον by Luke is "possibly because of its association with the emperor cult" (Clarke, p. 95). This is unlikely however, because such a reason would totally preclude the use of the word, which is used in fact (as Lowther Clarke admits) at Acts 15.7; 20.24. Furthermore we must say that on the large number of occasions on which it might be used and is not we can only infer that the word used in its stead (λόγος) is used quite purposefully both in Acts and in the Gospel - Luke is clearly using his words carefully when he uses λόγος in

(1) Flew, p. 122. Acts 6.7, 12.24, 13,49, 19.20.

(2) εὐαγγέλιον is completely omitted from Luke's gospel. cf. Mk. 1.1,14; 8.35; 13.10; 14.9; Matt. 4.23; 9.25; 26.13.

so deliberate a manner (1). In the gospels the content of the preaching (Jesus' or the disciples') is "the Kingdom of God", and in the apostolic age it is generally "Jesus Christ"; yet we do find ἡ βασιλεία as the object of κηρύσσω in the "we" passages of Acts: "We may therefore take it that a companion of Paul regarded his preaching as being just as much a proclamation of the Kingdom of God as was the preaching of the first disciples or of their master" (2). More generally in Acts the content of the λόγος or the κήρυγμα is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, or the acts of God which have their focal point in Jesus Christ. This is abundantly clear from the speeches of Acts as C.H. Dodd has demonstrated (3). In 2.41 we read "those who received τὸν λόγον were baptised"; from 2.14b-39 it is clear that ὁ λόγος is the exposition of God's amazing acts in Jesus Christ. The λόγος which the Jews at Solomon's porch heard and believed was again the exposition of God's acts in Jesus. By implication ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in 13.44 is the proclamation of God's actions to free the people of the earth in 13.17-41. The sermons generally began with a reference to the Word spoken to the prophets, with the intention of showing how it pointed to Jesus, then continued

- (1) The verbs εὐαγγελίζω (15 times), and κηρύσσω (8 times) occur.  
 (2) Dodd, Preaching, p.8  
 (3) Dodd, Preaching, pp. 7-35

with a brief account of Jesus' life, ministry and crucifixion; considerable stress was laid upon the resurrection of Jesus and his exaltation to be Lord. The sermon generally finished with an account of the Spirit's work of re-presenting Jesus to men, and the challenge to repent and be baptised. These are no isolated instances, it is very much the case throughout

Acts:  $\delta$  λόγος is the exposition of Jesus the Christ.

There is a very interesting use of λόγος at the beginning of Acts: "in the first λόγος O, Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the apostles whom he had chosen" (Acts 1.1). By implication, therefore, the Gospel According to St. Luke is also a λόγος. Almost certainly all that we can really understand by λόγος is 'chapter', or 'first book' and 'second book', for Arndt and Gingrich give several instances of its being so used in Pagan authors (1), but the interesting point is that λόγος is used on the one hand for the exposition of the incarnate life of Jesus, and on the other for the account of the exalted life of Jesus (for Rackham is certainly correct when he says "the work of the church now to be described is still the work of the Lord" (2) cf. Matt. 28.20b.), as if what is spoken in Peter's speeches is written in Luke's two volume work.

(1) Arndt and Gingrich, *λόγος, I, 3* p. 479.  
 (2) Rackham, p. 4.

5. Let us now turn to the difficult section, Acts 10.34-38a. The style of Luke's Greek is generally good, but this passage stands out for its awkward grammatical structure (1). The main verb is  $\acute{\alpha}\iota\delta\alpha\tau\epsilon$ , and the object is  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ . In apposition to  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$  we have, apparently,  $\text{Ἰησοῦν}$  and  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\nu$ . The subject of the verb  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\lambda\epsilon$  is to be understood from the first half of the previous sentence as  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ , and the subject of  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\lambda\epsilon$  must also be the subject of the nominative participle  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\iota\zeta\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ . We can now take certain statements from this sentence.

(a) God (himself) announced good tidings of peace through Jesus Christ. (b) This announcing took the form of sending a  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  to the children of Israel. (c) Cornelius and his family know of the  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$  which was proclaimed ( $\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$ ) throughout all Judaea, presumably the teaching of Jesus.

Another difficulty now arises in  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , which is masculine nominative and is read by the best texts and is to be preferred although some texts read the easier  $\lambda\rho\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$ .  $\lambda\rho\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$  can not refer to  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ , and there is no masculine subject to which it could refer ( $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  would make nonsense), apparently, then, Luke's thought has forgotten already the neuter  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$  and has travelled back to  $\delta\epsilon$   $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  which is obviously a very important and dominant word in the

(1) see Dodd, Preaching, p. 22, where he follows Torrey's reconstruction of an underlying Aramaic original version.

sentence (especially this sentence!) from its position at the beginning. It may also look forward to the masculine in Ἰησοῦν, and this would make better sense. Therefore:

(d) Cornelius etc. know Jesus, who, after John had preached the baptism (sc. of repentance for the remission of sins), and when God had anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power (i.e. at his - Jesus' - baptism), began from Galilee to preach his ῥῆμα and to go about doing good, etc.

Another oddity is the use of λόγος with ἀποστέλλω. This is not unknown for it occurs again at 13.26 in "to us ὁ λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας... ἐξαπεστάλη"; a similar use is found in 28.28 where again it is salvation which has been sent; what is more, the content of our difficult sentence could also be described as salvation - and these are the only occasions which Arndt and Gingrich mention where ἀποστέλλω is so used, i.e. not with persons (1). In fact ἀποστέλλω is very nearly always used with persons and is an important word in the New Testament, referring often to the sending out of disciples and especially of the ἀπόστολοι (2). More particularly is it used of the Sending by God of his Son, Jesus, into the world (3). We conclude therefore that the wording, the grammar and the position of τὸν λόγον in this sentence is highly suggestive; and in fact, when we bear clearly in mind the whole of the theological meaning we have already found

- (1) Arndt and Gingrich, ἀποστέλλω, 2, p.98  
 (2) Matt. 10.5, Mk. 3.14, 6.7; Lk. 9.2, Jn. 4.38, 17.18  
 (3) John 3.17; 5.36; 6.57; 17.3,8,18,21,23,25; 20.2.  
 Matt. 10.40, 15.24, cf. 21.37, Lk. 4.43, 1 John 4.9.10.14.

to lie behind the word λόγος , it suggests that by λόγος we should understand a revelation of God, a revelation in which men may know they may be at peace with Him, and this revelation IS Jesus Christ who by his death and resurrection is Lord of all. The wording (and surely the theological meaning) of this sentence is very close to the wording (and surely the theological meaning) of the Johannine prologue (and each of these two passages should be used to explicate the other, especially is this so when we have to explain John 1.1-14). Nowhere in Acts is Jesus actually called ὁ λόγος , but we have stopped only just short of it.

## Hebrews.

It is the letter to the Hebrews which accentuates the differences we have found so far in the use of *λόγος* and forms a useful close to a consideration of its use outside the Johannine literature.

The ordinary use of *λόγος* is found at 4.13; 5.11; and in 6.1 it means 'doctrine'. Apart from 12.19 where there is the almost Johannine sense of the *λόγος* powerful within and behind the *ῥήματα*, there is no discernible difference between *λόγος* and *ῥῆμα* in this letter. The use of *ῥῆμα* e.g. in 1.3a and 11.3 as the creative word of Gen. 1.1, and in 6.5 as the gospel appear to be identical with the meaning of *λόγος* in 4.12 and 13.7. (cf. H. Clavier, p.81 ff.) The *λόγος* of exhortation in 13.22 refers to the letter as a written sermon, and the use of *λόγος* (without the article) with *δικαιοσύνη* in 5.13 forms an "ethical phrase for what moderns would call 'moral truth'" (1).

There are important references to the Old Testament in this letter. In the fine rhetorical opening of the letter, 1,1-4, we have a typically Hebraic conception of Yahweh speaking to act, and in this action revealing himself. One of the main themes of this letter is the supersession of the old type by the new reality, and immediately this theme is applied to revelation. God spoke to the prophets revealing

(1) Moffatt, Hebrews, p. 71.

himself to the world through them, yet whereas this revelation "was conveyed in successive portions and in varying fashions according to the needs and capacities of those who needed it ... the revelation in Him who was Son was necessarily complete in itself" (1). That God's action in creation should be described as one of speech is common to the Old Testament (2) - this same Word is now spoken in the Son. The emphasis on speaking is the probable reason for the designation of the revelation of God in the Mosaic code as  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  and not  $\nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\varsigma$  in 2.2 (3). The creation, the prophets and the Torah are closely linked here by reference to their ground in God's speech. The background, therefore, of this author's understanding of  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  is thoroughly Hebraic. Heb. 2.3b implies the possible use of  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  for the message of Jesus. It is also clear that  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  can be used for the message of the apostles. In 13.7 for example  $\delta\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  is the message which the presbyters or the apostles preached, a Word which created in them an obedient and faithful life. The mention of apostasy in 6.4-8 suggests that the  $\rho\acute{\epsilon}\eta\mu\alpha$  which has been heard is the gospel: if the gospel is refused death follows, but there is life if it is accepted in faith. It is also only by faith that the perception of the world's

(1) Westcott, Hebrews, p.3

(2) e.g. Gen. 1; Ps. 33.6; Ps. 147.18-19.

(3) cf. Heb. 7.28 and 12.19.



creation by the  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$  of God is possible. In 4.1-3 the  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  was preached to all but where there was no faith it meant death. The connection between the Word of the Old Testament and the current preaching of the church is thus made as close as it is in 1 Peter 1.23-25.

The effect of this word is always creative, and here it is creative of the church. The word brings salvation (2.1-4) providing the hearers respond with faith (4.1-3), and enables them to be filled with the Holy Spirit (6.4; cf. 2.4) - the Word of God has created the church. (1).

This last point illustrates Harnack's 'materialisation' of the  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  (2). To have tasted the goodness of the Word is to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and become a member of God's Church, whereas to disobey the word is itself to crucify the Son of God (6.4-8). The  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  is further expounded in 4.11-13 as an active force. We have here gone beyond the normal uses of  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , this "revelation is broader than scripture, it includes the revelation of God's purposes in Jesus Christ" (3). The epithets  $\zeta\omega\upsilon$  and  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\acute{\eta}\varsigma$  are often applied to God himself. Philo applied them to the  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  (4). The nature of  $\delta\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  is clearly divine, and the power of its action is well illustrated by the simile of

- (1) Flew, p. 166 f.
- (2) Harnack: Church, p. 337 f.
- (3) Moffatt, Hebrews, p. 55
- (4) See Westcott, Hebrews, p. 102

the sword (1). God in speaking to the world divides it sharply into two groups - the faithful and the disbelieving. Yet this speaking is "spoken to us by a Son" (1.2), in whom the λόγος of the prophets is now fulfilled (7.28); the nature of the Son is the "κληρονόμος of all things... he is the ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ Ἀ." The κληρονόμος has been appointed the supreme being over all things. ἀπαύγασμα indicates that the Son both reflects back the Father's glory and himself radiates that Father's glory to the world; χαρακτήρ suggests the impress of a mould on a coin, thus the Son is the exact reproduction of the very essence (ὑπόστασις) of God (2). Yet the Son is also the agent in the creation of the world, but in 11.3 it is the βῆμα Θεοῦ which is the agent in creation. We have therefore in this introduction to the letter a complete identification of the Son of God and the Word of God. Much of the language and ideas of this passage - and of the letter - can be found in Alexandrine thought, especially in Philo, (3), and this was probably the route travelled by the author in arriving at these formulations, which are so like the concepts of Wisdom and Reason and Word in Philo. Many of these concepts were common currency in the first and second centuries,

- (1) See below on Revelation 19.15  
 (2) A full note on this verse with the details of the usage of these 'technical' words is given by Westcott, Hebrews, pp. 10-13.  
 (3) Clavier stresses the importance of Philo's λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ (Clavier, p. 83).

however, and resemblances could be found to many religious systems. Since the real content of the letter is so manifestly Christian and Hebraically Christian, we must conclude that even if the language is Philonic the substance of the letter springs from the authentic Christian experience (1), and the authentic Christian experience was the experience of Christ. At the end of his essay Clavier suggests that in Heb. 13.7 we should realise the background of the author, and pay due attention to the next verse, 13.8. "Le premier sens qui s'offre à nos pensées analytiques est sans doute celui du message divin, enseigné ou prêché; mais en quoi ce sens apparent, et certain, pouvait-il empêcher un esprit d'une autre formation, l'esprit alexandrin, de sous-entendre, en même temps, le logos éternel qui remplit ce message et l'anime? Et qui, sur cette pente, aurait pu retenir l'Alexandrin juif et chrétien de monter jusqu'au point culminant de cette révélation qui, pour lui, ne pouvait être que Jésus Christ, le même, hier, aujourd'hui, éternellement?" (Clavier, p. 86).

This letter aptly summarises and clarifies the general theological understanding of *λόγος* in the general epistles and Acts. The Word of God which was active in the creation of the world, and was spoken by the prophets, is now spoken by the preaching of the Church and is Jesus Christ, is the same word of God, whereby God, in the preaching of the apostles, makes himself known to men in judgement and reconciliation.

(1) cf. Moffatt, Hebrews p. 55 on 4.12, "the author is using Philonic language rather than Philonic ideas".

Revelation.

It is quite convenient to approach the Johannine literature by way of Revelation as this is probably the earliest of that group of writings and possibly originates from the Apostle himself (1).  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$  does not occur in Revelation.  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  is used in the ordinary sense in several ways: (a) it is used for the words of the book of Revelation itself: 1.3; 22.7, 9, 10, 18, 19. (b) it is used for the words spoken by God through the prophets: 17.17. (c) it is used for God's words dictated by the angel to the author: 19.9, cf. 22.16. (d) it is used for the angel's words to the author: 22.6. (e) exactly the same formula as is used in 22.6 with the emphasis on truth and trustworthiness is used for the words spoken by God himself to the author, in the vision: 21.5.

This leaves eight other examples of the use of  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  of which seven seem to be used in the same way (1.2,9; 3.8,10; 6.9; 12.11; 20.4.) In these examples  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  is used in close connection with the words  $\tau\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ ,  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\eta}$ ,  $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  and  $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$ , words often used in the Johannine literature. Often  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\eta}$  are used interchangeably for the command to love (e.g. cf. Jn. 14.23-4 with Jn. 14.13, and see 1 Jn. 2.3-8), and then the verb governing them is often  $\tau\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  :

(1) cf. Barrett, John, pp. 113 f. where a most plausible account of the relationship between the Johannine writings is given.

it is possible therefore that in 3.8 and 3.10 we should translate *λόγος* as commandment. In 3.8 two points may be made: (i) the *λόγος* has been kept, and (ii) Jesus' name has not been denied - i.e. it has been confessed. If *λόγος* = *ἐντολή* we have here the two sides of the typical definition of a Christian in the Johannine literature, namely (i) confession that Jesus is the Son of God, and (ii) the love of one's neighbour (e.g. 1 Jn. 3.23). It seems then that it is quite possible for *λόγος* to = *ἐντολή* in 3.8, and if this is so, it should probably be taken in the same way in 3.10.

There is, however, another possibility. The *καὶ* here does not necessarily join two phrases of different meaning: it does not do so for example in the similar expressions in 1.9 and 20.4 where the *καὶ* is explicative (1) - cf. *λόγος μαρτυρίας* in 12.11. In these expressions there is little doubt that *λογος* and *μαρτυρία* have the same meaning (see below) and it may be this meaning which is to be understood in 3.8 and 3.10, namely, the preaching of the apostles concerning Jesus (so also Arndt and Gingrich (2)).

This leaves us with 1.2 and 6.9. The reference in 6.9 is to those whose constancy in preaching the word has eventually brought them death at the hands of the world -

(1) Arndt and Gingrich, *καὶ*, 3, p.393.

(2) Arndt and Gingrich, *λόγος*, 1, b, β, p.479

they have been 'martyred'.  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  in this verse =  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\eta}$ , as it also does in 1.2, 9 and 20.4. In 1.2 the R.S.V. translates - "his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ." If this were the correct translation one would have expected the dative after  $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  instead of the accusative; in fact it is probably better to translate  $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  here as "attest" or, with Arndt and Gingrich, as "declare" (1). It is probably because of John's declaration of the gospel that he was (not martyred but) banished to Patmos, an island used by the Romans as a penal settlement (2). In these seven examples, then, we take  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  to mean the 'preaching' of the apostles. We may now refer back to 3.8 and 3.10, and comment on the two possibilities of interpretation there. These two possibilities emphasise the connection between 'speech' and 'action', 'word' and 'deed' -  $\delta$   $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  is not empty speech, it implies and demands action, the concrete command to love one's neighbour is integral to the 'preaching', just as God's speech is intentionally an act of love, and nowhere more clearly than in another Johannine passage, Jn.1.1-14. There is no doubt of the real content of  $\delta$   $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  in these examples, it is Jesus Christ.

(1) Arndt and Gingrich,  $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ , 1, b, p.493.

(2) Preston and Hanson, p.56; Hort, Apocalypse, p.8; Charles I, p.21f.

Recently Prof. A. Richardson has suggested one way of seeing judgement in the preaching of the gospel by comparing two markedly apocalyptic passages, Mk. 13 and Rev. 6 (1).

In Mk. 13 there are four eschatological signs:

(i) wars (Mk. 13.7); (ii) famine, pestilence and earthquakes (Mk. 13.8); (iii) persecutions of the church (Mk. 13.9); (iv) the preaching of the gospel (Mk. 13.10). Richardson parallels these signs with the four horsemen of Revelation: (i) first there is a red horse (2nd) whose rider is commissioned to make war among men (Rev. 6.4); (ii) then there is a black horse (3rd.) whose rider holds the balances and cries out horrific famine prices for food. (Rev. 6.5); (iii) then there is the pale horse whose rider is Death and kills "with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6.8), here Richardson sees the poetic expression of the persecution of the church (Mark's 3rd sign). (iv) The fourth sign in Mark's apocalypse is paralleled by the first horse in Rev. 6 - "And I saw and behold a white horse, and its rider had a bow: and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer." (Rev. 6.2) Thus the preaching of the gospel in Mk. 13 is paralleled by this horse in Rev. 6. This white

(1) Richardson, Introduction, pp. 26 ff. The connection between Mk. 13 and Rev. 6 is also made by Charles (I, p.153f. especially 157), but Charles does not approve Richardson's view, apparently originally suggested by J. Weiss.

horse appears again in Chapter 19:

"Then I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True (1) and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems (2): and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is  $\delta \lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma \tau \omicron \upsilon \theta \epsilon \omicron \upsilon$ . And the armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses (3). From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron: he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of Kings and Lord of Lords." (Rev. 19.11-16)

The judgement here is lavishly depicted, brilliantly so with the image of the sword. That the Son of Man will enact judgement is common in the apocalypses, as it is in the gospel tradition (4), and the author of Revelation strongly emphasises this: "Then I turned to see ... one like a Son of Man ... from his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword ... He laid his right hand upon me, saying (1.12-17) ... 'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword ... I will come to you soon and war against them (the unrepentant) with the sword of my mouth'" (2.12-16). This is very similar indeed to the figure on the white horse (5), and in all these examples  $\beta \omicron \rho \phi \acute{\alpha} \iota \alpha$  is used.

- (1) cf. 3.14; 1.5, and also 21.5; 22.6.
- (2) These are the crowns of royalty, the  $\sigma \acute{\iota} \phi \acute{\alpha} \nu \omicron \varsigma$  in 6.2 is for the "beings of high rank" - v. Arndt and Gingrich,  $\sigma \acute{\iota} \phi \acute{\alpha} \nu \omicron \varsigma$  1, pp.774-5.
- (3) This galaxy of white horses and the question of the crowns in note 2 above might make us doubt the identity of the two white horses, but it should be remembered that we are dealing with poetry, and too exact a correspondence may not be demanded.
- (4) Mk. 14.62 and parallels.
- (5) cf. 19.21, and "conquering and to conquer" in 6.2, and Matthew 10.34. Torrey takes a similar view when he suggests that the white horse in Rev. 6 represents "the church during the interval before the second coming of the Messiah" (Torrey, Apoclypse, pp.111f.), but he comments upon the inappropriateness of a sword for this rider (p. 112).



In Eph. 6.16 μάχαιρα is used, and there "the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God", and in Hebrews we read that the "Word of God is sharper than any two edged sword" (Heb.4.12: cf. Wisdom 18.15 and Matt. 10.34). With this wealth of imagery the emphasis is laid upon the fearsome judgement which for those who will not listen is in the Word of God. - "ὁ λόγος which I have spoken will be his judge on the last day" (Jn.12.48; cf. Is.11-4). What the author has done is to take this aspect of the judgement of the Word of God and express it vividly in a poetic fashion - the Word of God is LORD. He who is the 'Faithful and True' (1), He who is the 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords' is in fact the Word of God. "This saying is completely destroyed if placed outside the whole New Testament picture. It belongs on the one hand to the succession of primitive Christian ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ sayings, and on the other to the primitive Christian view of Christ" (2). ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ is Jesus Christ. The author holds together both the preaching of the Apostles and the person of Jesus Christ as together forms of God's Word.

(1) cf. 3.14 and 1.5.

(2) Kittel, p. 126/31.

## The Johannine Letters.

The same tension between understanding *λόγος* as command or the preaching of the gospel or Jesus Himself which was apparent in Revelation is felt in the Johannine letters too. *λόγος* is found in 1 John, not in 2 John and at 3 John v.10: *ῥῆμα* does not occur in the Johannine letters.

At 1 J. 3.18 and 3 J. 10 *λόγος* is used in the ordinary sense - in the latter case pejoratively.

ὁ *λόγος* in 1 J. 1.10 means the gospel (1) - the "word as a living power makes the truth real little by little to him who receives it ... and further the 'word' is personal ... the truth on the other hand is abstract, though it is embodied in a person." (2) It is more difficult to decide the precise meaning of *λόγος* in 1 J. 2.5; Dodd takes it to be the same as *ἐντολή* (3), but Westcott cannot so restrict it - "the phrase expresses not only the fulfilment of specific injunctions (keep his commandments v. 3) but also the needful regard to the whole revelation made by Christ as a living and active power, of which the voice is never silent. The unity of the many 'commandments' is not in a 'law' but in a 'word': it answers to the spirit and not to the letter" (4). Two verses later the phrase "an old commandment which you had

(1) Dodd, Epistles, p. 23.

(2) Westcott, Epistles, p. 25-7.

(3) Dodd, Epistles, p. 31 f.

(4) Westcott, Epistles, p. 47 f. Note also his comments on the position of *αὐτοῦ*.

from the beginning" could refer back to Jn. 13.34; 15.12 - "a new commandment I give you that you love one another". This is also the old commandment - when the Sadducees asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment, he replied with the summary of the Law, the commandments to love God and one's neighbour from the Ten Commandments (οἱ δέκα λόγοι; Ex. 34.28; Deut. 10.4 (in LXX); cf. also Philo and Josephus in Arndt and Gingrich, *λόγος*, 1 α p. 479). The new 'commandment' means not "something added to the original gospel" but "a part of the gospel itself" (1). In 1 Jn. 2.14 the tension between the two meanings again holds - the point is that to have heard the gospel means living the life of love, i.e. God's life.

The beginning of 1 John is more complicated. Is the phrase *περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς* an integral part of the grammatical construction of the sentence or is it a parenthesis? How do we account for the neuter in 'that which'? Moffatt translates *λόγος* in the sense of the personal Word, and makes it the main topic of the sentence. Dodd prefers to "distinguish the expression 'the word of life' ... from the clauses beginning 'that which'" and so avoids "the awkward necessity of taking the neuter pronouns ... in reference to Christ as the Logos" (2). Hoskyns regards the grammatical constructions as flowing into

(1) Dodd, Epistles, p. 34

(2) Dodd, Epistles, p. 3

each other - "the neuter relative, that which we have heard, merges into a person who has been seen and touched by the author in company with others" (1).

Kittel thinks the example of anacoluthon in the structure of the sentence and the use of the neuter pronoun is theologically significant: "the writer still perceives the quite complete paradox, that one cannot really 'see' a 'word' 'with the eyes', 'look upon it', 'handle it'. Therefore he involuntarily avoids the relative  $\delta\varsigma$  which corresponds to the masculine  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  - and in so doing, the person who is personified in it - and thus gives the sentence its broken form. One perceives the real feeling, which involuntarily provides a weapon against some sort of mythological misinterpretation of the declaration with which the New Testament author is concerned." (2) However the author meant us to construe his sentence, his meaning is clear, as the commentators agree.  $\zeta\omega\acute{\eta}$  here means "the supernatural life belonging to God and Christ, which the believers will receive in the future, but which they also enjoy here and now." (3) What is meant then is that there was a place where the Life of God was shown to men, where they were actually

(1) Hoskyns, Epistles, p.660. cf. Westcott, Epistles, p.7. Kittel is emphatic, the author "cannot do enough in the threefold attack - in vv. 1.2.3. - to emphasise constantly the historical and concrete aspect of the appearances ( $\epsilon\phi\alpha\nu\epsilon\rho\acute{\omega}\phi\eta$ ). So it is beyond question that the  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  should be the historical figure of Jesus Christ." p.130/5.

(2) Kittel, p.130/39 f.

(3) Arndt and Gingrich,  $\zeta\omega\acute{\eta}$  2.p.340 f.

able to handle it, and that was in the person of Jesus of Nazareth: yet men have also experienced this life of God when confronted by the **λόγος** preached by the apostles. The **λόγος** gives life, the Life of the love which unites Father and Son, in the reconciliation which it brings to men: and this Life is also to be found in the **λόγος** in the sense of Jesus Christ, for it is certainly to him that 1 Jn. 1.1 refers, as Cadman emphasises: "Jesus was this Word of God; as such He was the Divine Life arrived amongst men. He was in person 'the Word of Life', the Word which is the Divine Life (1 Jn. 1.1). He, the personal Word of God, was the Life (Jn. 14.6); here Himself, Life was here (1 Jn. 1.2), the Life which the Father has and has granted to the Son (1 Jn. 5.26)" (1).

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel must here be taken into account (2) and to that gospel we now turn.

(1) Cadman, p. 64

(2) See Hoskyns p. 660 on 1 Jn. 1.5 and Dodd's unnecessary doubts on p. 2 of his commentary. Kittel insists that 1 Jn. 1.1 be understood in the light of previous apostolic usages of **ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ** - in particular, of course, the apostolic preaching - but claims it can only be fully understood in the light of the Johannine prologue. See p. 130 f. cf. also Richardson, Introduction, p. 162.

The Gospel According to St. John.

It is true that in John *ῥήμα* and *λόγος* are used in the usual senses, but even these ordinary meanings seem to have a special significance in this gospel where many words have a 'particular' meaning. Two good examples of where these two words are used in their ordinary meanings are 12.47-8 and 14.24. These are particularly useful examples because they bring out the typical sense of *λόγος* as generally opposed to either *λόγοι* or *ῥήματα* in this gospel.

"If anyone hears my *ῥήματα* and does not keep them, I do not judge him ... He who rejects me and does not keep my *ῥήματα* has a judge: *ὁ λόγος ὃν ἐλάλησα* will be his judge on the last day" (12.47-8)

"He who does not love me does not keep *τοὺς λόγους μου*, and *ὁ λόγος* which you hear is not mine but *τοῦ πέμψαντός με Πατρός*" (14.24) (1). If we may broadly translate *ῥήματα* here as 'human utterances', then *ὁ λόγος* is that formative speech which is within and behind these utterances, and within and behind them not because of any intrinsic character of ordinary human words themselves, but because it is the speech of God which is heard in them (2).

- (1) Elsewhere *λόγος* is used in the ordinary sense at: 4.37; 6.60; 7.36; 40; 10.19; 15.20; 18.9,32; 19.8,13; 21.23; elsewhere *ῥήμα* is used in the ordinary sense at: 5.47; 8.20; 10.21; and again though with some emphasis upon their divine origin at 3.34; 6.63,68; 8.47; 14.10; 15.7; 17.8.
- (2) 5.19 f., 31-2; 7.16f.; 8.28; 12.49; 14.10.

This is always to be understood. in 3.34 and 8.47 the Jews are not able to receive the  $\rho\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  : the context of 3.34 suggests that only he speaks the  $\rho\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  who is inspired by the Spirit of God - this is not to be understood as the ecstatic glossolalia of the primitive church (1) but as the work of the Paraclete (2). Just as the work of the Spirit is to lead the church (and per ecclesiam the world) into all truth, so also this is the function of  $\delta\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  spoken by Jesus. The context of 3.34 shows that he who has heard the  $\rho\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  "sets his seal to this that God is true": similarly the context of 8.47 shows that the Jews do not understand Jesus when he "tells the truth", i.e. they do not perceive in Jesus' speech that which is ultimately real - GOD (3); this is the same as to say the Jews cannot bear to hear  $\tau\omicron\nu\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\nu$  of Jesus (8.43; 17.17) (4). Since he is completely at one with the Spirit of God, the words of Jesus do always contain the Word of God, but these are not identical because the words may be heard without the Word by blinded Jews (5), and sometimes, as we shall see there is a difference between 'words' and 'precepts' over against which  $\delta\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  also stands.

In as much as Jesus, his work and his words show the presence of God, here is the Word of God, though his words may

(1) 1 Cor. 14.2,6.

(2) 14.26; 16.13, 14.

(3) Dodd, I.F.G. Chapter on Truth pp. 170-8.

(4) Calvin apparently does not appreciate this distinction between  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\lambda\alpha\lambda\eta$  in 8.43; he is certainly wrong in translating the way he does. (Calvin, p.227).

(5) cf. 1.11, 12; 3.20,31-36; 7.37-9; 8.39-47; 14.3,17; 17.8,14-17.

find as little good ground as did Moses' (5.46). The reason why Jesus' words always contain the Word is because he is fully obedient to the Father (cf. 8.55) and is thereby filled with the Spirit of God: "it is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail, τὰ ῥήματα that I have spoken unto you are spirit and life" (6.63). "If you abide in me and τὰ ῥήματά μου abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you" (15.7). It will be noticed how often even ῥήματα (always in the plural) has almost the meaning of ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ. The distinction we have drawn, however, between ῥήματα (cf. λαλιά) and ὁ λόγος still stands. The reason for this idea in these cases of ῥήματα is simply that in Jesus' words ὁ λόγος may always be heard and so the content of the latter phrase is, in the case of Jesus, the content of his ῥήματα also. The words of Jesus purify the hearers who believe them and keep them abiding in themselves (1); they do this because they are spirit and life, their authority is of the Father, "τὰ ῥήματα I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does the works" (14.10), and in them is ὁ λόγος, the final judge (12.48; cf. Rev. 19.13 ff). Jesus confronts the world as the Spirit-filled Son of God, therefore his words since they are true can be called 'spirit and life', and reveal the Father just as much as the σημεῖα and the ἔργα do, providing the hearers have ears to hear ὁ λόγος.

Bultmann goes much further than this and identifies 'signs' and 'words' (Theology II, p. 60), this is because he regards the miracles in John as only symbols for the following discourse (II, p. 3f); this is a false procedure, the miracles and the speech are parallel and each significant per se: this is

(1) cf. 15.3 and 1 Pet. 1.23



not to deny that  $\delta$  λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ is as much revealed in the one as the other, nor that the effect of each is identical (II, p. 61).

Barrett draws the distinction "between word (singular) and words (plural). The former means the divine message brought by Jesus taken as a whole, the latter is nearer in meaning to ἐντολαί, precepts" (1). These two meanings are sometimes found very closely juxtaposed (cf. 14.23-4 with 14.15; 12.50; and 15.3 with vv. 4,5,7,9-11 and 20) and on occasion prove difficult to distinguish, yet although "the word of Jesus includes precept ... it is far more. It is an active thing, which has almost an independent existence, and judges, gives life, and cleanses, "as Barrett says (2). Where there is a confusion it is probably a typically Johannine confusion, i.e. to hear, receive and be nourished on the Word of God is to have the life which God can give - eternal life, but what is this life? It is the life of Love - and the precepts of Jesus are the precepts of Love. "The words of Jesus in John relate to both aspects of the Word. There are words which are meant to authenticate the presence of the Word as Life; and there are words about the Word as demand, which summon to decision" (Cadman, p.65). As John abundantly shows, to hear the Word is to decide to live for God, to live the life of Love.(3)

From yet another angle Hoskyns has put the relation between Word and words in this Gospel thus: "the words of Jesus are not

(1) Barrett, John, p. 421

(2) ibid p. 217

(3) 13.34f ; 14.23-4; 15.12-17; 17.26.

isolated maxims, detached aphorisms, or disjointed commands, powerful but without connected meaning. Because of their essential unity the Evangelist is pressed from the plural to the singular, from 'words' to 'word', and from a series of words to the "Word". The business of the world depends upon the Word of God both for its creation and for its salvation" (1).

There remains the relation of *λόγος* to *λαλιά* and *φωνή*; *λαλιά* is used similarly to *ῥήματα*, "why do you not understand *τὴν λαλίαν τὴν ἐρῆν*? Because you cannot hear *τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐρῶν*" (8.43). Here again the *λόγος* is the essence of Jesus' speech, the self-revealing speech of God to the world. There is a similarity here to the use of *φωνή* in the Hermetic writer who "says that all men of every nation have one *λόγος* whether they be Greeks, Egyptians or Persians, though their *φωνή* differs" (2). The Johannine use of *φωνή*, however, is not like that of the Hermetica, it is nearer to meaning 'what is really being spoken in the speaking'.

"John the Baptist said I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness (1.23)

"The friend of the bridegroom rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice" (3.29)

"The sheep hear and ... know his voice ... but they do not know the voice of strangers" (10.4,5)

(1) Hoskyns, F.G. p. 136

(2) quoted by Dodd, I.F.G. p. 266

"I have other sheep ... I will bring them and ... they will hear my voice." (10.16)

"My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life" (10.27).

"Then a voice came from heaven 'I have glorified it and will glorify it again!'" (12.28).

"This voice has come for your sake not for mine" (12.30)

"Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice" (18.37)

The voice of John the Baptist possesses the only authority that can be recognised within Judaism, the authority of Scripture ... John is the spoken word, whereas Jesus is the incarnate Word" (1). "John is a Voice by means of which men are summoned to faith (1.7) Jesus is the Word of God in whom the apostles have believed (1.12-14)" (2). The voice is only heard by those who do believe, or are immediately about to believe - only the friend of the Bridegroom rejoices at his voice; the sheep will only know - i.e. obey (3) - the voice of the shepherd, not that of strangers. When God Himself spoke from Heaven (4) there were those who thought it was only a thunderclap or an angel speaking, but for those who believed it was a strength (12.30). John 10.14 implies that the

(1) Barrett, John, p. 145

(2) Hoskyns, F.G. p. 175

(3) cf. Matt. 11.27; Is. 1.3; Jer. 33.34. Fuller, Mission, pp.85, 93 ff. Bultmann, Gnosis, pp. 15-18, 36.

(4) cf. Barrett, John, p. 354

sheepfold does not only contain Christ's sheep but also the unbelieving members of the House of Israel. The distinction is between those who do and those who do not hear the voice, hear the word, are of the truth, have perceived what is ultimately real - God the Father, who speaks in the voice.

Everybody to whom Jesus spoke naturally heard the words, phrases and sentences which he uttered, but not everybody  $\delta$  λόγος - The Word. Those who did <sup>not</sup> hear it were the children of the devil (8.44), they did not believe in him as sent by God, therefore they were bound to kill him (8.37-43; 5.38). Jesus is "the Apostle of God, and his mission is intelligible only when it is recognised that the initiative rests with God. The mission of Jesus is not self appointed ... The failure of the Jews to perceive the meaning of his spoken word ('speech') can be explained only by their inability to hear the Word of God which is made manifest in the teaching ('word') of Jesus" (1). "The Word of Jesus, which is the Word of God, makes no pervading and penetrating progress in them (the Jews), and they are consequently pre-occupied in planning his murder" (2). Some, however, did hear the Word and believed (4.41f.; 2.22), experiencing its creative and cleansing power (15.3; 4.50-3): in these people who obeyed

(1) Hoskyns, F.G. p. 343  
 (2) *ibid.* p. 341

the word abode, thereby giving them eternal life (1). To perceive the Word spoken by Jesus was to perceive in it and in Jesus the revelation of what is ultimately real - the Truth, God the Father - and thereby enjoy freedom (2). These are the true disciples:-

"... and you do not have his word abiding in you" (5.38).

"If you continue in my word you are truly my disciples" (8.31).

"You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me and I in you ... he who abides in me bears much fruit ... if you abide in me and my words abide in you." (15.3-7; cf. 13.8).

In these passages there is little difference between Jesus abiding in the believer and the Word abiding in the believer; what men need to have abiding in them is that which will put them in a right relationship with God. Men cannot bring this about on their own initiative (15.5b). God must address himself to man, and when this happens men must cling to this Word and let it abide in them. Yet in the allegory of the vine, it is those in whom Jesus (not the Word this time) does not abide who are cast out - they have rejected God's testimony which he sent **κατὰ σάρκα** in Jesus (15.6; 1.14). Such people are the Jews - but the precise reason given for their rejection is that they have not the Word abiding in them (3). There seems, then,

- (1) 5.24; 8.51,52; cf. Matt. 7.24-7 = Lk. 6.47-9, and also Jn. 6.68 on which F.J. Taylor comments: "the words of eternal life ... means not the description of life hereafter but words which are living and effective to create and sustain eternal life" (TWB, p. 128).
- (2) 8.31f.; 15.20; 17.6.14 cf. 17.8,17; cf. also 4.42.
- (3) 5.38 cf. Barrett, John p. 222; Hoskyns F.G. p.338-9

to be little difference between Jesus and his Word. A remarkable difference between this gospel and the synoptics is in the form of Jesus' sayings: in John his speeches are long and assertive, quite different to the pithy, aphoristic nature of the speeches<sup>h</sup> in the synoptics. And yet for all the length and the assertive nature of the speeches in John, not once are they said to contain  $\xi\xi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ , while the concept of  $\xi\xi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$  is most important in the synoptics. However, we do find in John the  $\xi\gamma\acute{\omega}\ \epsilon\iota\pi\iota$  sayings, in which the most absolute assertions are made (Jn. 6.35; 8.12; 10.9,11; 11.25; 14.6; 15.1). Yet these assertions of authority are also applicable to Jesus' speech; not only Jesus himself, but his Word demands careful listening, acceptance and belief - belief in the sense of really allowing the Word to abide in one. Jesus' speech is certainly authoritative (cf. Bultmann Theology II, p. 63 ff. "his word is identical with himself".) Those who do have the word of Jesus abiding with them are true disciples because they have seen the manifestation of the Glory of God. (1). Thus the content of the Word is the relationship between Jesus, his Father who sent him, and the Spirit whom the Father will send (cf. Bultmann, Theology, pp. 61-3). This relationship is the Life of the Godhead, the essence of God, Love. This further explains the occasional

(1) "we have beheld" Jn. 1.14-18

equivalence of λόγος and ἐντολή, the command to love (the only meaning of ἐντολή in this gospel) being actually part of ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ - we may say it is the imperative form of that indicative which is the life of God. So also life and freedom, necessarily closely bound up with love, are the result of rightly hearing the Word - for they are all in the Word, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος .

It is now quite clear that this Word of God, God's addressing of himself to man in self-revelation (14.24; 17.14,17) is both the word of Jesus and Jesus himself. The Word of God is Jesus Christ - precisely T H E R E is beheld the manifestation of the ἀλήθεια - God.

#### John 17.20 - the Word of the Apostles

"I have given them thy word" (17.14 cf. vv. 8,20).

"Word" here can only mean the saving message brought by Jesus, but John is here looking back over the work of the apostles not recording verba ipsissima. To the disciples "Jesus committed ... the truth of his relation to God, which they truly received" (1) or shall we say not only is the saving message brought by Jesus but Jesus is the saving message - and this the disciples perceived (whether before or after Pentecost is not carefully stated by John). This is to perceive the truth - God - and this is to have eternal life.

(1) Barrett, John, p. 425.

The disciples have kept the word (17.6) - this "means that they have loyally accepted, and faithfully proclaimed, the truth of God in Jesus" (1). Their word, their proclamation, will create faith - "I do not pray for these only but also for those who are to believe in me through their word" (2). Their preaching will constitute the company of believers, the church - "that they may be one" - but only God can do this - their word is also made by God to be His Word (cf. 10.16). Where they preach Jesus Christ is present by the action of the Holy Spirit (14.26; 16.14). Those who have believed in Jesus through the apostolic preaching are the fruit of the vine and its branches (17.20), hence the addition 'go and bear fruit' (v.16), that is, 'go out into the world' (17.18 cf. Matt.28.19,20). The narrative of the miraculous draught of fishes is the fulfillment of this command. The seven disciples 'go a fishing' (21.3). So long as they acted on their own initiative 'they took nothing', but under the direction of the Lord and in his presence they enclosed a multitude of fishes (21.6.): 'apart from me you can do nothing' (3).

(1) *ibid* p. 421

(2) 17.20. cf. 4.39. In the synoptics Jesus alone imperiously calls his disciples, cf. John 1.vv. 29f, 36,41,45-6. But cf. 6.10; 15.16.

(3) cf. Hoskyns F.G. p. 476



Chapter Five.The Gospel According to S. John 1.1-18.

When we arrive at this provocative passage how are we to understand *λόγος*? Are we to bear in mind the rest of the New Testament, or are we to understand this as referring to a conglomeration of the first and second century ideas of the intermediary contacts between Divinity and Humanity? Most commentators would say the latter, indeed very few give much attention to the specifically Christian understanding of *λόγος* at all, while some would excise these first fourteen verses from the rest of the gospel and call them a Logos Hymn. Those who regard the verses as an integral part of the gospel think the author has in mind either the Logos of the Hellenistic mystery religions, the Stoic Logos, the Logos of Philo, the Wisdom of Rabbinic Judaism, the Word of the Lord from the Old Testament or a combination of two or more of these concepts.

Barrett gives an account (1) of the way in which both Burney and Weiss divide the prologue into an Aramaic Logos-Hymn with prose insertions. These two scholars, however, arrive at conflicting conclusions, so that we are unable to place much confidence in their findings. What is more important than these conflicting results is the nature of the prologue itself. As it stands each individual part is very closely

(1) Barrett, John, p.126.

bound up with the theology of the rest of the gospel and introduces us to the themes of word, life, light, witness, darkness, world, belief, glory, truth - themes which dominate the rest of the gospel - and above all to <sup>the</sup> incarnation of the word, which is described at some length throughout the rest of the gospel. It is not possible to excise these first fourteen verses, therefore, from the rest of the gospel, on the contrary they are very closely bound up with it.

We are, then, dealing with a whole gospel. Now the important thing to remember about the gospels is their title: τὸ κατὰ Μάρκον, Ματθαῖον, Λουκᾶν, Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον. Each evangelist sets out to write his own presentation of the ONE gospel - how could there be two 'gospels'? There is only one εὐαγγέλιον : following Kittel's suggestion of adding to 1 Cor. 8.5 (Kittel, p. 137/26f.) καὶ λόγοι πολλοί we might add καὶ εὐαγγέλια πολλὰ (cf. Friedrich, T.W.N.T., II, p.721 f.) but only one true εὐαγγέλιον (ibid. p. 733 f.) By talking of the 'gospels' of the New Testament we do not mean different εὐαγγέλια as in the Emperor-cult, we mean that "in the different gospels the one Gospel of God is announced" (ibid. p.734/20). Each gospel is carefully written and laid out: each is begun in a purposeful manner. Mark begins at the place where Jesus is appointed to his Messianic mission - the Baptism. For fear, perhaps, of adoptionist interpretations Matthew and Luke begin with his miraculous birth: in their genealogies Matthew,

the Jewish gospel, traces the descent back to Abraham, the first of the chosen people, while Luke, the Gentile, traces the descent back to Adam, the first of the human race. John also begins purposefully; he begins with the pre-existence of the Son of God, the Logos. The pre-existence of Jesus, the Word of God, is not mentioned in the prologue to be forgotten again. Throughout the gospel it is emphasised that Jesus came from above, from his Father with whom he had ~~communion~~, who sent him into the world, to whom he will return when glorified. The fact that the Son was, and then was sent to save the world is the whole raison d'etre of the gospel. This emphasis is most clear in such places as 1.30; 3.13-31; 6.33ff, 46, 50ff, 62; 8.23,38,42,58; 16.28-30; 17.5; cf. Matt. 10.40. But as all the gospels begin with the Person Jesus Christ, so also does John - "he begins with Christ, the eschatological fulfilment of God's purposes, and with the fundamental conviction that Christ Himself is the gospel, the Word which God has spoken" (1).

In view of the opinions of many commentators that the only way to understand the prologue is against the background of contemporary ideas of the Logos, we should perhaps pause here and ask if Barrett is in fact correct; does John begin (immediately in his prologue) like the other gospels with Jesus Christ and follow that theme through to the end, or does he begin with a sort of praeparatio evangelica drawn from contemporary philosophy? Or, and this is more to the point, does

(1) Barrett, John, p. 129

he begin with an attempt at natural theology? Does John have any interest in this latter theological procedure or is his interest solely with writing the Gospel of Jesus Christ? It does not at all seem to be the case that here John is attempting to seek out the Divine along the lines of the Stoic Logos, or the Hermetic mysticism, or Philo's Logos, or the Rabbinic Wisdom or even the Torah: John is no Natural Theologian! The theology of his gospel decisively cuts the world into those who believe and those who do not believe - the criterion being belief in the Person Jesus - "I am ἡ ὁδὸς ... no-one comes to the Father but by me" (14.6); apart from the Person of Jesus there is nothing but darkness (1.5), the interest of John is solely and exclusively in the manifestation of the Father in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth (1). Kittel is quite clear about John's lack of concern with speculation (2). He points out that the importance of the authority of the evangelist is not what he has thought - but what he has seen and not he alone, but the church, the "we" of the fourth gospel (3). "The declaration" of the prologue "has not originated from a reflection or from a mystery religion or even a theological idea of a pre-existent being, but from the θεῶν of the historical figure of Jesus - this, and nothing, absolutely nothing else has given him evidence and knowledge of the eternal

- (1) cf. Jn. 1.17-18; 3.12; 5.22-4; 6.44-5; and Lightfoot, John pp.87f.  
 (2) Kittel, p. 134/6 f.  
 (3) cf. Hoskyns, F.G., pp. 86-95.

Sonship and of the  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \tau\acute{o}\nu \pi\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha \acute{\epsilon}\iota\upsilon\alpha\iota$  of the  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ "(1).

Indeed, as he later asserts, the whole of the New Testament "has no sort of primary interest in a "World reason" or in a semi-divine intermediary "Logos" that would be real to describe, and that - among others - would one day enter into the person of an earthly human being: even less in concepts of the Messiah or the Law (messianologischen oder thoralogischen "Vorstellungen") which would be applied to one specific person, not in "concepts" not even theological: but uniquely and solely in the activities of the person of Jesus" (2).

There is therefore no possibility of any type of Logos being personified - it is simply that the evangelist has seen Jesus and known the power of the Holy Spirit. We may say that John begins with 1.14 and works backwards to 1.1, or as Hoskyns put it, "the Prologue does not move to Jesus, but from him". (3). The same must also be said of course of the rest of the New Testament: Paul for example has said in Col. 1.15-20 all that John is saying here - it is the knowledge of what happened in Jesus and happens in the power of the Holy Spirit that has led Paul to make these statements. We may say that Paul begins with 2.Cor.5.19 (Rom. 5.1?) and works back to Col.1.15ff (4) as Davies, commenting upon Paul's doctrine of the Second Adam,

- (1) Kittel, p. 134/12. At this point we should remember the attempts to prove an original Aramaic version of the gospel: although these are generally held to be unsuccessful, "it does ... seem probable that John was accustomed to think and speak in Aramaic as well as in Greek", Barrett, John, p.11.
- (2) Kittel, p. 134/28f.
- (3) Hoskyns, p. 137
- (4) cf. Rom. 5.12-21; 1 Cor. 8.6; 10.5; 2 Cor.4.4; 8.9; Phil.2.6ff; Gal. 4.4

writes, "Paul, in his doctrine of the second Adam, asserts the same truth that the Fourth Gospel proclaims in its insistence that the Word became flesh, in another, Rabbinic, way, that the particular is not a scandal. He was impelled to assert this not from any philosophical motives but from the mere fact of Christ in History." (1). Hoskyns is equally emphatic: "The texture of the prologue is taken from the Old Testament Scriptures (e.g. Gen. 1, Prov. 8); but it is altogether Christian. That Jesus once spoke is more fundamental for its understanding than is the history of Greek Philosophy or the story of the Westward progress of Oriental mysticism; more fundamental even than the first chapter of Genesis or the eighth chapter of the Proverbs" (2). It is therefore necessary to realise that the starting point of the thought of the prologue is none other than the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Since, therefore, the prologue is not only so integral a part of the rest of the gospel, but also begins a book which is a thoroughly New Testament book, with the same intentions as the other four gospels, and with the same starting point, and since also by using this term *λόγος* without explanation John implies that it is familiar to his Christian readers, the only sensible place to hope to find its meaning is in the rest of the Fourth Gospel and the rest of the New Testament. It will be useful therefore to make now a brief summary of all that we

(1) Davies, Paul, p. 52.

(2) Hoskyns, F.G., p. 137.

have found the rest of the New Testament to mean by this term, so that we may be helped in drawing out the meaning of John, 1.1-14.

Summary of the Apostolic use of λόγος.

We have seen that λόγος is used in all its varied meanings, there is nothing particularly special about the word itself. It can be qualified by such derogatory epithets as σαπρός, κενός, πονηρός, πλαστός, the λόγος can be κολακίας and it can be compared to gangrene. In fact the "New Testament describes how the human λόγος operates in sin and how exceptions from this rule, if not impossible, are nevertheless exceedingly rare" (1). This leads us to an important understanding of the meaning of the spoken word, whether of man or of God. Kittel again writes "It is not because it is uttered by a human mouth that it is a human word, but because its content is human (Menschentum); the same human mouth can also be the instrument of the Word of God (cf. 1. Th.2.13)" (2). The meaning of λόγος will always be determined by whether its contents are human or divine. Yet the simple word λόγος is used in all its meanings in the Apostolic writings, this should make us beware of identifying different meanings - simply because the same word is used; a fault in Kittel's argument is that he sometimes identifies meanings too easily where two quite distinct ones are probably meant.

λόγος (or sometimes ῥῆμα) is used for the Word spoken by God to the men of the Old Testament and to the early church

(1) Kittel, p.101/6

(2) Kittel, p. 101/12

through the Old Testament. We have the expression the 'Word of the Lord' in Lk. 3.2 which came to John the Baptist in the Wilderness, and this is the same word which came to the prophets (2 Pet. 1.19, cf. 3.2), and was the active agent in creation (2 Pet. 3.5). *λόγος* is also used for the Word of God made known in the Law (Heb. 2.2, cf. 7.28), and for the Word which is now able<sup>to</sup>/be heard in the scriptures and demands radical obedience (Matt. 15.6). *λόγος* is also used for the sayings and the message of Jesus. It is most probable that there were collections of *λόγοι* of Jesus in the oral tradition, and that these were regarded as important is clearly proved by the existence of the Gospels themselves. Paul in 1 Cor. 7.25 shows the concern of the early church for *λόγοι* of Jesus, and in 1 Cor. 7.10 actually refers to a saying of Jesus about marriage and divorce. In the Johannine writings the *ἐντολή* of Jesus to love one's neighbour is frequently called a *λόγος* - though often the meaning of *λόγος* in this case is not able to be restricted simply to 'commandment'. *λόγος* is also used for the whole message of Jesus in the editorial passages of the Synoptic Gospels and more significantly in the Fourth Gospel.

The author of the Fourth Gospel also uses *λόγος* for the message of the apostles (Jn. 17.20). Before this, either *λόγος* or *ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (τοῦ κυρίου)* has been used frequently in Acts and the letters for the preaching of the apostles - the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed by the church to the World. The function of this *λόγος* has been seen to be



always similar to and often identical with the function of the Risen Christ - it saves, judges, cleanses, gives life and truth, and reconciles men to God. In the Johannine writings a certain tension has been found in the use of  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  between the sense of the command to love and the sense of preaching God's act of love.

We have noticed the close and highly significant connection between  $\delta$   $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  and baptism and the eucharist. In all three we have the Real Presence of Christ. "Baptism gave outward embodiment to the apostolic preaching; it was a concrete 'symbol' of the kerygma, the good news of salvation through the crucified and risen Lord" (Flemington, 127). We have come to see that "the apostles' preaching is never merely the report of something that happened in the past. It is the re-presentation of the Word in exactly the same way as the sacrifice of calvary is re-presented in the eucharist" (Fuller, Word,,p. 269).

Finally, there has in all the New Testament strata been a strong movement towards using  $\delta$   $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$   $\tau\omicron\upsilon$   $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  to describe Jesus Christ himself. So far this has only been made explicitly in Rev. 19.13 and almost certainly at 1 Jn.1.1f, but pressure is felt in the other writings as well, even though the theology is only implicit.

In view of the demurrings of scholars of as different persuasion as R. Bultmann and A.M. Ramsey against thinking there is but one theology in the New Testament where in fact there are probably several (1), the method of study here has been to treat

(1) Bultmann, Theology, II/p. 237 ff. Ramsey, "York Quarterly" February, 1959, p. 17.

each New Testament book individually to decide the meaning attached to **λόγος** by each author. This has been done to save any fear of reading the theology of one author into the writings of another. It is now, however, possible to survey the general theology of the authors in their use of **λόγος** - and the similarity between them in that they all use it in the four ways outlined above is impressive. We may even dare to speak of the New Testament theology of the **λόγος** !

Kittel in the very fine section of his article called "Jesus Christ the **λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ** " (1), elucidates the theological importance of the use of **ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ** in the New Testament. The assertions which the New Testament makes about the meanings of **λόγος** , he writes, "do not originate from an idea of 'word' - and that is now of simply decisive importance. If one understands them in the abstract, then they are completely and utterly distorted. They always obtain and achieve their life solely in the event which occurs in the person of Jesus" (2).

In the above analysis of the use of **λόγος** in the New Testament there has been felt a tension - an inability to decide precisely the exact meaning of **λόγος** , but we have seen that it always stands in the closest possible relationship to the saving events of God in Jesus Christ. In the gospels the Word of Jesus is inseparable from his acted miracles and his whole life, in the rest of the New Testament the miracles and wonders

(1) Kittel, p. 126 f.

(2) Kittel, p. 127/14

of the apostles go together with their preaching of the Word. God's Word is God's Act. And Kittel emphasises that for the whole of primitive Christianity, the Word of God is the occurrence "not alongside the person of Jesus Christ - as some teaching preached by him and later by apostles - but is alone present in His person, in the historical event, which occurred in him, which He is ... Both the ἦλθον... πληρῶσαι (Matt. 5.17) and the ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν (Matt. 5.22f.) show that in Him, in his person the καινὴ διαθήκη is present. The ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μείζον ἔστιν ᾧ δε (Matt. 12.6) points to His person, in which the 'old' value of the Temple also confirmed by Jesus (cf. Matt. 21.12f.) is present in a 'new' way. Not with words, not in teaching, not in a theology is the καινὴ διαθήκη present, but in his blood, in all that happens to His person, in the life lived by Him ... Jesus is not represented merely as the bringer of the word, but as the one who in his person embodies it in the historical event of his speaking and acting, of his being, of the incarnation - as the 'word'"(1).

This long quotation from Kittel aptly summarises the theology of the λόγος in the whole of the New Testament apart from John 1.1-18: it is not that different meanings of λόγος have here been confused (cf. paragraph 1) but that that which gives the content of the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is found in each case to be the same - Jesus Christ.

(1) Kittel, p. 128/24ff. - 129/7.

In our view, therefore, it is the whole considerable burden of this specifically Christian use of  $\delta$  λόγος which is the key to the Johannine prologue.

Of course, it may be wondered at this point why Jesus is never referred to as  $\delta$  λόγος in the rest of the gospel, where he is called, 'Messiah', 'Son of Man' and 'Son of God'. To this question Kittel replies, "The great importance of the λόγος declaration of the prologue lies ... in the past. The  $\xi$ γένετο of John 1.14 is the transition and the 'word' becomes historical appearance. This historical appearance is called Jesus. He is the 'word'. But the 'word' is now called: Jesus ... the unconditional identity of the  $\sigma$ ὰρξ Jesus ... and of the eternal 'word' is the first and most radical presupposition of this 4th gospel" (1).

When John came to know Jesus Christ, however, he did not, as it were, exist in a vacuum - naturally he was a person who lived in a certain culture and was accustomed to use the thought forms of that culture. Whether his culture was that of Greek philosophy or Hellenistic Judaism, or whether before writing his gospel he has borne only the Old Testament in mind must be decided, because he must have been aware at least of some of the contemporary ideas connected with the Logos. What then, is the background of John? Here again the body of the gospel and its general tenor must be considered before going outside to pagan sources (2). And here the emphasis in the gospel upon Judaism

(1) Kittel, p. 132/20 f.

(2) cf. Lightfoot, John, p. 78

and the importance of the Jews is decisive.

- 1) Salvation begins with the Jews (4.22) whose scriptures point to the Christ (1.45).
- 2) Jesus was a Jew, of the line of David (7.42).
- 3) The Jews, the people of God, reject their Messiah.
- 4) The gentiles are only brought in later (12.20).

John's use of the Old Testament proof texts is slight in comparison with the Synoptics, but Old Testament themes such as the unity of God and the love of God permeate the gospel. The only two parabolic similes which occur are of the Shepherd and the Vine - "neither of these looks back to a single Old Testament passage, but each is full of Old Testament imagery" (1). In his commentary, Barrett shows how clearly John stands in the line of Judaistic apocalyptic (John, p. 26) and how he is aware of Rabbinic legal procedure, both religious and criminal (John, p. 27). It is, then, the Old Testament which is the background of John as of the rest of the New Testament, and the Old Testament Word which is spoken in this 'Word' as in the 'Word' of the rest of the New Testament.

Therefore we must understand the use of *λόγος* against the background of the Old Testament Word of God. This Word which God spake in creation (cf. John 1.1-3), when bringing the world into life (cf. vv. 4-5), which God spake

(1) Barrett, John, p. 25

through the prophets (cf. vv.6-8), and in the Torah (cf. v.5,9 & Ps. 119 passim esp. v.105), which Word the people of Israel consistently rejected and disobeyed (cf. Jn. 1.10,11) THIS Word of God  $\sigma\lambda\phi\tau\epsilon$   $\epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$  (v.14). The background of the Prologue is utterly Hebraic (1). But let us remember precisely what John is saying: it is not simply that the Word which God spake in times past has now become flesh, but that the only way of coming to know i.e. obey, this Word is by believing in Jesus - "The Logos exists, but is unknown and incomprehensible apart from the historical figure of Jesus" (2).

As for the efforts of the Pagans to seek God by means of intermediary Logoi (3) - inasmuch as there is any value in their attempt they will find that the Logos is He who became man in Jesus of Nazareth, and they will find that it will not have been a case of them seeking out the Divine, but of God, the Father of Jesus, seeking out them - "and I have other sheep that are not of this fold: I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice" (John 10.16) (4). Kittel proffers the interesting suggestion that the following different conceptions of Logos were interacting with each other in John's mind: (i) the primitive Christian view of the Historical Jesus as the "Word"; (ii) the similarly primitive Christian

- (1) Old Testament parallels to the declarations of the prologue are given by Hoskyns, F.G. pp.140-154.
- (2) Barrett, John, p. 129.
- (3) Apart from in most commentaries on the Fourth Gospel, an exposition of the different concepts of the Logos in different religions may be found in E.R.E. Vol. XII, pp.749-752 (S.Langdon), and Vol. VIII, pp. 133-138 (W.R.Inge); the former deals with ancient religions and their influence upon Hebraic thought, and the latter with the concepts of Logos in Judaism and Greek thought.
- (4) cf. Hoskyns, p. 163, also E. Brunner, The Mediator (Eng. Tr., London, 1934) p. 206, n.1.

knowledge of the divine pre-existence of the divine Christ; (iii) the creative Word of the Old Testament; (iv) the logos myths and theories of the time. "This position", he writes, "has caused the author of the prologue to take up the catchword of the latter and use it as the motif of his verses. It is a catchword which comes to him from the biblical and from the primitive Christian language. But with him it takes a new place and a new emphasis. One can vary 1 Cor. 8.5 ὡς περ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί—καὶ λόγοι πολλοί. He puts forward his own λόγος there which is the one and only and was - 'in the beginning'; which is not speculation about an indefinite intermediary being and metaphysical personification of a mythical idea, but is a visible person in Jesus and is the "Word" in him" (1).

Kittel points out that the prologue does pick out from the possible 'backgrounds' the Law, in order to contrast it with the Logos. Now the contrast of Christ and Law is one common in the New Testament. In the synoptics Christ is generally shown opposing the proponents of the Law, and in Matthew where care is taken to stress that the Law is in itself good and that Christ's function is to fulfil it and not destroy it (Matt. 5.17), the actual lay out of the gospel with its five books standing over against the Pentateuch lays the same emphasis as John 1.17. With Paul, of course, this problem is

(1) Kittel, p. 137/16 ff.

treated very fully, both theologically and practically especially in Galatians and in Romans but elsewhere also. For Paul, Christ is "the End of the Law" (Rom. 10.4). Yet the question of Christ and Law (which is too often regarded as only a Pauline question) is embedded in the Fourth gospel (1). The question is just how does John resolve the problem of Christ and the Law? Hoskyns said, "Moses ... remains a negative witness to Jesus" (2), and often it certainly seems that Jesus completely abolishes the Law, he is the end of it in the sense of the last term in a series. The use of the pronoun 'you' or 'your' with the Law (8.17) suggests that here we have the comment of John who is the member of a community standing quite over against Judaism, rather like Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, who also talks in terms of 'your law' (18.31), whereas Gamaliel, a member of the Sanhedrin, talks of 'our law' (7.51). At times John seems to make Jesus stand over against the law (cf. 9.28,9) especially when he seems to regard it as ultimately the murderer of the Messianic King (19.19-22), and therefore the destroyer of grace and truth (1.17).

The other way of taking 1.17 is to regard the essential point of the Law as potentially able to bring grace and truth, but because the Law has been used rather than obeyed, i.e. used legalistically for the purposes of men, this potential never became actual fact: only in Jesus Christ did grace and

- (1) Bultmann is certainly wrong in thinking the discussion of the Law is omitted in John, cf. Bultmann, *Theology*, II, pp.5 ff.  
 (2) Hoskyns, F.G., p. 152.



and truth come, though in him the essential point of the Law is confirmed. At least one of the functions of the Law was to witness, to point forward to Jesus (1.45; 5.39,46), and in as much as the Jews reject Jesus they also reject the Law (7.19). Jesus is truly 'the end of the Law' in the sense of the fulfillment of it, as is seen from such passages as 8.17; 10.34 f.; 12.34 f.; 15.25. If the Law had been paid proper attention, the Jews would have acknowledge Jesus (cf. Gutbrod, T.W.N.T., IV, p.1077/3). Thus in the phrase 'your law' in 8.17 the emphasis falls not on the 'your' as if Jesus is saying he will have nothing to do with it, but on the 'law' which is perfectly good and actually proves Jesus right (Gutbrod, *ibid*). Nathaniel, for example, an Israelite in whom there was no guile, did come to Jesus (1.47 f.; Gutbrod, *op. cit.* p.1077/24). Also we must question the assertion that the Law murdered Jesus, for 7.19 shows quite plainly that the desire to kill Jesus is in fact failing to keep the Law, and ultimately the killing of Jesus is the evasion of even the legislation of Moses (7.50 f.; cf. Gutbrod *op. cit.* 1077/30). It seems, then, that we must differentiate between the Law of God, and the legalism into which men may twist this Law. It is with this view of 1.17 that Whitehouse in his article on Law in TWB seems to agree, "the 'grace' and the 'truth' which the torah was to establish according to many Old Testament promises did not come through the legislation attributed to Moses. They came by Jesus Christ who had been

condemned as a result of that legislation (Jn. 1.17; 19.7)" (TWB, p. 123). Legalism along with all evil is conquered by Jesus, ultimately without remainder; but the Law is fulfilled, confirmed and - for we must also say this - restored by Jesus. Here we must disagree with Gutbrod when he completely denies that there is any evidence to show that "the law is fulfilled according to its real intention with the fulfillment of the command to love" (op. cit. p.1077/40) (in point of fact Gutbrod considers the gospel belongs to a generation in which the question of the law is no longer of importance - the preceding section of his article seems to argue against this (Gutbrod, *ibid*) ).

Throughout the Johannine writings we have noticed the intimate connection between the word and the  $\kappa\alpha\iota\nu\eta\ \epsilon\upsilon\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\eta}$  to love. This is the establishing of the will of God for his people who are the new creation, and are to live the life with all its possibilities which was given when creation first began, when God spoke and it was done (cf. Whitehouse, TWB, p.122 f.) God spoke His Word and creation came into being, God spoke His Word through the Law with the intention of giving life; in Jesus Christ God spoke His Word to recreate all things and re-establish his Law of life - His life, i.e. love. "The command of God is always the action of the one gracious God upon man's life, determining that life in accordance with the divine purpose ... the effect of the command is to bind man with God and with his neighbour in a relation of love, and to determine

his life through the duties which flow from love." (Whitehouse, TWB, p. 50). It is precisely this which is so obvious in the Johannine letters and Revelation. The νόμος is superseded by Jesus, and re-established in the καινή ἐντολή - love.

We may conclude therefore by saying that we are to understand λόγος in the Johannine prologue primarily and above all against the highly impressive background of its use elsewhere in the New Testament. The culture in which John stood is that of Judaism, and it is the Word of God in the Old Testament which out of the many possible rivals is the only significant, indeed the significant concept of the Word to be borne in mind when considering this passage, because it is the idea of the Word in the Law (cf. Ps.119) alone which is here selected for comment. That Word is the Word of Yahweh, which is now made flesh in Jesus Christ, through whom God's creation is restored and God's Law re-established.

The full weight of the λόγος is set against the νόμος : the incarnation of the Word in Jn. 1.14, the kernel of the prologue, is characterised concisely as being of the tremendous love of God that he should voluntarily do this for men (grace), and that what he should do should be to come Himself (truth). The import of v. 17 is not only that it emphasises how what background there is behind the Christian experience underlying this gospel is Hebraic, but also that all that the Jews (or even - remotely - the Pagans) ever knew of God, of His Word actually 'comes to pass' in Him of whom it must be said -

καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο.

## Chapter Six

### The Word of God in the Old and the New Testaments.

Chapter Five really concluded our study of the New Testament Doctrine of the Word of God, but before proceeding to outline Barth's Doctrine of the Word of God in Chapter Seven, we now try to discuss the Old and New Testaments from the point of view of the writers of the New Testament. The first half of this chapter is simply concerned with what the New Testament writers thought of the Old Testament scriptures, but obviously the second half moves away from a strictly New Testament study in that these writers say nothing about the New Testament as a written document. In the second half, then, we try to find a way of regarding the Bible which will be consonant with the thinking of the New Testament writers, even though they themselves say nothing explicit about it.

The use of the phrase "ἐγένετο ῥῆμα θεοῦ" to John, the son of Zechariah," (Lk. 3.2; cf. Jn. 10.35) is reminiscent of the Word of the Lord which came to the Old Testament prophets, and so raises the question of the way in which the New Testament writers describe the words of the prophets, and what they think about the Old Testament in general. They refer to the Old Testament in the following seven ways:-

1. No author is named, or there is simply the formula, 'it is written': e.g. Matt. 4.4,6,7,10; 11.10; 21.16; Mk. 1.2; 7.6;

12.10; Lk. 3.4; 4.17; Jn. 2.17; 6.45; 10.34; 15.25; Rom. 9.27, 29; 10.16, 20; 15.12; Heb. 2.6.

2. For individual Old Testament passages γραφή is sometimes used: e.g. Mk. 12.10; Jn. 7.38,42; 13.18; 17.12; 19.24, 28, 36; 20.9; cf. 15.25. For the Old Testament as a whole γραφαί is sometimes used, e.g. Mk. 12.24; Jn. 5.39; 6.45; 10.34.

3. Sometimes the prophet himself is thought of as the speaker or the writer of the quotation: e.g. Matt. 2.6, 17, 23; 3.3; 4.14; 8.17; 12.17; 13.14, 35; 15.7; 21.5; 22.24; 27.19. Mk. 1.2; 7.6,10; Lk. 3.4; 20.42; Jn. 1.23, 45; 7.19, 22f.; 12.38,39; Acts 3.22; 7.48; Rom. 9.27, 29; 10.19; 15.12.

4. In the book of Psalms David is regarded as the speaker, Acts 2.25, 34; Rom. 4.6; 11.9 but in Matt. 22.43 = Mk. 12.36 = Lk. 20.42, the emphasis is on the inspiration of the spirit. The Spirit inspires the prophets in 2 Tim. 1.21 and speaks in the scriptures in 1 Tim. 4.1; Heb. 3.7; Acts 28.25.

5. In John 1. 23, 45; 7.19, 22; 12.38, 39 the prophet is regarded as the speaker in the quotation, but although we read in 9.29 "God spoke to Moses", in John we do not hear of God or the Spirit speaking in the scriptures - their author is primarily Moses: e.g. Jn. 1.17,45; 5.45, 46; 7.19; 9.29. cf. Matt. 19.7.

6. In Hebrews we sometimes have the idea that the speaker in the quotation is the pre-existent Christ; e.g. Heb. 2.12f.; 10.5, 8, 9.

7. Finally, God Himself is often regarded as speaking through the Old Testament quotation: e.g. Matt. 1.22; 2.15; 15.4; 19.5;

22.31; Lk. 1.70 (cf. Lk. 11.49 and T.W. Manson's comment - "the human introductory formula is ... equivalent to, 'God, in His wisdom, said' " (Sayings, p. 102) ). Mk. 12.26; Acts 3.25; 4.25; 7.3, 6, 7, 31, 33; Eph. 4.8; Rom. 1.2; Jas. 2.11; Heb. 1.5, 6, 7, 13; 3.15; 4.3, 4, 7; 5.5, 6; 6.14; 8.8; 10.15, 30.

From the evidence of these quotations we may say generally that the New Testament writers understood God to have spoken his Word to the men of the Old Testament who, in the power of the Holy Spirit witnessed to this speaking in writing, and that it is because of this that the scriptures must have attention paid to them (2 Pet. 1.20 f.) As C.H. Dodd has shown (1) the witness of the Old Testament underlies the New Testament to an extraordinary degree, explicating the facts of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament was not simply referred to by means of 'proof texts' or 'testimonia' but constant reference was made to important Old Testament passages. In the Fourth Gospel, for example, there are few 'proof texts', but Barrett has shown how deeply Old Testament themes underly the theology of this gospel, and how in fact the theology of the Old Testament is there reinterpreted christologically (2). Indeed not to believe

- (1) C.H. Dodd, According To The Scriptures (London, 1952).  
 (2) Barrett, John, p. 22. Barrett also analyses the linguistic problems of John's use of the Old Testament; although John certainly used the LXX it is likely that he also used the Hebrew.

in Jesus, "not to come to Him and follow Him, is to abandon life and misunderstand the scriptures altogether" (1). In John of course the question of the Old Testament is closely linked with that of the Law, which is discussed above in the chapter on the Johannine prologue.

As already mentioned, in Lk. 3.2 we have the expressions often associated with the phrase 'the Word of the Lord' in the Old Testament. There is no indication anywhere in the New Testament (apart possibly from Hebrews, see below) that the words of the Old Testament are the Word of God. Such a 'Sibylline' doctrine of inspiration is not found - "as against all such unbiblical ideas, the New Testament writers hold no theory of inspiration; they had inherited from Judaism the view that God had revealed his truth by 'showing' or 'speaking' it to the scriptural writers who had then written down what they had seen or heard" (2).

Any such identification of words and the Word is implicitly but emphatically denied in John, cf. 5.47 with 12.48. Even in Matt. 4.4, "man shall not live by bread alone, but  $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\iota} \rho\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\iota$  that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Lk. 4.4 omits the second clause), it is probable that we should understand  $\rho\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha$  as what God is really saying

(1) Hoskyns, F.G., p. 273.

(2) Richardson, TWB, p. 114.

in the message of the Old Testament, it is the awareness of God's command in the Law which is important (1).

The quotations in the third list above show that at least in some cases the prophets themselves were reckoned to have spoken these words, but they are quite human words. It is of course true that, as the fourth list shows, the prophets were certainly regarded as inspired by the Spirit, yet they are still really human words, and only in Hebrews, where (except possibly 2.6) the prophet is merely a mouth-piece and so not mentioned at all, do we find a doctrine of inspiration akin to that of Vergil's Sibyl. Kittel suggests this is due to the Alexandrine origin of Hebrews (2), but it is an unbiblical understanding of inspiration (3), the human authors are not mere mouthpieces, they are the "real subject of the speech" as is quite clear in such expressions as Rom. 9.27 (κράζει), or Rom. 10.20 (ἀποστολῆ) (4). And yet we must give appropriate weight to the quotations in the seventh list and say that fundamentally God is the true author of what is really being said in the Old Testament; nor is this to be understood simply from such obvious places as Matt. 22.31 but throughout the New Testament the examples in our lists "show that God affirms himself as the speaker

- (1) cf. Whitehouse, TWB, pp. 123-5.
- (2) Kittel, p. 112/3.
- (3) Richardson, TWB, p. 114
- (4) Kittel, p. 112/6.



in the written word " (1).

In the Old Testament scriptures God speaks his Word now, as Jesus says quite unmistakeably in Matt. 15.6 - "For the sake of your tradition you have made void τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ". There are various readings here, both νόμος and ἐντολή are also found in different MSS. The fact is interesting and probably not difficult to explain. Matthew is here editing Mk. 7.5-15. In Mk. 7.6-9 Mark lets Jesus denounce the Jews' abandonment of the command of God (2), and the assumption of religious practices of using the Law for self-justification, and then says in v. 13, "thus making void τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ through your tradition which you pass on." It is probable that Matthew, who has a very considerable interest in the Law, reading this passage and being struck by its insistence on the Command of God in his Law, himself preferred to use νόμος meaning that which God sent to Israel to give his people true life (cf. Matt. 7.12; 19.17). Later redactors, however, possibly substituted λόγος in some texts in harmony with Mk. 7.13. λόγος here is not quite "the divinely inspired pentateuch" (3), but rather "the mind of God made known in his Law" (4). We may say,

(1) Kittel, p. 111/33.

(2) "The command of God is taken to be the underlying principle of all creaturely being. It is an ever present element in the Word of God, and the biblical testimony to it is co-extensive with its testimony to the Word." Whitehouse, TWB, p. 49, cf. also p. 50.

(3) McNeile, p. 24

(4) Taylor, p. 341

therefore, that in Mk. 7.13 **λόγος** is used as a designation of the Old Testament, or rather of the Word which God speaks in the Old Testament. We may now consider Mk. 12.24 "you know neither **τὰς γραφὰς** nor **τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ θεοῦ**": this refers to the resurrection life, and means they are ignorant of God's "power to overcome death and bestow the gift of life" (1) because they do not hear God's Word in the scriptures.

The words **λόγος** and **ῥῆμα** do of course refer to the words of the Old Testament in their ordinary meaning, e.g. the 'words' of a prophet or of a book thus Lk. 3.4; Jn. 12.38; Rom. 4.23; Acts 15.15; Heb. 12.9. More important - **λόγος** is also used for the message of the Old Testament (2 Pet. 1. 19) or certain promises in the Old Testament awaiting fulfillment (Rom. 9.9; 1 Cor. 15.54) or for the summary of the commandments (Rom. 13.9; Gal. 5.14). Yet **λόγος** is used for the Word of God actually spoken by God to the prophets (Jn. 10.35; Rom. 9.6), spoken by God in the creation of the world (2 Pet. 3,5-7; cf. Heb. 11.3, **ῥῆμα** ), and spoken by God in the Law, Heb. 2.2, cf. 7.28. We might have expected among a group of sayings such as this to meet the common Old Testament phrase " **ὁ λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου** ", but in fact we do not. As Kittel shows, however, we do find **λέγει** used with **Κυρίως** actually within Old Testament quotations (e.g. Rom. 12.19; 14.11; 1 Cor. 14.21; 2 Cor. 6.17; Heb. 8.8; 10.16; Rev. 1.8) and on two occasions as the introduction (1) Taylor , p. 483.

to two quotations (Matt. 1.22, 2.15) (1).

It is worth noting that the subtitle of Dodd's book, According to the Scriptures, is "The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology", for it is the case that the only reason the church read the scriptures was because it heard in them the witness borne to the Christ who had now come. This is seen clearly at such places as Acts 3.24; 18.28; Rom. 1.2 or in John where Jesus says, "The Father who has sent me **μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ ἐμοῦ**. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen; and you do not have **τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ** abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom he has sent. You search **τὰς γραφάς** because in them you think you have eternal life; and it is they that **μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ** ; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." (Jn. 5.37-40). It seems fairly clear that **μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ ἐμοῦ** is to be understood along with **μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ** (2), and the **λόγος** which the Jews never heard in the scriptures, they do not perceive in Jesus either, and these are one and the same **λόγος** . This particular point is emphasised by the quotations from Hebrews in list 6 where the pre-existent Christ is regarded as the author of the Old Testament quotations, and the many other references in list 7 where it is asserted that God speaks in the Old Testament. Indeed Heb. 1.1 ff emphasises

(1) Kittel, p. 113/12

(2) as against Barrett, ad loc., but cf. Lagrange, Jean, p. 152, "le contexte suivant montre bien qu'il (le témoignage du Père) s'agit des Ecritures (Schanz, Zahn, et apres Cyr.)"

strongly the unity of God's Word. We have seen how the New Testament conceives of God's Word in creation, in the Law, in Prophecy and also in Christian preaching (1) as *λόγος*, and this unity is held firmly together and ultimately explicated (not only by John 1.14, but also) by the *λαλεῖν* of Heb. 1. 1ff - this is one Word, God's Word to his world, there is "a continuity and unity of the salvatory events (heilsge<sup>c</sup>schichtlichen Geschehens) from the *προφῆται* to the *ὁίος* " (2). Ultimately it must be said that it is only because the church met *ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ* in the person of Jesus Christ that they were able to hear, and become interested in listening to *ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ* in the scriptures of the Old Testament.

In this second half of the chapter an attempt is made to discuss the collection of books called the New Testament in terms of the theology of the New Testament, it is, therefore, not strictly a New Testament study but an attempt to draw from the New Testament certain lines of thought to give direction to answering the question about how we should approach the Bible as a whole. In this way we move towards the strictly dogmatic nature of chapter seven.

We have seen that the early church understood God to speak His Word to them through the Old Testament scriptures,

- (1) Kittel, in fact, denies the certainty of being able to decide if the Old Testament Word or the preaching is being referred to in Heb. 4.12, and Eph. 6.17, (Kittel, p. 113/29 ff. and n. 184).
- (2) Kittel, 113/37 .

and that it regarded the scriptures as pointing to their fulfillment in Christ, the Word made Flesh. We have also seen that they understood God to speak His Word through the preaching of the Gospel, whose function was also to point to Christ by proclaiming the great events of his life. The function of the apostles was the preaching of Jesus Christ - and that is precisely the function of their writings, the New Testament - they are the kerygma in written form.

In his essay on *Παράδοσις* (1) Cullmann suggests that the apostles are 'middle-men' between Jesus and the later church, and "the united testimony of the Apostles together constitutes the Christian paradosis, in which the Kurios himself is at work" (2). This tradition of the apostles, is however, quite different from that of the Rabbis, it is not a fixed body of material but is the work which occurs in the witness of the apostles, and this work is not men's action at all but is the action of the Holy Spirit as Vicarius Christi (Jn. 16.13) (3). Cullmann shows that this witness of the apostles is the foundation of the church, which is dependent upon that apostolate. Hoskyns puts the matter well in the Introduction to his Fourth Gospel,

"There was a place where the glory of the Word of God became luminous, a time when the Word of Life became almost

(1) Cullman, Church, pp. 59-104.

(2) Cullman, Church, p. 68.

(3) *ibid.* p. 71.

transparent. There were men who saw flesh, who with their ears heard words, and with their eyes saw deeds done, and who with their hands handled Him who spake the words and did the deeds (p. 87) ... these men bore witness (p.88) ... their witness ... is authority (p. 91) ".

Only the Apostle witnesses from revelation and not from men (1).

The witness of the church is therefore a derived witness dependent upon the witness of the apostles (Jn. 17.20).

"The authoritative witness of the original disciples", writes Hoskyns, "of the strictly apostolic 'we', governs the whole edifice of the Christian community and alone is able to bring into being the authoritative first person plural of the general body of Christians. The church that authoritatively confronts the world must first have been confronted and created by the witness and apprehension of the apostles" (2). Now "as long as it is available the living voice of the apostles and those who consorted with them would be preferred to the writings" (3), but after the period of the voice of the living apostles their witness is written.

C.H. Dodd in his important book The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments, outlined the content of the apostolic preaching, and explained how it underlay the writing of the whole of the New Testament (4). In brief the outline of the

(1) Cullmann, Church, p. 78 f.

(2) Hoskyns, F.G. p. 91.

(3) McNeile, Introduction, p. 312.

(4) cf. also Dodd, New Testament Studies, p. 1 ff.

kerygma is (a) the event of Jesus Christ, (b) the response to this event required from the world, (c) the final judgement of the world by Jesus Christ. In the New Testament the gospels tend to emphasise (a), the epistles (b), and the Revelation (c) - but they each have the whole of the kerygma underlying them, the object of the whole of the New Testament is to proclaim the gospel, only now in writing. Irenaeus expresses the idea quite simply: "we learned the plan of our salvation from no others than from those through whom the gospel came to us. They first preached it abroad, and then later by the will of God handed it down to us in writings" (1), more particularly he writes of the third evangelist, "Luke, the follower of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel as it was preached by him" (2). That this is what the New Testament is, is generally agreed by the majority of modern scholars, though it is likely that they are indebted to Dodd. Barrett writes, "the gospels as they now stand were written under the influence of a 'high' Christology and in the interests of a thoroughly dogmatic church kerygma" (3); with this Bultmann (4), Friedrich (5), T.W. Manson (6), Richardson (7)

- (1) Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, 1; cited from The Early Christian Fathers Ed. C.C. Richardson, (London, 1953), p.370.
- (2) Irenaeus, ibid.
- (3) Barrett, H.S.G.T., p. 118, cf. p. 15.
- (4) Bultmann, Theology I, p. 86.
- (5) Friedrich, T.W.N.T., II, p. 733 f.
- (6) Manson, Sayings, p. 9.
- (7) Richardson, Introduction, p. 22 f.

Sparks (1) and Schniewind (2) - to cite only a few - all agree. (3).

It is because the kerygma is the basis of the New Testament that these books were admitted into the canon. By the time of Papias it was becoming clear that the accretions to the oral tradition had no value - the apocryphal gospels showed that the  $\phi\omega\nu\eta\ \zeta\omega\sigma\alpha$  was quite useless - "the teaching office of the church in itself did not suffice to preserve the purity of the gospel" (4). Heresies "led the church writers to define more clearly those (writings) which early tradition had handed down as truly apostolic" (5). In fixing the canon the church emphasised the constitutive nature of the apostolic witness (6). Ramsey puts the matter quite exactly when he writes, "the church is not 'over' the Holy Scriptures, but 'under' them, in the sense that the process of canonization was not one whereby the church conferred

- (1) Sparks, The Formation of the New Testament, (London, 1952), pp. 101 f.
- (2) Schniewind, Kerygma and Myth, Ed. Bartsch, (Eng.Tr., London 1953) pp. 68, 91.
- (3) It would take too long to discuss here the objections raised by D.E. Nineham in Studies in the Gospels, pp. 223-240. His main objection is that (a) the speeches in Acts could be modelled on the framework of Luke's gospel, (b) would the early church have wanted to preserve such a skeleton outline of Jesus' ministry? We may credit Luke with a less cavalier attitude to history, and also think that the message which the apostles proclaimed was in fact more important and formative than the gospel lection at the eucharist. This is, however, a very fine essay, and we can do little more than mention it here. C.F. Evans has also questioned Dodd's approach to the speeches in Acts in an article in J.T.S. April, 1956, pp. 25-41, where he questions the existence of a single kerygma, preferring to think there are several kerygmata.
- (4) Cullmann, Church, p. 90.
- (5) McNeile, Introduction, p. 340.
- (6) McNeile, Introduction, p. 372 - 'the survival of the fittest'.



authority on the books, but one whereby the church acknowledged them to possess authority. And why? The books were recognised as giving the witness of the Apostles to the life, teaching, death and resurrection of the Lord, and the interpretation by the apostles of these events. To that apostolic authority the church must ever bow." (1) From here we may well proceed to suggest that the Word which was heard in the preaching of the apostles, may now be heard in their written preaching - the New Testament. This procedure is "justifiable in so far as the New Testament preserves the original apostolic witness to Jesus. The apostolic authorship of many books of the New Testament has been called in question by criticism. Yet even where those questionings are justified it remains true that the doubtful writings are the "work of those who, though belonging to a later generation, have been so completely created by the apostolic witness that they are veritably carried across into the company of the original disciples of Jesus and invested with the authority of their mission" (Hoskyns, Fourth Gospel, i, 100 f.) The New Testament, as preserving the witness of the apostles, is like the Old Testament as preserving the witness of Moses and the prophets, the Word of God. But it is this in a secondary, derivative sense. The Word of God in a primary sense is Jesus Christ. To Him both Old and New Testaments bear witness." ... "through the Bible man meets face to face with Jesus Christ. God stoops down, condescends to use the Bible as the means of speaking his Word." (2).

(1) Ramsey, Lambeth, 2.5.

(2) Fuller, Word, pp. 270, 271.

Chapter Seven

In this short essay a precis is given of a part of Karl Barth's exposition of the doctrine of the Word of God. It is in Chapter I of his Dogmatics that Barth expounds this subject most concisely, and it is of paragraphs 4 and 5 of that chapter that a precis is given here.

The conclusion of Barth's introductory discussion of the function of dogmatics is that the basis and final criterion of all theological work must be the Word of God. We are, therefore, dealing with a topic which is of prime importance for the understanding of Barth, and without an appreciation of this important matter his work will scarcely be understood. Since, however, Barth lets the Word of God be the basis of his whole work, for a full account of his teaching on this subject we should have to refer to the whole of his Dogmatics - that is obviously not possible here. Nor even do we refer to Chapter 2 where Barth discusses the revelation of God as the revelation of the Trinity (I.1 pp. 339-560), the incarnation of the Word (I,2, pp. 1-202), and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (I.2 pp. 203-454). We also have to leave out of account the two very important chapters with which the prolegomena close, namely that on Holy Scripture: (I.2 pp. 457-740), and the proclamation of the church (I.2 743-884). There is, however, much worth considering in the two paragraphs selected.

Barth begins by distinguishing different ways in which we talk about God. We talk about God when we pray to Him, when we praise Him, and when we confess our faith in Him - but these are ways of talking to God, not of talking to men about Him. Only preaching, the real desire to speak the Word of God, is the proper way of talking to men about God. Also, neither the church's actions of love to non-Christians, nor even church instruction can strictly be called preaching, though they both presuppose a hearing of God's Word. The same is true for theology itself which also is not preaching, though preaching "is its presupposition, its raw material and its practical goal (but) not its content or its task" (55) (1).

And yet since it is GOD's Word that we are speaking about we must confess that he may make any of these ways of talking about him - prayer, praise, confession - to become His Word if he so chooses where and when it seems fit to Him - He is not restricted by our intention to preach his Word (58), indeed "God may speak to us through Russian Communism or a flute concerto, a blossoming shrub or a dead dog, (and) we shall do well to listen to Him if he does so" (60), but our primary concern here is not what God can do, so much as what he has commanded us to do. Our task is to set before men (obviously in our whole lives, but especially) by the appointed means of sermon and sacrament God's demand upon them. Yet to carry out this awesome task

(1) Here and subsequently when only page numbers are given, the reference is to I.1. In general the English text is paraphrased rather than quoted, since - out of its context at least - the style of the English is sometimes difficult to follow.

we have only human words at our disposal, and it is as a check upon the natural fallibility of our words that dogmatics exists. If we are to obey God we must preach His Word; if we are to preach His Word truly we must call to our aid dogmatics to see that what we say is correct - dogmatics is the handmaid of preaching. It is this particular way of talking about God - the preaching of His Word - which is the Word of God.

#### The Word of God in its Threefold Form.

Barth deals first not with the revelation of the Word in Jesus Christ, then scripture, then preaching as is usually done, but starts where men are - with the preaching of the Word. He emphasises first that God's Word is spoken by Him from outside the natural order of creation, and is, therefore, not something explorable by the scientific method (as e.g. are the Biblical texts) nor by aesthetic appreciation (and Barth does not belittle either of these human activities - indeed in their proper place he is most appreciative of them (1)). God's Word originates from GOD - "let none think God's Word cometh to the earth of man's device. If it is to be God's Word it must be sent ... For 'tis a vast difference 'twixt the Word that is sent from heaven and that which of my own choice and device I invent ... therefore must we learn to

(1) cf. the essay on W.A. Mozart in Religion and Culture, ed. Leibrecht, London, 1959.

base our blessedness soundly upon the power of God's Word and not upon our device or opinion" (Luther, cited 101). Of course if anyone is going to hear this Word it must enter the empirical human world, but the point is we only have it because it gives itself to us not because we have any hold over it in any way - thus Müller, "preaching is distinctly not the handing down of revelation, but it is an indication that revelation is taking place" (cited 103). While, therefore, the Word of God by using human words actually enters into the empirical order of creation and becomes the object of human perception, it is not only the object of human perception; and while it is this, it is not primarily this, but primarily it is something OTHER. Although preaching is open to the same criticisms as is other human speech, fundamentally the Word of God may not be judged since man is never in a satisfactory position to do this, instead the Word of God is itself the Judge (104). The decisive thing about preaching is that here God acts, God speaks in these thoroughly human words, and once again Barth insists on the real humanity of these words by negatively referring to the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation in the Eucharist - the words of a sermon are not 'transubstantiated' into God's Word (105-6). In real preaching the use of human words to describe God "is not set aside, but rather exalted", for man's words become the place "in which and through which

God Himself speaks about Himself" (106).

When we preach we speak 'in recollection' of the Biblical witness. Recollection, anamnesis, memoria is a concept more often associated with the doctrine of the eucharist in Anglican theology, and this association is helpful when it comes to understanding the relationship in Barth's thought between the preaching of God's Word and the reading of the Bible. What is this recollection? Is it the 'memoria' of Augustine? Augustine, after searching long for the 'vita beata', or for God concluded "nimirum habemus eam nescio quomodo ... neque enim amaremus eam nisi nossemus" (112) indeed the truth of the matter seemed to be "et ecce intus eras et ego foris"(112); does the recollection of God's revelation mean therefore the recollection of a long unused but essential part of man's being? Is God in fact immanent in this way in the church, or the church's ministry? Since God is free this most certainly could have been the case, but in practice this is not what God in His freedom chose to do. The church is not herself "the fountain of the divine Word" (112), she does not believe that it is in "the hidden depths of her own existence" (113), that she will find her commission. No, the church looks to her Lord, to Jesus Christ, who, it is true, "possesses the church in Himself, but not the church in herself" (113). It is just at this point that Barth begins to discuss the question of Holy Scripture, for he parallels the

relationship between Jesus Christ (the Head) and his church (the body) with the relationship between the canon of scripture and preaching. The church may not preach just anything she likes, but instead, by acknowledging the canon, she recognises that this record of past events "composed of definite texts is her directions for work, her marching orders, with which not only her preaching but she herself also stands or falls" (114). Actually both scripture and preaching are of the same genus: scripture is the written record of what men in the past have preached, "Jeremiah and Paul at the beginning - the preacher of the Gospel today" are the two ends" of one and the same series" (114). The nature of the succession between the canon and the church is the apostolate, but this does not mean the episcopacy, in fact it means the regulative and constitutive written canon of scripture, to which "the church must ever bow" (1), for "the Bible constitutes itself the canon. It is the canon because it has imposed itself as such upon the church and invariably does so".

In the canon we may hear the promise that God will reveal Himself to us again. The promise of God is Emmanuel - i.e. that God will be with us, that He will be on our side. To us the Bible may become the Word of God in the same way that preaching may, for although the Bible also is composed of

(1) A.M. Ramsey, Lambeth, 2.5.

human fallible words (as is preaching) yet because of what it witnesses to God makes it to be His Word (1). Therefore when the church preaches it preaches upon the recollection of the past revelation which is declared in the Bible, but not "on the basis of an automatic conjuring up of Christ's presence (as if he were the djin who must perforce come at Aladdin's summons) but according to His sovereignty, in which he has freely bound himself to his gospel and to His church" (Parker, p.190). "The Bible grips us", writes Barth, "therefore because we become reminded this recollection is achieved ... that is grace and not our work," (123). Barth emphasises the humanity of the Biblical texts by refuting the suggestion of the Lutheran Hollaz that the Bible is like a seed in the ground which always retains its inner 'potentia' however barren the soil may be, the words of the Bible are completely human words, and God's Word is GOD'S Word - "the Hebrew and Greek letters are merely an outward form, the reality behind them is the Word of God" (Revelation, p.223). The promise of revelation heard in preaching is founded upon the witness to a past revelation declared in the Bible, to witness "means to point in a definite direction beyond oneself to something else" (125). To that 'something else' we now turn.

(1) cf. "In the Bible the church found its rule of life. It had to decide for itself what it should choose as its canon ... the Early Church did not despise the wisdom of the world. The small difference which made it necessary for such a modest writer as the author of the Epistle to James to be accepted as canonical and not a great writer such as Plato, was simply that the Epistle of James bears direct witness, clearly and simply, to Jesus Christ". (Revelation, p.220).



"In calling Holy Scripture the Word of God ... we mean by it Holy Scripture as the witness of the prophets and apostles to this one Word of God, to Jesus the man out of Israel, who is God's Christ, our Lord and King in eternity. And in confessing this, in venturing to call the church's proclamation God's Word, we must be understood to mean the proclamation of Jesus Christ, of Him who is True God and True Man for our Good." (Dogmatics in Outline, p. 17). It is to this man that the Bible witnesses, and Barth clarifies the nature of the biblical writers and the nature of the incarnation by referring to Kierkegaard's "difference between an apostle and a genius" (126). The biblical writers are not people who have out of some remarkable capacity for religion or religious aesthetics conjured up the superlative religious system which by its quality is binding upon all men. Rather the biblical writers have been compelled by something which actually happened and which they heard and saw to write what they have written-'they had no choice' we might say. They must simply point, as does the "prodigious index finger" of John the Baptist in Gruenewald's crucifixion (126), to the wholly dominating event of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. This Word was spoken in the fullness of time, and becoming flesh in time made all other time relate to that moment. For this is the quite unique event in which God's "Word became flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood" (130). Whereas the Bible and preaching may only become the Word of God where and when

it seems fit to God that this should be so, of Jesus Christ we must say that there and then it did seem fit to God to reveal himself and speak His Word (135) (1). In Jesus Christ the promise is offered "wholly, radically and in a concentrated form" (Christmas, p. 40). Jesus Christ is revelation.

"The reality of revelation is just this ... the Word of God to which the Gospel witnesses, is (without detracting from His majesty and authority) a man ... the man of whom the Gospel speaks, is neither the 'symbol' nor the 'appearance' of God's Word to man, nor the highest expression of the Word in a relative sense, but the Word of God Himself, His one and only, His first and His last Word." (Christmas, p.11).

#### The Nature of the Word of God.

He would be a bold man who would attempt to define the nature of the Word of God (it is no easier in dogmatics than it is with the New Testament!) and Barth is properly cautious and quite aware of the danger of "becoming far too positive" (185 ff.) For with the Word of God we have to deal with the Word of GOD - and who would dare define GOD? "We can never by retrospect and so by anticipation fix what God is or what His Word is: He must always repeat that to us and always repeat it afresh" (149).

Barth looks at the nature of the Word of God from three points of view, first as God's Speech, then as God's

- (1) This is as much as Barth is concerned to say in this paragraph where he is still dealing mainly with the relationship between the Forms of the Word of God. For an exposition of Jn. 1.14 Barth waits until pp. 457-512, and I.2 pp. 1-202. Here he simply describes the three forms of the Word and asserts its unity in itself.

act, then as God's mystery.

First then we think of God's Word as God speaking - "God's Word means God speaks" (150). In saying this Barth means to stress the divine nature of the Word: the Word is spiritual - though of course we may only know it when it becomes a physical event. "The Word of God is primarily spiritual, and after that, and in that form, in this its spirituality, for the sake of it and without prejudice to it, also a corporeal or natural event" (152). God speaking is God communicating with human reason - i.e. this Word is a rational event not an irrational event. Speech implies hearing - i.e. obeying. What we obey when we hear this Word is the truth contained therein. This is quite unlike human, fallen and therefore abnormal speech, which is why Barth asserts the divinity of the Word. Thus when God speaks, His whole self is in this speaking, and in this act he confronts man with Himself so that man has to decide for or against Him. From here Barth proceeds to discuss the personal nature of the Word. Here again Barth stresses the divinity of the Word: it is not 'a truth', nor is it 'something objective', but rather it is "the objective because it is the subjective, namely God's subjective," and it is "the truth because it is God's person speaking" (155). Thus the Word is not something simply theoretical or potential but something which actually happens, this is what Barth means when he describes it as "fulfilled

reality", or when he says "God always utters a "concretissimum" (155) - God does not speak some thing, e.g. a profound truth, He speaks Himself, and reveals Himself. Supremely this is seen in the third form of the Word discussed above, namely Jesus Christ, for "God's Word is God's Son" (157). "Precisely in his Word God is a person" (157) for there God comes to us and in his freedom will come to us again and again. Looking at the man-ward side of God's Word, Barth insists that God speaks for a purpose - He does not, as it were, speak for the sake of speaking, he speaks because of us, and he particularly addresses us men in His Word. "Every (ordinary, human) word has in view, in some sense or other, the obedient response of other persons ... (similarly) God wants our interest, He wants us to listen, He wants to call us to decision, He wants us to obey His Word" (Revelation, p. 214). We are the reason why God speaks, but we are always the object in the speaking, we never have control over the Word. God's Word is a 'concretissimum' just in this, that "to every man from time to time it has something quite special to say, something which comes straight home to him, and only to him in that way" (159). When God speaks to us, He comes Himself restoring the true relationship between us, and promising us our future in Him. (158-60).

When God speaks He acts. In 1946, in the ruins of Bonn, Barth spoke these words: "This centre is the Word

of the act or the act of the Word. I greatly desire to make it clear to you, that in this centre of Christian faith the whole contrast, so current among us, between word and work, between knowing and living, ceases to have any meaning. But the Word, the Logos, is actually the work, the ergon, as well; the verbum is also the opus. Where God and this centre of our faith are involved, those differences which seem so interesting and important to us become not just superfluous but silly. It is the truth of the real or the reality of the true which here enters the field: God speaks, God acts, God is in the midst. The very Word with which we are here concerned is an act, this act, which as such is the Word, is Revelation." (Dogmatics in Outline, p. 67). In I.1 Barth explains this in three ways, and first he uses the phrase (clumsy in English) "contingent contemporaneity" (164). To explain this he recalls again the three times of God's word, the incarnation, the apostolate (scripture) and the preaching of the church: these are quite different times each with its own peculiarity, but when a sermon is preached from the basis of the biblical witness then these three times become contemporary, because God speaks. This contemporaneity, however, is the work of God and not the church: the church does not effect this contemporaneity by reflecting upon the Bible and trying to make these men

contemporary with itself, such an action is futile, for it is not a matter of man's historical understanding, it is a matter of God acting. "Where the Word of God is heard and proclaimed, something happens which in spite of all interpretative skill cannot be brought about by interpretative skill" (170). We are here concerned with the way in which what happened there and then in Jesus Christ may be relevant and helpful for us here and now, and this is God's work. Secondly God's Word as God's Act means its "power to rule" (170). When man hears God's Word he is there called out of himself and claimed as God's property, but in this calling he experiences the inherent judgement of God's Word, because man is called not on account of any innate worth on his part, but only because of grace on God's. What applies to the individual man applies equally to the world as a whole, God's Word governs and alters the life of the world, i.e. history, "the Word of God in the highest sense makes history" (163). When God speaks something decisive happens, the Incarnation changed the world - God claimed it, in its totality, for himself - "here Barth voices his (oft-reiterated) admonition not to take 'secularism' and 'worldliness' too seriously, and at any rate not to attach as much importance to man's unbelief as to God's grace." (Weber, p. 28). The Word of God is Lord. Thirdly God's Word is a decision - on the part of God of course! GOD chooses, decides to help US! This is "a decision which is independent of all

subjective attitudes towards it" (Revelation, p. 235), and since it comes from God, it is, like God, A SE. This lays due emphasis upon the possibility of this Word being spoken remaining only with God, but we are not to continue and think that (since God is free) it is the mere potentiality of this speaking which is important. What is important is that God has used his freedom, he has decided and he has spoken. The significance of these three points is that (a) the Word of God is not a reality in the general human sense of predictable reality but is only a reality suo modo, sua libertate, sua misericordia (180). (b) God's speaking is a calling of one or more people together with the inevitable denunciation and rejection of all that is evil in those who are called. (c) We have the paradox that although the decision for faith or disobedience is man's own responsible decision, man is conditioned in his choice by the Word spoken to him. This last point is explained more carefully in the last part of the next section - the Spirituality of the Word.

Barth begins this final part with a serious warning to all whose task it is to study, write and talk about what we understand about God - and a warning especially pertinent to those who write theses upon the Doctrine of the Word of God! Are we, he asks, able by our study and careful thinking to exercise any mastery over God's Word?

Do we come to know God's Word by "hard work"? (184). Ever to be able to think this would mean complete ignorance of God's Word, for here we have to do with GOD's Word, GOD's act (184). It would be folly to assume that we could delimit the nature of the Word of God since to do so would require a participation in the otherness of God, who is sui generis (186). No, "God's Word is and always remains God's Word ... we could not utter one wretched syllable about the nature of the Word of God, if the Word of God had not been spoken to us as God's Word" (187). It is because we can only talk about how the Word of God is spoken to us and not about its essential nature that finally we can only speak of the mystery of God's speech.

First, God's Word is a mystery in its worldliness, for it is from one point of view at least, very similar to and part and parcel of human affairs. But although it is true that God's Word is revealed in earthly affairs it is also there veiled - it is manifested within fallen humanity, but in spite of fallen humanity. It is of the "very nature of revelation that the form in which it confronts us is relative and problematical" (Revelation, p.223). To study this particular area of fallen humanity by a science is often a useful and profitable undertaking, but the result will only be knowledge of that particular area and not of God's Word; to hear God's word there it is



necessary that God make himself known by his Spirit enabling us to hear His Word. But he does make himself known in our ordinary humanity! and this is the wonder of it all. "Revelation means the incarnation of the Word of God" (192) - this worldliness is necessary if men are to hear the Word at all. Revelation is to us men, and we are worldly and can only understand what is in human experience. If the Word of God were not to speak through our experience we could never know it;  $\delta$  λόγος had to become  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  if it was to save  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ . God veils himself in humanity, that humanity may receive this unveiling of Himself (I:2, pp.152 ff.)

Secondly God's speech is God's mystery in its "one-sidedness" (198). This means that we perceive the Word only either absolutely veiled or absolutely unveiled and we see the other (which can be either) by faith in the one we see. We see either the Divine content or the worldly form (200) and only by faith see them together in God. This is the two-fold movement of the Word - the unveiling in the veiling, and the veiling in the unveiling.

Thirdly God's speech is God's mystery in its spirituality. Even to be able to mention the term the Word of God means having known God's Word, and for this to be the case we have had to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. This means that we have to deal with "the way in which this and

that man is ... open and ready for the Word of God that he can hear it" (207), therefore the spirituality of God's language is the way "it belongs to the nature of the Word of God to be apprehensible by man" so that it is finally and ultimately itself the ground of this event" (207). We have here to clarify the connection between the Word and the Holy Spirit. "A pure teaching of the Word will take into account the Holy Spirit as the divine reality in which the Word is heard, just as a pure teaching of the Spirit of the Son will take into account the Word of God as the divine reality in which the Word is given to us" (1). The God who speaks to us is also the God who enables us to hear Him speaking, He who speaks His Word gives us faith - "The Lord through whose act the openness and readiness of man for the Word is true and real is not another God, but the one God in this way - and that is the Holy Spirit" (208). Thus we can in no way search for a method of hearing God's Word by delving into whatsoever depths of our human experience, the Word is God's Word, it comes from God's side, from the mystery who is God, therefore "hearing the Word of God is faith, while faith is the work of the Holy Spirit" (211).

"What is the nature of the Word of God? Answer: It is on our lips and in our hearts, in the mystery of the Spirit who is Lord." (212)

(1) K. Barth, From Rousseau to Ritschl, (Eng. Tr. by B. Cozens), London, 1959. p. 340.

Finally as we think back over the New Testament understanding of the Word of God, and the forceful reminder that Barth has given us of this central theme of the whole Bible, we may allow him to remind us also "of a story in the Old Testament. The Lord called Samual: 'Samuel, Samuel', and Eli told him that if he heard the call again he was to answer: 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' " (1).

O Almighty and everlasting God, who didst give to thine Apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and to preach thy Word: Grant, we beseech thee, unto thy Church, to love that Word which he believed, and both to preach and receive the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (2).

(1) Revelation, p. 240.

(2) Collect for St. Bartholomew's Day from the Book of Common Prayer, 1662.