CHAPTER FIVE

GOD THE LOGOS AND WORLD

The ‘place’ of the Logos

The distinction drawn between Wisdom and Logos is only an intellectual one. The concept of cosmos is the central philosophical notion, by means of which this distinction is made and understood. For the Logos is perceived as the Wisdom herself in her relation to the world. There is no question of any actual otherness. Speaking of either Wisdom or Logos, the essential reference pertains to the same person, namely, the Son of God. The difference is that Wisdom indicates the living incorporeal personal subsistence in herself, without any allusion to the world or to anything else, while the Logos is the Wisdom conceived in her ‘communication with rational creatures’ (κατά μὲν τὴν σύστασιν τῆς περὶ τῶν ὅλων θεωρίας καὶ νοημάτων τῆς σοφίας νοουμένης, κατά δὲ τὴν πρὸς τὰ λογικά κοινωνίαν τοῦ λόγου λαμβανομένου).1 This means that Wisdom is perceived as Logos by a rational creature who communicates with her.

The notion of the conceptions (ἐπίνοιαι) of the Son allows him to portray the relationship of the timeless God with the temporal world. This correlation is possible through the particular conception of the Logos and its implications. Through his activity, the Logos becomes a kind of span, something of a connection, through which this relation between Here and the Beyond is established.

Wisdom was made the beginning of God’s ways towards his works. It is along these ‘ways’ that ‘the Son of God is moving decorating, providing for, making benefaction, favouring, in this made wisdom. The Logos is, therefore, said to be ἀρχή, being different form her [sc. the wisdom] not in substance, but only in [mere] conception and relation; so that he [sc. the Logos, who is] stated in the scriptures is the same being (ὑπαρξίας) in substance; he is Wisdom inasmuch as he is affiliated with God, [whereas] he is the creative Logos in so much as he has inclined, so to speak, towards creatures. (ἀρχήν ὁ θυγός τίνα λόγον

1 commJohn, 1, XIX.
The view reiterated here is that of the relation of the Logos to God himself and to the world; but there is something more indicated through this passage: not only did the Logos create the world; but also he is constantly related to it, as he acts perpetually ‘decorating, providing for, making benefaction, favouring’. On the other hand, the world is regarded as something ‘external’ to God. Hence we should conclude that Origen conceives the Logos as being both ‘in’ wisdom, that is, into timelessness, and within the world, that is, ‘outside’ of the Trinity.

It is through this conception that the Logos may be regarded as a mediator between the timeless God and the temporal world.

God is the original ‘place, as it were’ (οἰκον τόπος) of the Logos. But this is not the only ‘place’ of his: he is also fully present in the world, yet not being himself part of the world; he is ‘stretched out alongside with’ the world (συμπαρεκτεινόμενος). The notion is found in Jerome’s Latin translation of Origen’s Homilies on Luke; the verse of the Psalm ‘The sound of his teaching has gone out into every land, and his words to the ends of the earth’ is commented thus: ‘Our Lord Jesus has been spread out to the whole world, because he is God’s power. ... Behold the Saviour’s greatness. It extends to all the world.’ He goes on thus:

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2 John, I.
3 Ibid.
4 Princ, IV.4.1.; s. also comm John, 20, XVIII.
5 comm John, 20, XVIII. Determined to read Neoplatonism into the works of Origen, R. Norris states that ‘the Logos appears ... as the first step ‘down’ from the One in the stream of existence’ and he is ‘the expression of eternal Mind’ (op. cit., p. 154). Origen never used these Plotinian categories. Beyond that, however, the assertion that the Logos is ‘existing down’ in relation to God is a miscomprehension by those who in all ways wish to attribute a Plotinian perception of the world to Origen. The discussion in this section shows how wrong they are in regarding the Logos as being somewhere ‘lower’ from God or ‘standing midway’ (s. infra) between God and the world. The Logos is and always was with God in the divine timelessness.
6 Psalm 18, 4, also cited in Rom. 10, 18; Origen adds the expression ‘of his teaching’ and twice substitutes ‘his’ for ‘their’.
7 Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 24.
8 Homilies on Luke, 4.5. On the Logos ‘extending’ to all the world, s. ch. 6, p. 211.