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true he is called prince (*nasi*), but, as 37:24f show, this is not intended to deny that he is king. This is not the usage of 12:10 and 21:25 (see Vol. XXV, p. 194). Here, and in 44:3; 45:7; 46:2 the use of *nasi* is meant to stress that God's king will not obscure the kingship of God; he will represent, not misrepresent Him. 'My servant David' implies both the fulfilment of the promises of God to David and also that 'Great David's greater Son' would truly be a man after God's own heart. There is general agreement that we should read with LXX in v. 31, 'You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture'.

(To be continued)

## THE PROLOGUE TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL\*

(A Study of John 1: 1-18)

C. F. HOGG

What is the relation between the first eighteen verses of the Gospel according to John and the body of the book? The question may be answered in one of two ways: either that John wrote his story first and then, by way of introduction to it, deduced certain doctrinal conclusions therefrom, or, that he first wrote these conclusions, the fruit of long years of meditation on what he declares in a covering letter to be 'that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life' (1 Epistle 1:1), and thereafter, by relating certain words and actions of the Lord, justified what he had said concerning Him.

There is no essential difference between the two answers, nor is it possible to say which represents the order in which the Prologue and the Gospel were written. Nor does it matter, indeed, so long as it is recognized that a relationship does exist. One line of attack upon the authenticity of the Gospel is to assert

\* This article is taken from an early issue of *The Bible Student* at the suggestion of a subscriber, supported by our esteemed contributor, Prof. Bruce.

that no such relationship is discoverable, as, for example, in the words of a writer in a contemporary theological magazine: 'Seeing that an allusion is actually made to the creative activity of the Logos (the Word) in the Prologue, why is the Gospel itself utterly void of any expansion of the idea? We should have thought that it would have suited the purpose of the Evangelist to attribute to the Logos-Christ some references to His activity as God's agent in creation'. This assumption, however, is not in accordance with fact, for we *do find* just such references, implied in words He spoke and demonstrated in works He performed.

After the healing of the impotent man, in reply to the challenge of the Jews the Lord said to them, 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work'. The relation of the workings of the Father and those of the Son called for explanation, and this He immediately supplied: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He (the Father) doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner' (ch. 5:17, 19). Again, He said to them, 'He that sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these speak I unto (lit., into) the world . . . I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father taught Me, I speak these things . . . I do always the things that are pleasing to Him.' So intimate is the fellowship between the Father and the Son that He could say, 'I speak not from Myself: but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works' (ch. 8:26, 28, 29; ch. 14:10), thus declaring Himself to be the Father's Agent in speech and action. There is no exception in word or deed, all His words are His Father's; all His works are His Father's wrought through Him. Among the latter the recall of Lazarus to life has a strong claim to be reckoned a *creative* activity. He is careful that those who witness it should understand that He is not acting apart from His Father, He had already spoken with Him concerning it, and what He was about to do was 'for the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified thereby' (ch. 11:4, 40-44). He allows His light so to shine that men seeing His good works might glorify His Father in Heaven (Matt. 5:16).

The changing of water into wine and the feeding of the multitude on the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee are ample to substan-

tiate the statement of the Evangelist, 'all things come into existence (*ginomai*) through Him; and without Him not anything came into existence that has come into existence'. The perfect tense of the last occurrence of the verb accords well with the notion that 'in the beginning' the Word was the agent of God in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and not less so on the occasions recorded in this Gospel. When the wine, the bread, the fish were multiplied the ordinary processes of nature were syncopated. All intermediaries whereby the same results are annually secured, sun, cloud, rain, wind, ocean, earth, vine and corn, were eliminated. His creative energy acted directly; 'by the word of the Lord were the heavens made . . . He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast' (ch. 1:3; ch. 2:1-11; ch. 6:1-14; Ps. 33:6,9). The power of the Creator is adequate to His ends whatever the means He may please to use to bring them about. But in every case the Word is the agent; this is John's point; he had himself seen the creative energy of the Father—God—put forth through the Word—the Son—and therefore he declares that all, from the beginning, had been accomplished through (*dia*) Him.

The opening statement of the Gospel, '*in (the) beginning was the Word*', is authorized by ch. 8:58, 'Jesus said unto them: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was (came into being) I am.' That 'the Word was God . . . was in the beginning with God,' is certified by ch. 17:5, 'and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' Thus the Word is to be distinguished from God as the Father is distinguished from the Son (ch. 1:18), yet is the Word also to be identified with Him as sharing the incommunicable essence of deity. Hence the further statement, 'and the Word was God', is strongly suggestive of ch. 10:13 'I and the Father are one,' and of ch. 14:9, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' In the former passage 'one' is neuter, and must not be understood as meaning that the two are one Person, for though the nature is one the Persons are distinct. Their oneness of purpose and method in accomplishing that purpose expresses the oneness of essence in which the Word and God, the Son and the Father, have eternally subsisted. In ch. 14:9

the Son is the adequate expression of the character of the Father, and for the same reason. It is to be observed that the presence of the Greek article before Son and its absence before God forbids the rendering 'God was the Word'.

Comparing ch. 1:5 with ch. 12:35, where the same word occurs, it seems as though the meaning is that the darkness did not succeed in extinguishing the light. Again and again through the generations preceding the Incarnation the powers of evil attempted to destroy the line through which the promised Light (Isa. 49:6) was to come; again and again during the days of His flesh attempts were made to destroy Him (Matt. 2:13-18) and to divert Him (Matt. 16:22, 23) from the appointed path to the consummation of His purpose. But in vain! For the light was the life the Father had given Him to have in Himself (ch. 5:26). Passing for a space into the obscurity of the tomb the Light emerged to become the Light of the world.

At this point the Baptist is introduced. Why? Some have supposed a dislocation in the text, a favoured method in certain circles, of dealing with the New Testament generally. But this is just the place where the necessity for witness-bearing enters, where the transition is made from what the Word is to God absolutely, to what the Word became to men in incarnation.

It is not possible to give accurate expression in English to the meaning of verse 11, inasmuch as 'own' serves for both numbers, and all three genders, whereas the original distinguishes them. That the reference of 'His own (*hoi idioi*, masculine plural) received Him not' is to the Jews is clear, only of them could it be said that they were 'His own people'. He had 'become flesh,' that is, He had assumed manhood, of an Israelite mother who was in the line of David (Rom. 1:5; 9:5; 2 Tim. 2:8). It was to Israel 'the law was given through Moses,' and to Israel, 'in the fulness of the time,' the grace and the truth which the law had not produced among them (Rom. 8:3, 4) 'came through Jesus Christ.' The earlier phrase presents more difficulty, 'He came unto His own (*ta idia*, neuter plural) things.' In the other passages in which the words occur they are sufficiently comprehensive to cover possessions, home, interests, all, in fact, that goes to

make up life in this world. Peter claimed to have left all his interests to follow the Lord, Who declared that they would all return thereto when the hour of His extremity had come. John not merely provided Mary with shelter, he made her a sharer in all that he had (Luke 18:28; John 16:32; 19:27). What were the 'things' to which the Lord came, and which were denied Him? Possessions, or hereditaments, would be a better word to supply. What, then, did He inherit, and from whom? In virtue of His descent from Abraham (Gen. 17:2) through Isaac (Gen. 26:3) and Jacob (Gen. 35:11, 12) the Land was the inheritance of the Messiah (Ps. 109: 9-12). In virtue of His descent from David the Throne was His (2 Sam. 7:16; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:30). According to Malachi the Temple, too, was His (Mal. 3:1). These, at least, are included in 'His own' possessions, which the trustees of the inheritance first refused to the heir and then put Him to death. This He told them plainly they would do, and so plainly did He tell them, albeit in the form of a parable, that they readily perceived His meaning, resented it, and proceeded to confirm His insight into their purpose (Matt. 21:33-46).

What is meant by giving to certain persons 'the right to become children of God'? It cannot mean, as at first sight it seems to mean, an option which might, or might not, be exercised, for those to whom it is given have already believed on His Name. Believing does not qualify them for a further step that will usher them into the status of children of God; in believing they actually become such; *they are born anew* (ch. 3:5-14). In contrast with 'His own' who 'received Him not,' these have become 'His own' (*hoi idioi*, ch. 13:1) in a new way and in a new sense. The thought seems to be that He had taken away everything that hindered their becoming children of God. 'Right' represents, *exousia*, which means 'to be free of restraint', it is defined by Abbott-Smith as 'liberty to act.' The hindrance lay in our sins, and 'He was manifested to take away sins'; at the Cross He 'put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself' (1 John 3:5; Heb. 9:26).

There He removed the guilt that made access to a righteous God impossible, and there He removed the defilement that made impossible access to a holy God. To make men children of God

is the work of the Holy Spirit acting on them through His word, and in response to faith in Christ (ch. 3:5; cp. Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23). For not the Holy Spirit but Christ is the object of faith; forgiveness and the new birth are coincident experiences to him that receives Christ, even to them that believe on His Name.

A unique feature of verse 13 is that whereas there is no difference in reading among known Greek manuscripts, all of which have the verb (*gennaō*) in the plural number, 'were born', two very early Christian writers assert that it should be singular, 'was born'. These are Irenæus, in the second century, and Tertullian, in the early third. If they were right in saying that the original was so written the meaning of the verse would be entirely changed, for then we should read 'to them that believe on His Name Who was born;' that is, the statements that follow would refer not to the children of God but to the Lord. The difficulty of the present text is obvious. It does not seem necessary to say that the new birth, by which it is quite clear that a spiritual experience is intended, is not brought about by a natural process, there is no danger of any reader misunderstanding a 'birth from above' to be the result of the human function here alluded to. But if the singular is read all is plain; the reference is to the circumstances of the Lord's birth, and to current attacks made upon the veracity of Mary and Joseph in their testimony (and there was no other available) that He was born of a virgin mother. He was not born of 'bloods', (the Greek is plural, not singular) that is, in the ordinary course of the mutuality of the marriage relationship: 'nor of the will of the flesh', that is, of mutual intercourse between unmarried persons: 'nor of the will of (a) man' (*anēr*, man as distinguished from woman) that is, as the result of violence, rape\*: 'but of God', that is, by His will and by the act of His Holy Spirit, was set in motion in the womb of the Virgin that natural process in which 'the Word became flesh'. These three statements meet the reflections made by early traducers upon the witness of His mother and of His (legal) father, and so upon the claim of the Lord to be the Son of God. It may well be that this

\*This is the rabbinical account. The name of a Roman soldier is mentioned in this connection by early antagonists of the faith.

insinuation is implied in the words of ch. 8:41, 'we (emphatic) were not born of fornication', implying 'though you were'. And if these two writers are warranted in their assertions that the verb was originally written in the singular, then John does make unmistakable reference to the Virgin Birth. It will be of more than passing interest if one, or more, of the more ancient Greek manuscripts, which, in the providence of God, may shortly be expected to see the light, should confirm the testimony of Irenæus and Tertullian. In the meantime, however attractive this alternative to the accepted text may be, dogmatic assertion would be unjustifiable. None the less the possibility that it may be correct, should be borne in mind.

A passage somewhat similar in form is ch. 7:37, 38, where drinking of the living water that Christ gives is explained by the words 'he that believeth on Me', as in ch. 1:12 the 'receiver' of Christ is he that believes on His Name. But from whose inward parts does the living water flow? There is no Old Testament Scripture that speaks of a man as the source of salvation, nor indeed of any grace or blessing. Nor can it be said that the Lord meant that the believer is to be the channel through which what He provides should be supplied to others, for the word is *ek* (out of) not *dia* (through). The actual words of the quotation are not found in the Old Testament; there are, however, passages the general sense of which fully justifies it, but only if the Lord is understood as referring to Himself when He said 'out of His inward parts shall flow rivers of living water', for it is of His fulness we all receive, it is from Him that we are 'filled unto all the fulness of God', since it is 'the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell' (Eph. 3:19; Col. 1:19). Such passages are Psalm 36:8,9; Isaiah 12:3, and particularly, Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13. But no one of them could be taken as descriptive of the believer. The Lord alone is 'the fountain of living waters'.

*Verse 14.* The aorist, or 'point', tense suggests that the Transfiguration may have been in the mind of the writer. In that case when 'His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light', the glory was not assumed, put on as clothing is put on. In was the outward manifestation on that one



occasion of what had always been there. 'The veil, that is to say, His flesh' became translucent to the glory it normally concealed. This seems to provide the clue to the meaning of 'glory' (*doxa*) in some other passages. At Cana the Lord is said to have 'manifested His glory' at a marriage feast. This seems to mean not merely that He put forth His power there, but also that He displayed His character in rejoicing with them that rejoiced, and in saving them from threatening embarrassment. Indeed John never speaks of miracles, or powers, nor of wonders, as do the other evangelists, but always of signs; the Lord's works are significant of His character—they reveal Himself. When He heard of the sickness of Lazarus, and again when He stood by his grave (ch. 11:4, 40) He spoke of the opportunity afforded for the display of His own character and that of His Father, for the glory of the Father and of the Son is one glory. In that highly contrasted scene another aspect of His character was displayed in His sympathy with the sorrowing sisters. This would agree with Godet's definition, 'the display of His perfections in the view of His creatures', and with Hope Moulton's 'self-revelation'. How much better we know the Lord since we have seen Him in the house of sorrow and in the house of joy; no stranger in either, equally at home in both! Never did He do anything, never go anywhere out of place (*atopos*, Lk. 23:41). Wherever He went men 'beheld His glory,' His character made manifest in correspondence with His environment and with the need of the occasion.

How then is the comparison instituted in verse 14 to be understood? It is clear that a person cannot be compared with himself. In Rev. 1:13 'like unto the Son of Man' (A.V.) cannot be correct, for two reasons: there are no articles in the original, and these are always present where the Lord uses that title of Himself; and because it would not make sense to compare Him with Himself even if the other, and final, objection did not stand. The figure seen by John bearing all the weight of the glory he described, was, nevertheless, man and could, therefore, sympathize with the suffering folk to whom the message of the book was sent. In John 5:24, also, and in Rev. 14:14, where His qualification to judge, like His qualification to save, is seen in His community of

manhood with those He saves and judges, the articles are absent; these three are the only places where this is the case. In ch. 1:14 He cannot be compared with the only begotten Son of the Father—He is that Son. R.V. margin, therefore, better represents the original, 'an only begotten from a father'. The splendour of the Transfiguration was seen but once, and then only by the few with whom He refused to tabernacle (Lk 9:33) but there was a moral glory always visible to those among whom He did tabernacle and who had eyes to see it. In a family each child may reproduce some trait of his father's character, each, so to say, may reflect some ray of his father's glory. What then is to be expected of an only son but that he will display the character of his father in perfection? In the words, 'glory as of an only begotten of a father', the ideal case is stated. So is it with the only begotten Son of the Father; eternally the expression of God to the Universe brought into existence through Him, in His incarnation He became the manifestation to men of the character of God under the conditions in which men live. Hence His words to Philip, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' (ch. 14:9). Hence, too, John's words with which He brings the Prologue to an end, 'the Only begotten Son, which is (lit., Who exists, Who has His being, *ho ōn*) in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him'.

In Hebrews 1:2, 3 the same idea is expressed under the figure of the sun and its rays: 'God . . . hath . . . spoken unto us in (a) Son . . . Who is the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance'. The sun is known by its rays, and only so. There is nothing in those rays save that which proceeds from the sun; all the rays are necessary to a complete experience of what the sun is; yet there are more rays radiating from the sun than the human eye can perceive. So is the Son with the Father. God is Light, and the Light (1 John 1:5) is displayed in the Son, the Light of the world (ch. 8:12) that through Him all sentient beings might see God according to their creature capacity to bear the Beatific Vision.

*Verse 16.* The variety of ways in which the words 'grace for grace' (*charin anti charitos*) have been understood by expositors suggests that they have been found 'hard of interpretation'.

Among modern ingenious attempts to rectify the text of the Gospel it has been suggested that 'grace for law' may have been written originally. The value of the Prologue, however, does not lie in its obviousness. Better for the expositor to remain in a difficulty with a good conscience than get out of it with an uneasy one. But are the words so difficult as the variety of exegesis suggests? A. T. Robertson (*Grammar*, p. 1181) shows the way to a simple, and entirely satisfying understanding of the clause which, he says, 'is an explanatory addition introduced by *kai*'. Winer calls this use of *kai* 'epexegetic', and Abbott-Smith includes the verse under this caption. If *kai* is taken as merely copulative, or as ascensive, marking an advance on what precedes it, the resulting idea is that the believer receives from Christ's fulness, and that over and above what he so receives he also receives grace. Which, of course, is an impossible conception. 'His fulness' covers all the resources of God in Christ viewed as a whole. 'Grace for grace' is the fulness viewed as made available to meet the varying and ever recurring need for the believer.

*Anti* is 'the preposition of the scales': it has 'the idea of equivalence' (Hope Moulton); it 'answers' (Robertson). But in this case equivalent to what? To these writers the meaning is that fresh grace replaces exhausted grace; 'a new supply takes the place of the grace already bestowed as wave follows wave upon the shore'. Should we not rather look in *another direction* for the writer's intention, that is, toward *Christ*? Then the meaning would be that there is available to the believer grace answering to every grace manifested in his Lord. This assurance corresponds with our responsibility to follow Him, to love God and to love men as He loved His Father and as He loved us. How appalling the burden of such responsibility apart from the assurance that His resources, not merely in a general way, but in each particular, are at our disposal to enable us to please the Father as He pleased Him! It is by the continual use of *this grace* thus made available to us, that the purpose of God for the Christian, and indeed for Christ, is accomplished. For the Christian that he may be 'conformed to the image of His Son', for Christ that He may be 'the Firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. 8:29). In Him

'the fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. 5:22, 23) is seen in its ninefold perfection; it should, and it will, be seen growing thereto in those who name His Name, and in whom His Spirit dwells, 'for of His fulness we all receive, even grace answering to grace'.

*Verse 17.* Law is intended to induce a whole-some fear in men, and where there is a right sense of God such fear results. The writer of Hebrews (12:18-21) gives a vivid description of the effect upon Moses, and upon the Israelites, of the giving of the Law at Sinai. He 'did exceedingly fear and quake', and they 'could not endure that which was enjoined'.

*Grace* stands out in contrast. The word (*charis*) seems to have 'attractiveness' as its primary meaning; compare Luke 4:22 and Colossians 4:6 with Ecclesiastes 10:12, for example. As it shares its meaning with this word, it may also be related to the English word '*charm*'. When the Lord began to preach, 'the words of grace that proceeded out of His mouth' attracted the crowds to Him. Foreseeing the Cross He said, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself' (John 12:32). These words have been abundantly vindicated. In every generation, and in every clime where the Gospel has been preached, He has attracted men 'by His own glory and virtue' (2 Peter 1:3).