'The *Logos* was God'

by Ed. L. Miller

*he translation of John 1:1 still causes problems if we may judge by the variety of
nderings in modern versions of the New Testament. It was discussed briefly in
'HE EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY some years ago by V. Perry with particular
ference to the teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses (EQ 35, 1963, 15-22). We are
rateful to Dr. Miller for raising the matter afresh.*

'he deity of Jesus, together with the cross and resurrection, stands at the
entre of the theology (or theologies) of the New Testament.[1] On the
ther hand, if we turn from what is everywhere assumed or implied
bout the deity of Jesus to what is stated explicitly and unambiguously
– for example, 'Jesus is God' — we encounter very little. The only real
andidates for such unequivocal claims are: John 1:1; 1:18; 20:28;
.om. 9:5; Col. 2:2; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:8-9; 2 Pet. 1:1.[2] Out of these
ight passages, three are found in John. Of these three, everyone
cknowledges John 20:28 to be an unequivocal 'deity-passage', even the
therwise sceptical Taylor who calls it the 'one clear ascription of Deity
ɔ Christ'.[3] John 1:18 has always been clouded by a textual problem, but
10st scholars now correctly take *monogenēs theos* ('only God') rather than
ıonogenēs huios ('only Son') to be the original reading. In addition to
eing the *lectio difficilior*, it is supported by a long list of MSS., Fathers,
nd Versions, including Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and now also P66 and

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[1] It is, of course, one thing to deny that Jesus Christ was God incarnate and quite
another to deny that the New Testament writers believed and taught this. The first
question aside, I doubt that one could have much success demonstrating the second,
not even the scholars who contributed to *The Myth of God Incarnate*, ed. John Hick
(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977). *Cf.* the responses to their efforts in *The Truth
of God Incarnate*, ed. Michael Green (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977), espe-
cially Green's essay, 'Jesus in the New Testament,' 17ff.

[2] These and other relevant passages are considered in a series of articles by Rudolf Bult-
mann ('The Christological Confession of the World Council of Churches,' *Essays
Philosophical and Theological*, tr. James C. G. Greig (New York: Macmillan, 1955),
273ff.), Vincent Taylor ('Does the New Testament Call Jesus "God"?', *Expository
Times*, 73 (1961-62), 116ff.), and Raymond Brown ('Does the New Testament Call
Jesus "God"?', *Theological Studies*, 26 (1955), 545ff.). *Cf.* also, Oscar Cullmann, *The
Christology of the New Testament*, rev. ed., tr. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall
(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), Ch. 11, and A. W. Wainwright, 'The Con-
fession "Jesus Is God" in the New Testament,' *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 10 (1957),
274ff. Also the article by Ethelbert Stauffer, 'Christ as *Theos* in Early Christianity,' in
Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich,
tr. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964-76), III,
104ff., and Johannes Schneider's contribution, 'Christ as God,' in *The New Inter-
national Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Lothar Coenen, et. al., tr. and ed. Colin
Brown (Exeter, England: Paternoster Press, 1975-78), II, 80ff.

[3] Taylor, 118.

P75.[4] When the textual problem is thus decided, this verse too becomes an unambiguous proof-text for the deity of Jesus.[5] This brings us, finally to the all-important and much discussed claim of John 1:1c: *kai theos ēn ho logos.*

Our purpose here is to review some of the problems involved in this claim and some proposed solutions, to pay special attention to the grammar of the proposition, to make a little more than has been usual out of the possible theological/Christological implications, and to provide some bibliographical direction for those who wish to investigate the passage for themselves.

A full exegesis would have to take into account the immediate context, vs. 1-5,

En archē ēn ho logos,
kai ho logos ēn pros ton theon,

kai theos ēn ho logos.
houtos ēn en archē pros ton theon.

panta di' autou egeneto,
kai chōris autou egeneto oude hen.

ho gegonen en autō zōē ēn,
kai hē zōē ēn to phōs tōn anthrōpōn.

kai to phōs en te skotia phainei,
kai hē skotia auto ou katelaben.

and, more generally, the whole Prologue. Here I can only indicate in the barest way my own view that the proposition before us is one line of a Christological hymn[6] which includes at least vs. 1-5 (pieces from the same hymn or from yet others may be found elsewhere in the Prologue)

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4   *Cf.* Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 198. So also J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John,* ed. A. H. McNeile (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), I, 31f.; and Raymond Brown, *The Gospel according to John: I-XII* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 17. Those favouring *monogenēs huios* include Rudolph Bultmann, *The Gospel of John,* tr. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *et. al.* (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1971), 81f., n.2; and Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John,* tr. Kevin Smyth (New York: Herder, 1968-), I, 279f.

5   Schnackenburg comments that whether we opt for one of the other readings 'makes no essential difference' (279). Quite to the contrary, it is precisely because such explicit claims are so rare that the reading here becomes so important.

6   For a recent and exhaustive discussion of the hymnic material of the Prologue, see Mathias Rissi, 'Die Logoslieder im Prolog des vierten Evangeliums,' *Theologische Zeitschrift,* 36 (1975), 321ff. A wealth of bibliographical information is contained in the notes.

ind was composed after the First Epistle which was composed after the
?ourth Gospel 'proper' (1:19-20:30). Although v.1c is a part of the *Logos*
Hymn we must keep open the possibility that this line, along with v.2, is
ı later (polemical?) interpolation, though perhaps by the same hand.
These two lines do not fit logically and stylistically the otherwise very
ıeat series of four couplets; furthermore, the polemical and clarifying
:haracter of these lines is apparent. As for the well-known question con-
:erning the origin and background of the Johannine *Logos*, I reject all
:he theories which root it in some pre-Johannine tradition such as Greek
philosophy, Gnostic thought, Old Testament *hochma/sophia* concepts,
Sapiential literature of later Jewish thought, Philo Judaeus, etc. Without
denying utterly some possible connections with these traditions, I pro-
pose that *Logos* here is a peculiarly Johannine idea, and that its Christo-
logical development may be traced from the many Christologically
'transparent' uses of *logos* and *rhema* in the Fourth Gospel 'proper', to a
more self-conscious Christological significance in the First Epistle, to the
full-blown Christological title in the Prologue.[7] It means 'Word', the
saving truth which is revealed in and is Jesus Christ.

But we turn now to the single line which is our subject. Although it
does not bear on the essential claim made in 1:1c, we should first con-
sider the possibility of punctuating the whole passage as follows: *kai ho
logos ēn pros ton theon, kai theos ēn. Ho logos houtos ēn en arche pros ton theon,*
'And the *Logos*, was with God, and was God. This *Logos* was in the
beginning with God.' This is grammatically possible and is, in fact,
adopted by Sanders/Mastin on the grounds that it makes for a better
balance of the clauses, early unpunctuated manuscripts allow it, and the
phrase *ho logos houtos* ('this word') occurs twice elsewhere in John.[8] But
two occurrences elsewhere in the whole Fourth Gospel hardly suggest a
rule, and in any case, apart from the present instance, *ho logos* (alone)
occurs three times in the Prologue and never in relation to the demon-
strative pronouns *houtos* or *ekeinos* which also occur two times each. It is
also difficult to overcome the sense that the threefold repetition of *ho logos*
in v.1 is intentional. As for the manuscript witnesses, it would appear
that the earliest extant interpretations of the passage coincide with the

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7 I intend to argue and document this thesis in a future publication.
8 J. N. Sanders and B. A. Mastin, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* (New
   York: Harper & Row, 1968), 69f. Note also Frederick Louis Godet, *Commentary on the
   Gospel of John*, third ed., tr. Timothy Dwight (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1893),
   who attributes this interpretation to an 'anonymous English writer' and rejects it
   (246).

usual one, and the Sanders/Mastin interpretation is unknown in the punctuated manuscripts when they do finally appear. As for the argument from the balance of the clauses, it presupposes certainty about the number of lines involved, the use of couplets, rhythmic patterns, etc., and in any event it produces two lines which, though balanced in length relative to one another, are inordinately long relative to all the other lines in vs.1-5. The standard punctuation is surely the best — John no doubt intended *kai theos ēn ho logos*.

Three overlapping questions must now be raised in relation to the assertion, *kai theos ēn ho logos*: (1) the problem of the translation of *theos*; (2) the significance of the definite article; and (3) the relation of the line to the preceding statement in v.1b.

With respect to the first, the question is whether *theos* might be rendered by 'divine'. It would appear that for most there is a difference in affirming of *x* that it is 'divine' and that it is 'deity'. It is the difference between some sort of participation in or likeness to deity and deity itself. Clearly, 'divine' is weaker and more ambiguous a term than 'deity' or 'God'. Some scholars and translators do in fact render *theos* as 'divine' — 'And the *Logos* was divine'. This rendering is sponsored, for example, by Strachan[9] and Haenchen,[10] and among the translations it shows up in Goodspeed and Moffatt. But it must be rejected.

Several literary/stylistic considerations weigh heavily — perhaps decisively — against this rendering of *theos*. First, the adjectival form *theios* no doubt was ready to hand for John. Though it does not occur in John it is employed elsewhere in the Greek New Testament and by three different authors (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20 *(theiotēs)*; 2 Pet. 1:3f.);[11] if John intended the adjective here, he certainly would have employed it. Second, it is unthinkable from a stylistic standpoint that in the three consecutive statements —

kai ho logos ēn pros ton theon,
kai theos ēn ho logos.
houtos ēn en archō pros ton theon —

theos means 'God' in the first and third while the adjectival 'divine'

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9   R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel: Its Significance and Environment* (London: SCM Press, 1941), 99.

10   For example, E. Haenchen, 'Probleme des johanneischen "Prologs" ', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 60 (1963), 313.

11   So, for example, Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 33. Haenchen's argument to the contrary, that the adjective *theios* may have been too classical a word for John's vocabulary ('Probleme des johanneischen "Prologs" ', 313, n.38) is extremely conjectural as well as question-begging.

ntrudes in the second. Third, the adjectival interpretation would des-
roy the suggested climax: He was with God and he *was* God.[12] Fourth,
he translation 'God' fits otherwise with the Prologue where in v.18 we
hould accept the reading *monogenēs theos* over *monogenēs huios*.[13] Thus the
vhole Prologue is bracketed at beginning and end with the assertions of
he deity of the *Logos*. Finally, it is to be observed that 'God' rather than
divine' is to be preferred in terms of the context of the whole Fourth
Gospel, where in a myriad of ways the deity of the *Logos* is suggested,
:ulminating in Thomas' outburst: 'My Lord and my God!' (John
!0:28).[14] On a more theological note, one must attend to Sidebottom's
speculation that

> . . . the tendency to write 'the Word was divine' for| *theos ēn ho logos* springs
> from a reticence to attribute the full Christian position to John. It will not do
> to say that the meaning is the Word 'belongs to the same sphere of being as
> God'; Philo could have accepted some such formula as that . . . But Philo was
> a Jew. He could not have accepted what the Church taught about Christ.[15]

We turn now to a larger and richer question — the significance of the
anarthrous *theos*. But we do not quite leave behind the question of the
translation of *theos* as 'divine', because some have reasoned that in the
line *kai theos ēn ho logos* we are to understand *theos* adjectively from the fact
that the article is omitted. Strachan, for example, states as straight-
forwardedly as possible, 'here the word *theos* has no article, thus giving it
the significance of an adjective'.[16]

This view was rebutted by Colwell in his oft-cited study, 'A Definite
Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament'.[17] On the
basis of a survey of definite predicate nouns in the Greek New Testa-
ment Colwell refined the standard rule that predicate nouns tend to omit
the article. This he did by suggesting that the presence or absence of the
article is not a matter of definiteness (as it is in Blass-Debrunner-Funk:

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12 These last two observations hold even if the line should turn out to be a later addition.
13 See above, p.66, n.4.
14 But I doubt that v.1c 'is almost certainly meant to form an inclusion' with 20:28 (so
    Brown, *The Gospel according to John: 1-XII*, 5). That this Gospel ends in this way should
    not be surprising, but vs. 1:1-5 (at least) were probably composed later and indepen-
    dently (from a literary, not a theological standpoint) from the Gospel proper.
15 E. M. Sidebottom, *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1961), 48f.
16 Strachan, 99.
17 E. C. Colwell, 'A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testa-
    ment', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 52 (1933), 12ff. See also the more recent and concise
    summary of Colwell's work and rules by Bruce M. Metzger, 'On the Translation of
    John i:1', *The Expository Times*, 63 (1951-52), 125f.

'. . . the article is inserted if the predicate noun is presented as something well known or as that which alone merits the designation . . .'),[18] but a matter of word-order: 'A definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb; it does not have the article when it precedes the verb.'[19] From this it follows that predicate nouns preceding the verb cannot be regarded as indefinite or qualitative simply because they lack the article; it could be regarded as indefinite or qualitative only if this is demanded by the context, and in the case of John 1:1c this is not so: '. . . this statement cannot be regarded as strange in the prologue of the gospel which reaches its climax in the confession of Thomas.'[20] Colwell's conclusion concerning John 1:1c was reinforced in a short piece by J. Gwyn Griffiths[21] in which he, independently of Colwell's work, appealed to general usage in classical and Hellenistic Greek: 'Nouns which shed their articles do not thereby become adjectives; nor is it easy to see how the predicate use of a noun, in which the omission of the article is normal, tends to give the noun adjectival force.'[22]

More recently, the pendulum swung somewhat in the other direction with an article by Philip Harner.[23] He emphasized the generally qualitative force of anarthrous predicate nouns, conceded to Colwell that such nouns *may* be definite, but announced that in John 1:1c 'there is no basis for regarding the predicate *theos* as definite'. He believes that John meant something stronger than *theios*, 'divine', but weaker or more qualitative than *ho theos*, 'God', and suggests for the anarthrous *theos* the meaning, 'having the same nature as *theos*'.[24] But, first of all, we have argued already that *theos* here *is* definite — recall what has been said

18 F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. and rev. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chiacago Press, 1961), sect. 273.

19 Colwell, 13.

20 Colwell, 20f.

21 J. Gwyn Griffiths, 'A Note on the Anarthrous Predicate in Hellenistic Greek', *The Expository Times*, 62 (1950-51), 314f. The issue before us concerns the significance of the definite article (or its absence) with *theos* as a predicate nominative. Griffiths emphasizes that in other constructions (such as with prepositions or in the genitive form) not much can be built on the presence or absence of a definite article with *theos* in John; it is apparently indiscriminately included or excluded in otherwise identical expressions; for example, 1:6 and 9:33, but 5:44, 6:46, and 8:40; 1:13, but 7:17, 8:42, and 8:46; 19:7, but 1:34, 1:49, 3:18, 5:25, 10:36, 11:4, and 20:31 (315).

22 Griffiths, 315.

23 Phillip B. Harner, 'Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 92 (1973), 75ff.

24 Harner, 84ff.

bove about the total Johannine context of our line and also the unlikeli-
100d of a sudden intrusion of a *theos* with a different sense from the other
wo instances in this series of three. Furthermore, in his efforts to arrive
t the middle-ground translation of 'having the same nature as *theos*'
Iarner surely blunts the striking and almost paradoxical character of
ohn's claim. Finally, why shy away in v.1 from a straightforward repre-
entation of the *Logos* as God, when almost immediately following in v.3
he *Logos* is accorded the status of Creator of all things and thus the status
f God? Why soften in v.1 what v.3 will insist on?

It may be, however, that John's identification of the *Logos* with God
1imself in v.1:1c is clarified and sharpened by yet another consideration.
That the arthrous *logos* signals the subject of the sentence, and the anar-
hrous *theos* the predicate, is rightly agreed upon by virtually everyone
exceptions will be mentioned in a moment). After all, predicate nouns
1s a rule are anarthrous, and *logos* is otherwise the subject of all of these
propositions. But we must ask now whether the anarthrous *theos* is only
3rammatically conditioned, signalling the predicate — even definite
predicate — of the proposition, or whether it is not theologically condi-
:ioned as well: Does the author here identify the *Logos* with God, but
suggest also, by virtue of the anarthrous *theos*, that the *Logos* is not to be
identified *absolutely* or *wholly* with God?

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A point not sufficiently emphasized in Blass-Debrunner-Funk, but ex-
plicitly stated in most other grammars, is that though predicate nouns
usually take no article and are thus distinguished from the subject, 'even
in the predicate the article is used with a noun referring to a definite
object . . . that is well known, previously mentioned or hinted at, or *iden-
tical with the subject*.'[25] More generally, we may say that when in a predi-
cate nominative construction the article occurs with both nouns, the
result is a convertible proposition; grammatically there is no way to dis-
tinguish the subject from the predicate; 'A is B' and 'B is A'. That John
holds to this rule is apparent from the fact that although he here omits
the article with the predicate *(theos ēn ho logos)*, in v.4 he assigns the
definite article to both nouns on either side of the copula *(hē zōē ēn to
phōs)*. In the latter instance, it is evident from the context that *zōē* is the
subject, though it turns out to be in meaning identical with and inter-

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25 Herbert Weier Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, rev. Gordon M. Messing (Cambridge, Mass.:
   Harvard University Press, 1959), sect. 1152 (my italics). See also, for example, Basil
   Lanneau Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, Second Part (New York, N.Y.:
   American Book Co., 1911), sect. 666, and A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek
   New Testament in Light of Historical Research*, fourth ed. (New York, N.Y.: Hodder &
   Stoughton, 1923), 767f.

changeable with *phōs*: It is true both that the life is the light and that the light is the life. In the case of *theos ēn ho logos*, however, this identity and interchangeability is precluded by the fact that the predicate *theos* has no article, *logos* and *theos* are not identical and interchangeable: It is true that the *Logos* was God, but it is not true that God was the *Logos*. That this is the force of the construction *theos ēn ho logos* has been recognized and accepted by many scholars, for example, Holtzmann,

> Wäre *theos* artikuliert, so würde teils Versuchung bestehen, es als Subject zu fassen, teils würde, bei prädikativer Fassung, das schlechthinige Zusammen-fallen beider Begriffe, also das Gegenteil von dem ausgesagt sein, was der Verf. aussprechen wollte.[26]

and Loisy,

> Dan cette proposition, le mot *theos* n'a pas l'article, afin de prévenir une équivoque; car autrement on aurait pu traduire: 'Dieu était le Verbe', ou comprendre que le Verbe était personellement identique a Dieu (le Père), mentionné dans la proposition précédente.[27]

and Barrett,

> The absence of the article indicates that the Word is God, but is not the only being of whom this is true; if *ho theos* had been written it would have been implied that no divine being existed outside the second person of the Trinity.[28]

If this was, indeed, John's intent — or at least part of it — then surely the translation of the *New English Bible*, 'and what God was, the Word was', is blatantly incorrect not only because *Logos*, not God, is the subject of the proposition, but also because John's statement precludes such a wholesale identification of the *Logos* and God.[29] For the same reasons we must reject Morris' rendering 'All that may be said about God may fitly be said about the Word'[30] — it would appear that this is exactly

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26 H. J. Holtzmann, *Evangelium des Johannes*, ed. W. Bauer (Tübingen: Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1908), 33.

27 Alfred Loisy, *Le Quatrième Évangile* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1903), 154.

28 C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1955), 76.

29 *Contra* J. A. T. Robinson who first argues correctly that the construction in John 1:1c precludes the identity and interchangeability of the *Logos* and God, but then announces that the *New English Bible* 'gets the sense pretty exactly with its rendering' (*Honest to God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 71). On Robinson's exegesis, *cf.* Edwin D. Freed, 'Honest to John', *Expository Times*, 75 (1963-64), 61f.

30 Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 76. Actually, this is an apparent logical slip on Morris' part; he expresses himself more carefully later when he says that 'God was the Word' would have meant that God and the Word were the same. It would have pointed to an identity. But John is leaving open the possibility that there may be more to "God" than the "Word" (78).

hat John wishes to *deny*! With such a claim, John *excludes* any Sabellian
otion that the God-head was exhausted in the *Logos*. Excluded too, at
:ast by suggestion, is the idea, sometimes attributed to Origen,[31] that
he absence of the definite article with *theos* should be represented by an
ndefinite article (the *Logos* was 'a God'), and hence also the rendering of
he Jehovah's Witnesses' *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scrip-
ures* in which this polytheistic interpretation persists even yet.[32] The
.sual rendering of the line — for example in the *King James Version,
Revised Standard Version*, and *Jerusalem Bible* — seems exactly correct:
And the Word was God'.[33]

This understanding of *theos ēn ho logos* fits, furthermore, what John had
aid just immediately prior: *ho logos ēn pros ton theon*. Having just asserted
hat the *Logos* was 'with' God, John could not now say that the *Logos* was
dentical with God. Thus Bernard, commenting on the fact that Codex
⌐ does in fact read *ho theos ēn ho logos*,[34] correctly emphasizes that 'this
vould identify the *logos* with the totality of the divine existence, and
vould contradict the preceding clause.'[35] Also Howard: *Theos* and *Logos*
ire not interchangeable, for then 'the writer could not say "the Word
vas with God." '[36] And Vawter: 'The Word is divine, but he is not all of
livinity, for he has already been distinguished from another divine
Person.'[37]

The reference to v.1b leads to a further observation. Many think that
pros with the accusative (as in v.1:1b) is used in John with the same

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[1] Origen, *In Joannem*, II, 2. But it requires not a little self-assurance to insist on this as
the meaning of Origen's text. It has been understood also in a perfectly orthodox
manner.

[2] That is, while this view is not ruled out strictly or logically (though one might have ex-
pected *ho logos`ēn theos*), there is an alternate and much more plausible explanation for
the anarthrous predicate *theos*, especially in view of what is elsewhere said, in this con-
text and throughout John, concerning the *Logos*. Cf. V. Perry, 'Jehovah's Witnesses
and the Deity of Christ', *Evangelical Quarterly*, 35 (1963), 15ff. Bultmann is emphatic on
the anti-polytheistic character of the assertion (*The Gospel of John*, 33).

[33] Harner balks at this usual translation inasmuch as it 'could represent' an interchange-
ability of the terms (87). Also Robinson: 'This would indeed suggest the view that
"Jesus" and "God" were identical and interchangeable' (71). But, of course, it would
be a simple logical error to infer from 'A is B' that 'B is A'.

[34] The reading of L must certainly be rejected on textual-critical grounds. It arose, no
doubt, precisely in the interest of a theological claim which, as we are arguing, John
was in fact denying.

[35] Bernard, 2.

[36] W. F. Howard, *The Gospel according to St. John* (New York: Abingdon, 1952), 464.

[37] B. Vawter, *The Gospel according to John* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968),
422.

meaning as *para* with the dative, and that in any case it means here nothing more nor less than 'with'.[38] But others think that the English 'with' does not sufficiently reproduce the force of the preposition *pros* with its fundamental connotation of 'motion towards'.[39] Of the latter, Westcott noted long ago:

> The phrase (*ēn pros*, Vulg. *erat apud*) is remarkable. The idea conveyed by it is not that of simple coexistence, as of two persons contemplated separately in company (*einai meta*, iii, 26, & c.), or united under a common conception (*einai sun*, Luke xxii.56), or (so to speak) in local relation (*einai para*, ch. xvii.5), but of being (in some sense) directed towards and regulated by that with which the relation is fixed (v.19). The personal being of the Word was realized in active intercourse with and in perfect communion with God.[40]

And more recently de la Potterie has discussed the matter fairly exhaustively, and gives five arguments for a more 'dynamic' *pros* at John 1:1b:[41]

1. Nowhere in John does *pros* with the accusative mean 'with' or 'by'.

2. Wisdom Literature (which inspires the Johannine Prologue) always represents Wisdom's relation to God by means of the preposition *para*.

3. When John wishes to represent a relation of proximity between the Father and the Son, as between any persons, he always employs *para* with the dative, *meta* with the genitive, or *sun* with the dative — never *pros* with the accusative.

4. On the contrary, John always employs *pros* with the accusative with a suggestion of direction or orientation.

5. The *pros ton theon* of vs.1-2 forms an inclusion with *ein ton kolpon tou patros* of v.18, and it can be shown that the *eis* of v.18 bears a dynamic sense.

Aside from certain of de la Potterie's literary presuppositions and a begging of the question here and there, such observations, especially when considered cumulatively, must be reckoned with.

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[38] For example: Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*, second ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1925), 9; Bernard, I, 2; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 32, n.3; M. E. Boismard, *St. John's Prologue*, tr. Carisbrooke Dominicans (London: Aquin Press, 1957), 8, n.1; Schnackenburg, I, 234; Rissi, 326, n.27.

[39] For example, Godet, 245; B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, reprint 1967), 3; Marcus Dods, *The Gospel according to John*, in *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: reprint 1956), 684; Loisy, 154; Holtzmann/Bauer, 33; G. H. C. MacGregor, *The Gospel of John* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1929), 4; I. de la Potterie, 'L'Emploi Dynamique de *eis* dans Saint Jean et ses Incidences Theologiques', *Biblica*, 43 (1962), 379ff.; Morris, 75ff.

[40] Westcott, 3.

[41] de la Potterie, 379f.

Certainly *pros* with the accusative often conveys a *personal* relation,[42] nd in fact in the Gospels *pros* used in reference to persons by far out-umbers other instances, and John almost always uses it in this way. At ie very least *pros* surely suggests here the same degree of personal rela-on as is suggested by the *para tou patros* of 8:38 and the *para soi* of 17:5,) cite only two examples, and a person-to-person relation is necessarily ivolved in 2 John 12, where the phrase *elpizō genesthai pros humas* is xplained by *kai stoma pros stoma lalēsai*: 'I desire to be with *(pros)* you, nd to speak face to face *(stoma pros stoma)*.'[43] We might ask, further, rhether John employs *pros* of the *Logos'* relation to God in such a way as) suggest a special or unique relation, a relation to God not enjoyed by elievers. In this respect, we should note the shift in the first verses of 1 ohn from the representation of the *Logos'* relation to God as *pros ton theon* 1:2) to the beliver's relation to God as *meta tou patros* (1:3). Such a dis-inction would, of course, be consistent with John's other distinction be-ween the *Logos* as the 'Son of God', *huios tou theou*, and the believer as he 'child of God', *teknon tou theou*. Perhaps also relevant in this regard is he Johannine expression *monogenēs huios*. Aside from the question vhether it means 'only-begotten Son' or 'unique Son',[44] it suggests the listinction between the sonship of Christ by nature and the sonship of)elievers by faith — here St. Paul would speak of 'adoption'. We might :ven pose the possibility that for John *pros* is an almost technical term by vhich, on occasion (for example, John 1:1f. and 1 John 1:2), he desig-iates a special, *personal* relation within the God-head.

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This of course brings us to the further consideration that it is God *the* *7ather* that is in view in v.1:1b. This is virtually certain in light of the almost) parallel passage at 1 John 1:1ff., where it is said that the *Logos* of ife, which was from the beginning and was 'with the Father' *(pros ton* *iatera)* has been revealed, and also the concluding verse of the Prologue tself, John 1:18, there the *Logos* is said to be 'in the bosom of the 'ather'. This latter is especially significant because it joins two ideas in :he same way as in 1:1b and 1:1c, namely the relation of the *Logos* to 3od the Father, and the deity of the *Logos*:

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42 *Cf.* Blass and Debrunner, sect. 239; Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. and ed. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957), '*Pros*', III, 4b and III, 7.

43 A. T. Robinson on *pros*: 'The idea seems to be "facing", German *gegen. Cf. prosōpon.* In *ho logos ēn pros ton theon* (John 1:1) the literal idea comes out well, "face to face with God" ' (A. T. Robinson, 623).

44 On this see Dale Moody, ' "God's Only Son": The Translation of John iii.16 in the R.S.V.', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 72 (1953), 213ff.; Brown, *The Gospel according to John: I-XII*, 13f.

v.1:18b		v.1:1b, c
monogenēs theos (= *Logos*)	=	*theos ēn ho logos*
ho ōn eis ton kolpon tou patros	=	*ho logos ēn pros ton theon* (= Father

But why, then, is not *patēr* rather than *theos* employed in vs.1:1b and 2
We merely mention here three considerations: (1) *theos* with the definit
article is a common designation for God the Father in the New Testa
ment; (2) the *Logos* as *Son* has not yet been mentioned in the Prologue
and not at all in vs. 1-5 which, as indicated earlier, may be a complet
literary-theological unit, perhaps a hymn; (3) *theos* is required through
out for the literary pattern in vs. 1-2.[45]

But to return to our central concern, what we have in John 1:1c is ar
assertion that the *Logos* was God himself, but grammatically posed so a:
to be consistent with the prior claim of 1:1b which involves a distinctior
between the *Logos* and God the Father and an emphasis on the persona
character of their relation. And the reader can surely see what is coming
now! Implicit, if not explicit, in such talk is the later trinitarian concept,
'unity of substance, distinction of persons'.

Naturally, we are always in danger of reading our texts too muck
from the perspective of a later and more systematic theology and this is
rightly emphasized. Brown, however, probably overstates the case when
he says in reference to the statements before us, '. . . there is not the
slightest indication of interest in metaphysical speculations · about
relationships within God or in what later theology would call Trinitarian
processions', and that in John 1:1 'there is no speculation about how the
word is related to God the Father'.[46] If our analysis is at all correct, then
there *is* here an interest in, caution about, and reflection on the divine
nature — surely this can be conceded without picturing John as swept
away with metaphysical speculations, and without 'ontologizing' his
basically 'functional' Christology.[47] Furthermore, Brown's comment
neglects the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity was not, after all,

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[45] *Cf.* Loisy, 154. Boismard believes that *theos* with the article (as in v.1:1b) designates
God the Father and without the article (as in v.1:1c) designates God 'without distinc-
tion of persons' (8f.). But this will not hold. A comparison of John 1:18 with 6:46 sug-
gests that the anarthrous *theos* of 1:18 designates the Father, whereas the arthrous *theos*
in 20:28 clearly does *not* designate the Father, it designates the Son.

[46] Brown, 'Does the New Testament Call Jesus God?', 572, n.66.

[47] Though Cullmann desires to distinguish the New Testament concern with the person
and *work* of Christ from the later Christological concern (and controversies) about the
person and *nature* of Christ (*The Christology of the New Testament*, 3ff.), he does grant that
in John 1:1 we do have 'one of the few New Testament passages which speak in this
sense of the "being" of the pre-existent Word' (265).

rented *ex nihilo* and is at least implicit in the New Testament, espe-
lly John — this can be conceded without insisting on full-blown trini-
ian ideas there.

Generally, who can deny that the unity and relationship of the *Logos*
d the Father (and Holy Spirit too) is very much a concern of the
urth Gospel? And who would care to deny the theological and histori-
continuity of this concern with later and more speculative efforts? As
acGregor noted, 'In what sense Christ can thus be "God" and yet not
e whole Godhead but a Person distinct from God, is just the problem
iich the doctrine of the Trinity seeks to solve.'[48] Also Sidebottom:
hat John had some idea of the problem which was later to occupy the
st minds of the Church may seem difficult; but the constantly recur-
ig theme of discussions on the "equality" and the like of Jesus with his
.ther seems to point in that direction.'[49] And whatever one may think
Käsemann's general treatment of the Fourth Gospel, relevant here is
s observation that John expresses 'the beginning of dogmatic reflection
the strictest possible sense and thus opens the door for patristic chris-
logy.' Again,

> The problem of the nature of Christ is discussed thematically in John, to be
> sure still within the frame of his soteriology, but now with an emphasis and a
> force which can no longer be explained on the basis of a pure soteriological
> interest. The internal divine relationship of the revealer as the Son is just as
> strongly emphasized as his relation to the world.[50]

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Our purpose has been to provide an exegetical commentary on John
1c, *kai theos ēn ho logos*. To summarize our main conclusions: (1) On
th philological and literary-stylistic grounds 'divine' should be
jected as too weak a rendering for *theos*; (2) the general and immediate
ntexts of the line suggest a definite, not qualitative, meaning for *theos*;
) neither does an adjectival or qualitative meaning follow from the
sence of the article with *theos*; (4) it does follow from the absence of the
ticle that John avoids a complete equation of the *logos* and *theos*; (5) this
consistent with the distinction (or persons) implies by v.1:1b; (6) vs.
1b and 1:1c together are suggestive, at least, of a sort of metaphysic of
ie Christian God.

⸍ MacGregor, 4.
⸍ Sidebottom, 49.
⸍ Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*, tr. Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress
  Press, 1968), 23.