

ATHENA, SOPHIA AND THE LOGOS.

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THE re-discovery of the place which Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, occupied in primitive Christian thought as an antecessor to the more familiar Logos or Divine Reason, is an event of great theological importance. It gives us a clear perception of the starting-point from which the evolution of Christian doctrine proceeds, and an equally clear vision of the goal towards which it is tending. However much the intellectual road from Jerusalem to Nicæa may be crossed by other lines of speculation, the road itself is continuous and fairly straight. When the identification of Christ with the Wisdom of God has been made, and that Wisdom has been interpreted as Divinely foretold in the eighth chapter of Proverbs (and all the ancient theologians are agreed as to the assumed inspiration and infallibility of the Book of Proverbs), it is not difficult to see how the Prologue to St. John's Gospel came into being, nor how the Creeds, Nicene and other, were involved in the primitive identification. In our work on the *Origin of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel* we showed the probability that the Prologue itself was a re-casting of a Hymn in honour of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, and that this Hymn might be regarded as a versification of the eighth chapter of Proverbs with collateral influence from the seventh chapter of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the twenty-fourth chapter of the *Wisdom of Ben Sirach*.

It is evident that this hypothesis as to the Johannine origins opens the door for a number of other investigations. In the area of Christian thinking we shall be face to face with the question as to whether the identification of Jesus and Sophia is due to himself or to his immediate followers; in the area of pre-Christian thought we shall be obliged to ask whether the Divine Wisdom is a home-grown product of Judaism or whether it has been imported, and also whether, if a home-grown product, its growth has been affected by outside influences, say from

Egypt, Greece or Babylon. It will not be an easy task to resolve these and related problems.

We are not unaware, for instance, of the attempts that are being made, as by Professor Langdon recently, to find the fourth Gospel in Sumerian or Babylonian! If we do not at once plunge into the criticism of these or similar hypotheses, it is because we prefer an easier road, viz., that which leads to the unknown by way of the known. Our Wisdom and Logos documents are not thousands of years old: they are comprised as a group within the narrow compass of two or three centuries; and the age to which they belong is only nebulous because we ourselves are stupid. There is an abundance of material of every kind for criticism to occupy itself with, whether in history, philosophy or literature.

Our first task, following on the enquiry which put the Logos of St. John into its right place relatively to the Palestinian Wisdom, was to scrutinise more closely one particular section of the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*, in quest of such influences as might have operated on the side of Greek philosophy. It had been for a long time matter of recognised critical agreement that there were elements in the *Wisdom of Solomon* which could be described as Stoic, and these were especially numerous in the seventh chapter, in which Wisdom is treated to a number of epithets, which had a definitely Stoic flavour. She has a dictionary of her own but it is clearly a dictionary of philosophy, in which a Stoic teacher would see his own face in a glass and not very darkly. Wisdom was identified with the Primal Intelligence, the Divine Immanence, and the Universal Providence: and it was natural to the critics who only detected linguistic coincidences, to suggest that the Wisdom of the Apocryphal Writer was only the Logos of the Stoics in a Semitic dress.

At this point we took the matter up, and showed that there was a great deal more of fundamental Stoicism in the work than could be derived from the idea of the Logos: the writer was identifying Wisdom with God, not in a Semitic sense, but in the sense of the Greek Pantheon, which had been resolved into Zeus out of its normal multiplicity. The unification was, however, incomplete; for although Wisdom might be affirmed in terms of Unity (as the Being who is *One* and *can All*), the figures of Zeus and Athena were still on the screen; the pantheistic conception had not blended them: each could

be distinctly identified side by side with the other. The extension of Wisdom 'from marge to marge, valiantly and sweetly,' was shown to be Athena, viewed as the flashing rapidity of the æther, with whom Athena herself was identified (a bad piece of philology) by the Stoics. So that we were entitled to say

Wisdom is Zeus
and

Wisdom is Athena,

which leads us at once to the inclusive formula underlying the language of the Johannine *Prologue* that

Wisdom was God.

It is clear that if we have rightly derived the influences at work in the mind of the author of Ps. Solomon's Wisdom, so as to cast the shadow of Zeus and the shadow of Athena on the apocryphal page, that we cannot stop with that discovery : we must go on and test the matter further by asking whether there are any other traces of Greek gods in the document. The enquiry is particularly interesting as regards Athena, whose presence has certainly not hitherto been suspected in Jewish writings, for Athena is the Greek goddess of Wisdom, so that the equation between Athena and Wisdom was almost inevitable to the mind of a writer who had a moderate acquaintance with Greek culture, and was able to make parallels between the Hebrew and Greek religions. So we address ourselves to the search for further traces of Athena, or of the compound Zeus-Athena, in the *Wisdom of Solomon*.

As we remarked previously, there is no need for us to go down the Bagdad Railway in search of our goddess ; nor is it necessary for us to delve into the primitive strata of the history of religion among the Greeks. For instance, the question whether the birth of Athena, as represented by Pheidias on the eastern pediment of the Parthenon, was known to Homer, does not concern us ; it was certainly known all over the Greek world in the time of the composition of the writing which we are studying. It had its place in popular religion, and it is popular religion that expresses itself in Stoic teaching. Let us see if this popular philosophy and this popular religion have left any further marks on the *Wisdom of Solomon*.

In the eighteenth chapter we have a very vivid picture of the destruction of the first-born in Egypt at the time of the Exodus. The

writer of the book turned aside from his purely philosophical concepts in the seventh chapter, and his desire (as Solomon) to have this wondrous Wisdom for his affianced bride, and betook himself to the history of the Hebrew people, in order to show how that history was to be read as the deed of the Divine Wisdom and the panorama of the Divine Providence. This historical retrospect brought him, in due course, to the story of the Exodus, the plagues of Egypt and the great Deliverance. His description of the death of the first-born is as follows :—

ὁ παντοδύναμός σου λόγος ἀπ' οὐρανῶν ἐκ θρόνων βασιλείων,
ἀπότομος πολεμιστῆς εἰς μέσον τῆς ὀλεθρίας ἤλατο γῆς·
ξίφος ὃξὺ τὴν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐπιταγὴν σου φέρων·
καὶ στὰς ἐπλήρωσεν τὰ πάντα θανάτου·
καὶ οὐρανοῦ μὲν ἤπτετο, βεβήκει δ' ἐπὶ γῆς.

Sap. Sol. xviii., 15 sqq.

that is to say :—

“Thine all-powerful Logos leapt down from Heaven, from out the royal throne, a warrior severe, upon the doomed land. He bare the sharp sword of thy all-sincere appointment ; he stood and filled all things with death : he touched the heaven while walking on the earth.”

This very striking passage has naturally caught the attention of the critics : two points especially are emphasised : first, that Wisdom has here been replaced by the Logos ; second, that the whole passage is highly poetical in character.

Now with regard to the first point it is clear that, in some respect, the sequence of the interpretation of the Biblical incidents has been broken. Sophia, who has been engaged in miscellaneous acts of saving grace towards Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, etc., now seems to move to one side of the picture and to give place to the Logos, who appears as the destroying angel of the Exodus. But the displacement is only in appearance, for the expression

ὁ παντοδύναμός σου λόγος

taken with the description of Wisdom in c. 7 as a πνεῦμα παντοδύναμον and as one who πάντα δύναται, shows that the Logos is really the Wisdom after all, and that in the mind of the writer the Angel of Destruction is

ἡ παντοδύναμός σου Σοφία.

The Word has occupied the place of the Wisdom because it is none other than the Wisdom.

To this position, which implies that there was no sharp distinction between the two terms,¹ and that one is definitely reminiscent of the other, the objection arises that, since the Destroying Angel is spoken of in Warrior terms, as *πολεμιστής* and as bearing weapons of War, it was necessary that a masculine symbol should be employed, and that Sophia could not have been in the mind of the writer. The objection may, however, be at once met in the following manner.

The popular conception of Athena, is, to the Greek mind, precisely this warrior form. She was born *πολεμιστής*, she emerged from the brain of Zeus fully armed. In fact her military equipment appears to antedate her mental qualities. The oldest of her sanctuaries are military centres. For example, Farnell points out,² "Alalcomenae in Boetia, one of the oldest cities that cherished the worship, and that arose by means of it, is itself a name derived from Athena Ἀλαλκομένη, 'the helper in battle.'" "As a goddess of War she appears conspicuous in Homer and Hesiod, 'the dread goddess, the arouser of the battle, the leader of the host, who delighteth in the din of strife and in the contest.' It is she who marshals the ranks in company with Ares in the relief-work on the shield of Achilles."

And as to her appearance in full armour, with weapon in hand, and dancing the Pyrrhic war-dance, we have constant reference in the Greek poetic literature; this brings us to our second point, that the passage with the Logos as Destroying Angel is a poetical conception. We will assume, then, that the fully armed Sophia was the proper antecedent for an expression of the Destroying Angel, for she had military affinities, whereas the Logos had none. What do we learn, then, from the poetical structure of the passage? We see clearly that

¹ Grimm says the same (p. 363) "dem ebenso gut als der Untergang der Aegypter in rothen Meere (c. 10, 18) hätte auch das Sterben der Erstgeburt auf die Wirksamkeit der Sophia (mit welcher unter obiger Voraussetzung der Logos identisch wäre) zuruckgeführt werden können, da ja die Alexandrinische Lehre vom Logos oder der Sophia nicht in solche dogmatische Fesseln gezwängt war, dass ihre Anhänger in Ableitung alttestamentlicher Thatsachen von der Wirksamkeit jener göttlicher Wesen hätten einstimmig seyn müssen."

² *Cults of the Greek States*, I. 308.

we have more than merely Hebrew poetry before us : it is not a question of parallel stanzas, even if such should be involved and employed ; the terms used to describe the onslaught of the Avenger are borrowed from Greek poetry ; they are to be paralleled not merely from the Psalms or the Proverbs, but from Homer and Hesiod and Pindar.

It was Grimm who, in his valuable commentary on the *Wisdom of Solomon*, made this poetical substructure spring to light. He noticed the word ἄλλεσθαι used of the descending angel, and remarked that it was a classical word for the onslaught of the warrior : “ wird auch bei den Klassikern von kriegerischem Anläufen gebraucht : Hom. *Il.* xx. 353 ; xxi. 174.” Then he dropt his clue and went off to find the destroying angel in the first book of Chronicles (1 Chron. xxi. 16). But he noted a parallel to the Almighty Word, whose form reached from earth to heaven in the description of Eris in *Iliad*, iv. 443,

οὐρανῷ ἐστήριξε κάρη καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ βαίνει,

and the parallel form of Virgil's *Rumour*, of whom it is said that

“ Ingrediturque solo et caput inter nubila condit.”

That he was on the right track may be seen from the way in which later commentators absorb his quotations.¹ So we may return and pick up the thread which he let fall. Any Homeric scholar would be struck by the expression

εἰς μέσον τῆς ὀλεθρίας ἤλατο γῆς

especially when followed by ξίφος ὄξυν φέρων. He would recall the Homeric phrase so constantly recurring,

σὺν τεύχεσιν ἄλτο χάμαζε.

For the descent out of heaven, he would recall the flight of Thetis on her return from Olympus,

εἰς ἄλα ἄλτο βαθεῖαν ἀπ' αἰγλήεντος Ὀλύμπου.

For the sudden leap from a seated position, he would quote the god of the underworld,

δείσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ἄλτο καὶ ἴαχε

It is even possible that this repeated Homeric ἄλτο imagined to

¹ A closer parallel would be the Orphic fragments, where Zeus is described as follows :—

οὗτος γὰρ χαλκείον ἐς οὐρανὸν ἐστήρικται,
χρυσέφ, εἰνὶ θρόνῳ, γαίης δ' ἐπι ποσσὶ βέβηκε.

underlie the ἤλατο of our text, might furnish an emendation to Homer himself ; in *Iliad*, i. 194 Athena appears on the scene suddenly, to mitigate the wrath of Achilles : the text says,

Ἔλκετο δ' ἐκ κολλέοιο μέγα ξίφος · ἤλθε δ' Ἀθήνη
Οὐρανόθεν.

Who does not see that ἤλθεν is too tame a word for the motion of the intervening war goddess ; we expect, in connection with the sequent Οὐρανόθεν the phrase ἄλτο δ' Ἀθήνη : that would be an excellent parallel to the Biblical language.

Without venturing further on the critical audacity of the correction of the Homeric text, we can show from Homer himself that the proper terms to describe Athena's motion are as saltatory as those of the Biblical text. In *Iliad*, iv. 74, we have an actual descent of Athena from Olympus into the Greek camp. She flashes down like a falling star from the zenith,

τῶ εἰκυῖ ἤϊξεν ἐπὶ χθόνα Πάλλας Ἀθήνη
καδ' δ' ἔθορ' ἐς μέσσον.

Here we have all the necessary terms for illustrating our text, the sudden leap, the descent upon the earth, the appearance in the midst. Clearly it is Athena who, as Sophia, is the destroying Angel. The terms, which describe the flight of the goddess in her shining armour, become conventional in Greek poetry : we may compare Apollonius Rhodius,

ἦμος ὅτ' ἐκ πατρὸς κεφαλῆς θόρε παμφαίνουσα,
(*Argon.* iv., 1306).

and the Homeric *Hymn to Athena*, where again we have the full armour, the flying leap, the gleaming splendour,

τὴν αὐτὸς ἐγείνατο μητιέτα Ζεὺς,
Σεμνῆς ἐκ κεφαλῆς, πολεμῆϊα τεύχε' ἔχουσαν¹
Χρύσεια παμφανοῶντα . . .
ἣ δὲ πρόσθεν Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο
Ἔσσυμένως ὄρουσεν ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο καρήνου,
Σείσασ' ὄξυν ἄκοντα.

and we must not forget the great passage in Pindar,

ἀνίχ' Ἀφαιστου τέχναισιν
χαλκελάτῳ πελέκει πατέρος Ἀθαναία
κορυφᾶν κατ' ἄκραν
ἀνορούσαισ' ἀλάλαξεν ὑπερμακεῖ βοᾶ.

(*Ol.* vii. 35 sqq.).

¹ This is from Hesiod, *Theog.*, 945 who also makes Athena born as warrior.

The foregoing passages have doubtless affected the description of the Martial Athena which we find in Tzetzes' commentary on *Lycophron* :

Πάλλας δὲ ἢ Ἀθηνᾶ ἢ παρὰ τὸ πάλλειν ὄπλα,
πολεμικὴ γὰρ ἐν τῷ γεννᾶσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ
Διὸς κεφαλῆς ἐξέθορε τὰ ὄπλα κινουῖσα.

(Tzetzes in *Lyc.*, 355).

We certainly do not need to labour further the identification of Athena with the Destroying Angel in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. The Logos is Sophia and Sophia is Athena.

We now pass on to employ the result arrived at in the further elucidation of the text of our Apocryphal writer. We have shown that he has Olympus in his mind when he talks of Sophia ; and it has been seen that his conception of the Olympians is Stoic and Pantheistic.

We have shown elsewhere the way in which the Stoics employed etymological methods in order to escape from the anthropomorphisms of the popular theology. For instance in the passage just quoted from Tzetzes, Pallas is said to be so called from her brandishing her weapons (*πάλλειν*). But the Stoics go one further ; they say that the brandishing is really the vibration of the æther, which is itself Athena, so that the goddess and her armour are reduced to a single physical symbol. For example, in the Clementine writings, which are a storehouse of Stoic teaching, we are told that the æther is in ceaseless palpitation which begets intelligence, and is called on that account Pallas (*πάλλεσθαι*). *And this Pallas is the artist Wisdom*, by which the ethereal artificer made the world (see Clem. Hom. vi. 8). Thus Athena disappeared, and Sophia came on the scene, almost in Biblical terms.

The Stoics went again a step further in etymology ; they were not content with deducing Athena from the æther ; they tried to connect her with the conception of immortality and the bestowal of the same. Athena now is explained as *ἀθάνατος*. The Clementine writer knew the explanation. "Jove," he says, "from his head begat Sophia, who is called by the Greeks Athene, because of immortality (i.e. $\acute{\alpha} + \theta\nu\eta\sigma\kappa\omega = \text{'}\Delta\theta\eta\eta\eta\text{'}$) : and she is said to have formed and beautified the world by the mingling of the elements, because the All-Father created her by His Wisdom, and she is said to have been born of his very head and in the foremost rank" (Clem. Recog. x. 33). The passage is interesting on account of the equation between Athena

and Sophia, and the assignment of creative, or at least constructive powers to them both.

Turning, then, to the question of Athena as immortal and immortalising, we find it is one of the characteristics of the goddess to bestow the heavenly gift upon mortals.¹ Gruppe suggests² that this is one of her earliest functions and one upon which special emphasis was laid. Very good! now let us turn to Pseudo-Solomon and see what he says on the matter.

In his prayer for unity with the Divine Wisdom he says that

Through her *I shall attain immortality,*

And I shall leave an eternal remembrance to them that come after me.

(*Sap. Sol.* VIII. 13).

Again :—

These things I meditated with myself

And thought over them in my heart,

To wit, that *immortality* consists in *kinship with Wisdom.*

(*Sap. Sol.* VIII. 17).

It appears then that immortality is conferred by Wisdom in the thought of the writer, which is an excellent adaptation of the Greek mythological doctrine. Now let us take another parallel. It is well known that Athena was, to the Greeks, the patroness of the mechanical arts. She is known as *ἐργάνη*, the artisan. Weaving, for instance, she is the inventress of, and in her honour the Athenian maidens wove each year a new peplos for the goddess. But she was also closely connected with another Athenian art—that of ship-building. When the *Argo* was first planned and launched, she presided over the operations, so that the ship might even have been named after her: and certainly the building of a ship is as noble a conception as the weaving of a jacket. It is interesting to notice that our Solomon has a section of ship-building and sea-voyaging leading up to the case of the ark of Noah. He thinks that men venture on ship-board under the lure of gain, but, says he, it was the artist Wisdom that fashioned the ship in which they sail :—

ἐκέينو (sc. τὸ πλοῖον) μὲν γὰρ ὄρεξις πορισμοῦ

ἐπευόησεν· τεχνῆτις δὲ Σοφία κατεσκεύασεν.

(*Sap. Sol.* XIV. 2).

¹ E.g. Herakles, Diomedes, Tydeus, Erichthonios.

² *Gr. Mythologie*, p. 1216.

Here again we see the overlapping of functions between Athena and Sophia ; the natural explanation of which coincidence is that Athena and Sophia are one and the same, the former being Wisdom as seen from a Stoic angle, the latter from the Semitic or Semi-Semitic point of view. In the *Wisdom of Solomon* we are in part dependent upon the eighth chapter of Proverbs, and we must reserve the possibility that the description of Sophia as *τεχνίτις* may be derived from thence ; as in the passage where she is described (following one interpretation) as a master-workman, chief workman or architect. There is, however, nothing in the eighth chapter of Proverbs to suggest the Divine Wisdom as a ship-builder.

Now let us turn to another point. We have, in the seventh chapter of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, amongst the terms that describe the Divine Wisdom, the title of Monogenēs, or only-begotten, and as this is the title given to Christ in the *Prologue to John*, and we have shown abundantly the dependence of the Prologue upon the Sapiential books, it is hardly possible to avoid the deduction that the evangelical phrase

The Only-Born Son in the bosom of the Father,

has been written over an earlier statement which described Wisdom as

The Only-Born daughter in the bosom of the Father.

This was clearly seen by our sage and serious poet Spenser when, in his *Hymn to Heavenly Beautie*, he wrote

There in His bosome Sapience doth sit
The soueraine dearling of the Deitie.

Certainly it is no small illumination to be able to explain the mysterious expression in the *Prologue*. But what did the original writer mean by calling Sophia by the title Monogenēs ? Is it genuine Greek philosophy, and is it Stoic ? Is it Athena again that stands behind Sophia ? Does she ever have such a title ? Was it appropriate to her ?

The answer to these questions is partly easy and partly obscure. It is certainly true that Athena is described as Monogenēs in the *Orphic Hymns*.¹

Equally clear is it that the term would be exactly suited to her peculiar birth from the head of Zeus. We do not need the explanation that *Monogenēs* means unique, or the only one of its kind. The

¹ *Orph. H.*, 32¹.

birth itself may be involved in the term and the manner of the birth. The explanation would be complete, and we might annotate the term as being used of Athene in Greek religious poetry ; but here we stumble upon a serious difficulty. The same term is used in Hesiod and in the *Orphic Hymns* to describe Hecate, Demeter and Persephone ;¹ and it is reasonable to make a similar explanation of its employment in all these different cases. That consideration would negative the idea that Monogenēs was a term describing the *birth* of Athena, considered as unique. It does not contradict the fact that Athena herself was so described, and we may go as far as to say that in the use of the term Sophia is Athena, even if we do not see clearly why the term is so used. It cannot be a term that describes Zeus, and there is no competition for its use in the *Wisdom of Solomon* for Demeter or Hecate. Upon the whole we may say that the evidence is becoming clearer which identifies Sophia with Athena on the one hand, and with Christ on the other. The three will meet very harmoniously in the verse where Sophia “ extends from marge to marge,” for here we have the very description of Athena, and the recognition by theologians that Christ, the Wisdom of God, is involved in the passage. St. Thomas Aquinas puts the case for us in a sentence :—

“Christus, qui est Dei Sapientia, suaviter et convenienter disponit omnia, ut dicitur, Sap. 8.” (*Summa Theol.*, Pt. iii., qu. LV., art. 6).

Christ, then, is Wisdom, and Wisdom is Athena.²

¹ *Orph. H.*, 29, 2, 40, 16 ; Hesiod, *Theog.*, 426, 428.

² It is interesting to note that Dante, who follows Aquinas in the identification of Christ with the Wisdom of God, reduces the Trinity to the three terms—

Power, Wisdom and Love.

In the inscription over the portal of the Inferno is inscribed—

Fecemi la divina Potestate

La summa Sapienza e il primo Amore ;

upon which Scartazzini notes—

“ circoscrive la S. S. Trinità, secondo la massima Teologica : *opera ad extra sunt totius Trinitatis* :—

“ La *Potestate* e Dio Padre ;

“ La *Sapienza* il Verbo ossia il Figliuolo ;

“ L’*Amore* lo Spirito Santo.

In confirmation of which the reference is given to Dante, *Convito*, II. 6. Puotesi contemplare la *potenza* somma del Padre, la *summa sapienza* del Figliuolo, e la *Somma e ferventissima carità* dello Spirito Santo.”

(I owe the reference to my friend W. C. Braithwaite).

This identification of Athena and the Logos was known to Justin Martyr who makes a protest against it in his *Apology*. "They wickedly," says he, "affirmed that Athena was the daughter of Zeus, born without carnal intercourse, but, when they came to know that God, by process of thought (ἐννοηθέντα) made the world through Reason (διὰ λόγου) then they affirmed that the first thought-product (ἐννόημα) was Athena" (1 Ap. 64). In his usual manner Justin, who wishes to get rid of the pagan personification of Wisdom, explains that she has been substituted for the genuine article, just as the miracles of Asklepios have been written over the correct Biblical material. It is clear that Justin, in arguing for Christianity in a Hellenic environment, found Athena in possession when he wanted to say *Logos*. He promptly serves her with notice to quit : but, as we have seen from our study of the Sapiential literature, she is not so easily removed. After all, she had Pheidias to lean upon, and Judaism had never produced an artist !

We shall be asked, perhaps, whether, if we are so sure of the influence of Stoic philosophy and theology upon the *Wisdom of Solomon*, we can be certain that there is no such influence, operating in a similar manner, upon the eighth chapter of Proverbs. It is curious that we have in the Hebrew literature, Jahveh and his dear daughter Wisdom as a parallel to Zeus and his dear daughter Athena. There is, too, a certain likeness between the Stoic definition of God as 'an artistic fire, walking in the way towards the creation of the world,'¹ and the passage in which Wisdom affirms that 'the Lord created me in the beginning of his way before his works of old.' On the other hand, the Stoic expression is itself so obscure, that, if it is original Greek, we have failed to understand it, and the Hebrew of Proverbs appears to be genuine Hebrew. So, for the present, at any rate, we may leave the Proverbial Wisdom in possession, without giving her a literary ancestor.

Now let us ask whether the results of the foregoing enquiry have any influence upon the Gospel itself, either as regards the text or its interpretation. We started from the Prologue to the Gospel, and having discovered its primitive form as a Hymn to Sophia, with

¹ Cf. Diog. Laert., VII. 1, 84 : τὴν μὲν φύσιν εἶναι πῦρ τεχνικὸν ὁδῶ βαδίζον εἰς γένεσιν κόσμου ; Cic. *De. Nat. Deor.*, where φύσις is defined as 'ignem artificiosum ad gignendum progredientem.'

antecedents in the Sapiential literature of the Old Testament, we return to the Prologue again, bringing our sheaves of investigation with us.

Our first question will relate to the term *Monogenēs*, used of the Logos in the Prologue, of Sophia in the seventh chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon, and of Athena and other divinities in the Orphic Hymns. What does it mean? Is it an only child that is being described, or a child of unique character, or (to make a suggestion which we believe is quite new) is there any possibility that *Monogenēs* Athena, like *Pontogenēs* Aphrodite, means the child of one parent only?

As we pointed out, our difficulty arises from the fact that in Hesiod and in the Orphic Hymns, the use of the word appears to be somewhat colourless. It has to cover Hekate, Demeter, Persephone, and Artemis, as well as Athena. At all events, these are all feminine, and that suggests that there is some feminine term which connects them together. The suggestion is that the term in question is *Κόρη* ('maid'). In the Orphic system there is a great confusion between the personalities of the leading goddesses. Lobeck, in his *Aglaophamus*¹ refers to a passage in Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus*¹ in which Proclus says that the Theologos (i.e. Orpheus) was in the habit of giving to Korē the title of *Μουνογενεῖα* but, at the same time, of coupling another goddess with her in the use of that title, and Lobeck says that, in his opinion, the second reference was to Hekate, who is described by Hesiod as *Μουνογενής*.² But he also points out, again from Proclus,³ that we have to discourse of Diana, Proserpina and Hekatē together, because Orpheus and the followers of Plato confuse them. Proclus' language is as follows:—

ὅτι πολλή ἡ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὴν ἐγκόσμον
Ἑκάτην ἔνωσις, καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὴν Κόρην, φανερόν τοῖς
καὶ ὀλίγα τῷ Ὀρφεῖ παραβεβληκόσιν.

Here we have three of our goddesses grouped together in an Orphic unity, and the natural suggestion is that in Orphic circles each was *Κόρη* and each *Μουνογενής*. But where is Athena in this connection? For it is maid Athena that we are in search of. Clearly she is subject to the same classification. Accordingly Lobeck says: quoting Proclus in *Crat.*, p. 100, where Artemis, Korē and Athena are grouped in an Orphic unity, that the only thing that can be deduced from the language is that Athena shares the title 'maid' with Proserpine and

¹ II. 139.

² *Theog.* 426.

³ In *Crat.* p. 112.

Artemis. The same thing is evidently true in the Orphic hymns of the title *Monogenēs*. It is a common title of a group of goddesses. Now this at once raises a further difficulty, in that it is not possible to apply the title to the group in the sense which is commonly given to the word. Athena might be Only-Born but not Artemis, who was a twin : Persephone might be Only-Born, but not Demeter. Nor can we attach the meaning 'born of a single parent' to the word *Monogenēs* ; that would suit Athena, but not Artemis or Persephone. We are in this position then, that there is a meaning to the title which is eluding us. The suggestion arises that we have been trading too much with etymology ; the word simply means 'darling,' or as we say, Dear One. It is a hyperbolic expression of affection, which need not be interpreted by taking the word to pieces.

So much for the meaning of the term, and now for a few remarks as to the text.

In the Prologue to John, in each case where the term *Monogenēs* occurs, there is a bifurcation in the reading or a difficulty as to the interpretation.

In *v.* 14 we have the expression used of the Logos that it has a glory *μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός* and the editors are at a loss whether to write father with a capital F, or only-born with a capital O. The Revisers of the N.T. have decorated their margin with the school-boy translation

'an only-begotten from a father,'

but without giving a hint as to why such a person should have glory predicated of him. Nestlé suggests a small 'o' and a capital F, which would give us in the parallel case a single Zeus, and a group of Athenas. Evidently both the words in question are anarthrous, and the right rendering is

'glory as of the Only-Born of the Father.'

The Father in the original statement of the Hymn is either Jahveh or Zeus, the Only-Born is either the Sophia of Proverbs or Athena.

The other passage is in *v.* 18 where reference is made to 'the Only-Born Son in the bosom of the Father,' with the variant 'Only-Born God.' Here, if ever, we have a case of the harder reading, *μονογενῆς θεός*, and here, if ever, one's first instinct is to revolt against what is called the canon of the harder reading. It is well known that this is one of the cases which Hort selected as a trial of strength : he

wrote a monograph to prove that *μονογενῆς θεός* was the right reading. Thayer remarks on it in his lexicon that it is "foreign to John's mode of thought and speech, dissonant and harsh, and appears to owe its origin to a dogmatic zeal which broke out soon after the early days of the Church." I must confess that the expression does seem to be non-Johannine, and so harsh as to be almost unintelligible : but then one recalls that, if there is a previous document or series of documents involved, the language and thought need not be Johannine. Let us ask the questions whether the terms may not be Orphic ; we are quite sure about *Μονογενῆς* ; what about *Μονογενῆς θεός* ? The Hymn to Athena begins

Πάλλας μονογενές, μεγάλου Διὸς ἔκγονε σεμνή.

That suggests an 'only-born child' with the thought of Deity in the context : suppose we turn to the Hymn in honour of Persephone : it begins thus

Περσεφόνη, θύγατερ μεγάλου Διὸς, ἔλθὲ μάκαιρα,
Μονογενεῖα θεά.

Here the very expression 'Only-born God' is actually in use ; and if it is intelligible in the case of Persephone (who is, it will be remembered, grouped Orphically with Athena), then there is no reason why it should not have passed into the Prologue to John from the Hymn to Sophia out of which the Prologue was developed. In that case Dr. Hort's criticism would be justified, and his reading be removed from the region of apparent improbabilities. It meant originally and as used by St. John, "the dear God in the bosom of the Father."

So much for Orphism, and the Sapiential literature, and the Prologue to St. John. It is by the Orphic elements in the appropriated and transformed Hymn to Wisdom that we are able to explain the peculiar abruptness in the closing words of the *Prologue* (John 1. 18). Why does John introduce the dogma that 'No one has ever seen God' ? The answer is that it is one of the commonest metric tags in the Orphic literature : it is found in the following form in Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* v. 12, p. 693)

οὐδέ τις αὐτόν
εἰσοράα θνητῶν, αὐτὸς δέ γε πάντας ὀράται.

and the same quotation occurs in Ps. Justin : *Cohort.* VII. p. 63, in each case the reference being to Orpheus or to Orpheus as ὁ θεολόγος.

We infer, then, the influence of this metrical passage upon the

Wisdom Hymn. The discontinuity in the Gospel arises from the fact of its not being a first-hand composition. May we not also say that it is to the recognised use of Orphic material that we owe the title of *Theologos* which has been given to St. John in the Christian tradition? For if, as the Catacomb paintings show, it was possible to regard Christ as Orpheus, it was equally possible in the field of literature to regard John as *Theologos*.

P.S. Since writing the above, I see the report in the *Hibbert Journal* for January 1922, that in the *Rivista trimestrale di Studi Filosofici* (pp. 163-172) a suggestion is made by Signor Motzo that the literary source for the metaphor of the descending Logos in *Wisdom* XVIII. is the passage in the first book of the *Iliad*, where Phoebus Apollo descends in anger from Olympus, to strike death into the Greek camps.

Here is the passage in the prose-rendering of Lang, Leaf and Myers:—

“Phoebus Apollo heard him, and came down from the Peaks of Olympus wroth at heart, bearing on his shoulders his bow and covered quiver. And the arrows clanged upon his shoulders in his wrath as the god moved; and he descended like to night. Then he sate him aloof from the ships, and let an arrow fly; and there was heard a dread clanging of the silver bow. First did he assail the mules and fleet dogs, but afterward, aiming at the men, his piercing dart he smote; and the pyres of the dead burnt continually in multitude.”

No doubt the Italian scholar is on the right track in looking for the descending Logos in the pages of Homer; but there is no initial parallel between Apollo and the Logos to invite Homeric reference, and we have shown that the destroying angel is Athena and not Apollo.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES.

1. Professor Souter points out to me that the connection between the Christian dogmas and the Stoic philosophy had been already pointed out by Tertullian, in his *Apologeticus*: “Apud vestros quoque sapientes λόγον, id est Sermonem atque Rationem, constat artificem videri universitatis. Hunc enim Zeno determinat facitorem, qui cuncta in dispositione formaverit, eundem et fatum vocari, et decum et animum Jovis, et necessitatem omnium rerum. Haec Cleanthes in spiritum congerit, quem permeatorem universitatis affirmat” (*Apol.* c. 21).

2. The connection between Athena and Sophia comes out very clearly when the Parthenon ceases to be a pagan building, and is transferred to Christian uses. It then becomes, first a temple of the Holy Wisdom, and next a shrine of the Virgin Mary.

“The Capucins in their plan of Athens, 1669, speak of the Parthenon as dedicated to St. Sophia, while the Jesuit Babui in 1672 refers to it as the temple of *la Sagesse Eternelle*” (see D’ooge, *The Acropolis of Athens*, New York, 1908, p. 306 and p. 341).