

THE WORD OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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VINCENT TAYLOR has written: "By general consent 'the Logos', or 'the Word', is one of the greatest titles applied to Christ in the New Testament. Many would say that it is the sublimest title of all. The name is used only by St. John, in the Prologue to the Gospel, i. 1-18 and in the opening words of the First Epistle, i. 1-4; but its ideas colour the teaching of St. Paul in Col. i. 15-20 and of the writer of Hebrews in Heb. i. 1-3."¹ The purpose of this article is to synthesize the *OT* usage of the divine word which is the background of the application of the term to Jesus; it is hoped that theologians will find such a synthesis useful. I believe that the background, while complex, is extraordinarily rich and fruitful.²

THE DIVINE WORD IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

In tracing the pattern and growth of any *OT* idea, it is necessary to see whether the idea has roots in the older cultures of the Near East; from such a comparison alone is it possible to determine the degree to which the Hebrew idea is original. Oskar Grether and L. Dürr called attention to Mesopotamian uses of the phrase which are similar in conception and form to some *OT* passages.³ The following passages will illustrate this usage.

From a hymn to the moon-god Sin:

Thou! When thy word is pronounced in heaven the Igigi prostrate themselves.
Thou! When thy word is pronounced on earth the Anunnaki kiss the ground.

¹ Vincent Taylor, *The Names of Jesus* (New York, 1953) p. 161.

² Cf. for full treatments Oskar Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (*Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 64; Giessen, 1934); Otto Procksch, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 4 (Stuttgart, 1942) 89-100; R.-J. Tournay, A. Barucco, and A. Robert, in *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 5 (Paris, 1952) 425-65. The subject is also treated in most theologies of the Old Testament. Cf. Walther Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* 2 (Berlin, 1948) 32-38; P. van Im Schoot, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* (Tournai, 1954) pp. 200-207; Edmond Jacob, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* (Neuchâtel, 1955) pp. 103-9; Thorleif Boman, *Das hebräische Denken im Vergleich mit dem griechischen* (Göttingen, 1954) pp. 45-54. The work of L. Dürr, *Die Wertung des göttlichen Wortes im A. T. und im antiken Orient* (*Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft* 52; Leipzig, 1938), is not available to me.

³ Grether, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-43; Tournay, *op. cit.* 5, 424-33.

Thou! When thy word drifts along in heaven like the wind it makes rich the feeding and drinking of the land.

Thou! When thy word settles down on the earth green vegetation is produced.

Thou! Thy word makes fat the sheepfold and the stall; it makes living creatures widespread.

Thou! Thy word causes truth and justice to be, so that the people speak the truth.

Thou! Thy word which is far away in heaven, which is hidden in the earth is something no one sees.

Thou! Who can comprehend thy word, who can equal it?⁴

From the creation epic *Enuma Elish*; Marduk, invited to take up the combat of the gods against Tiamat, demands the right to decree the fates:

If I indeed, as your avenger,
Am to vanquish Tiamat and save your lives,
Set up the Assembly, proclaim supreme my destiny!
When in Ubshukinna jointly you sit down rejoicing,
Let my word, instead of you, determine the fates.
Unalterable shall be what I may bring into being;
Neither recalled nor changed shall be the command of my lips!⁵

The gods grant his request and he displays his power:

Having placed in their midst a piece of cloth,
They addressed themselves to Marduk, their first-born:
Lord, truly thy decree is first among gods.
Say but to wreck or create; it shall be.
Open thy mouth! The cloth will vanish!
Speak again, and the cloth shall be whole!
At the word of his mouth the cloth vanished.
When the gods, his fathers, saw the fruit of his word (outcome of his mouth),
Joyfully they did homage: Marduk is king!⁶

From a hymn to the goddess Baba:

My lady, thy word is true,
Thy lofty utterance is not brought down.
Thy holy word comes before the god,

⁴ Translation by Ferris J. Stephens, in J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, 1955) p. 386.

⁵ Translation by E. A. Speiser, in Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

It rises upon the king like the dawning day.
 Baba, thy holy word comes before the god,
 It rises upon the eager king like a day.⁷

From a hymn to the goddess Inanna:

Before thy word, which, like a double strand, no one can break, the whole
 heaven trembles.⁸

From a hymn to the god Enlil:

The utterance of thy mouth cannot be brought low—
 Who can resist it?⁹

From a hymn to the moon-god Nanna:

When thy word descends upon the sea, the sea surges,
 When thy word descends upon the marsh, the marsh groans.¹⁰

To these may be added lines from a hymn to the god An: "The utterance of An is firmly established; no god resists it"; from a hymn to the god Numushda: "Thy lofty word will never be overturned"; from a hymn to the god Enki: "The utterance of Enki cannot be overturned; it is established forever."¹¹

The divine word appears also in Egypt in connection with the creative action of the gods in the theology of Memphis. The text of this document is preserved on the Shabaka stone of 700 B.C., but the original is to be placed in the First Dynasty, about 2700 B.C. Part of it reads as follows:

There came into being as the heart and there came into being as the tongue (something) in the form of Atum. The mighty great one is Ptah, who transmitted life to all the gods, as well as (to) their *ka's*, through this heart, by which Horus became Ptah, and through this tongue, by which Thoht became Ptah.

(Thus) it happened that the heart and tongue gained control over every (other) member of the body, by teaching that he is in every body and in every mouth of all gods, all men, all cattle, all creeping things, and (everything) that lives, by thinking and commanding everything that he wishes.

⁷ This selection and those which follow are translated from the German rendition of the original in A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, *Sumerische Hymnen* (Zurich, 1953) p. 72. The "eager king" is Ningirsu, spouse of Baba; "eager" is a more polite rendition of the word which expresses his desire for his consort.

⁸ *Sumerische Hymnen*, p. 75.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 113, 135.

His Ennead is before him (in the form of) teeth and lips. That is (the equivalent of) the semen and hands of Atum. Whereas the Ennead of Atum came into being by his semen and his fingers, the Ennead (of Ptah), however, is the teeth and lips in his mouth, which pronounced the name of everything, from which Shu and Tefnut came forth, and which was the fashioner of the Ennead.

The sight of the eyes, the hearing of the ears, and the smelling of the air by the nose, they report to the heart. It is this which causes every completed (concept) to come forth, and it is the tongue which announces what the heart thinks.¹²

The following notes of John A. Wilson will help to the understanding of this passage:

Ptah thought of and created by speech the creator-god Atum ("Totality"), thus transmitting the divine power of Ptah to all other gods. The gods Horus and Thoth, a commonly associated pair, are equated with the organs of thought and speech. . . . A distinction is made between the act of creation by Atum through onanism and the creation by Ptah through commanding speech with teeth and lips. Pronouncing a name was creative. Shu and Tefnut were the first deities to be spoken. . . . The senses report to the heart. With this reported material, the heart conceives and releases thought, which the tongue, as a herald, puts into effective utterance.¹³

The Mesopotamian texts show that the divine word is conceived as an entity laden with power; both gods and man are moved by it and find it irresistible. It is a principle of life and of fertility, a creative utterance. Once spoken, it partakes of the eternity of the gods themselves. An even greater power is attributed to the divine word which determines the fates. Mesopotamian thought on the relation of the will of the gods to the course of events was vague and undefined. A part of the ritual of the New Year's festival, which re-enacted the annual renewal of creation, was the determination of the fates for the coming year. Nothing could happen unless the word of the gods decreed that it should happen; once this was decreed, nothing could alter the fates.

The power attributed to the divine word in Mesopotamia was similar to the power attributed to the human word in the formulae of magic. This power did not belong to every word, but to those formulae known by occult revelation. The magical word, the exact pronunciation of which was of vital importance, had the power to compel; it was more than a mere imperative, as the divine word was

¹² John A. Wilson, in Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*

more than a mere imperative. By the very existence which it received in utterance it was able to reach the intended object and there overcome any opposition. The divine word and the magical word created that which they symbolized.

A similar background appears in the Egyptian theology of Memphis. Once one penetrates beneath the obscure and tortuous cloak of Egyptian mythological language, one perceives that the purpose of this document is to extol the creative power of Ptah over the power of Atum, who created by grossly obscene masturbation. The "theologians" of Memphis attempted to rise to a higher plane, and they did so by recurring to the metaphysics of the name. The name gives reality; that which is nameless is unintelligible and therefore unreal. When the god utters a name, the reality which the name signifies springs into being. The conception, however, is more than a primitive nominalism. The name is formed by the heart (the organ of thought, not of feeling) on the data furnished it by the senses, and the organs of speech announce that which the heart has formed. When the conception is uttered by the creative deity, it receives reality.

THE ISRAELITE CONCEPTION OF THE SPOKEN WORD

The attribution of speech to the deity is an analogy; and in order to comprehend the full meaning of the analogy, it is necessary to understand the analogical term. When the analogy comes from a culture and a language different from our own, it is easy for us to miss its full force and its true emphasis. When the Israelites spoke of the word of God, they intended to affirm that it differed from the word of man; but whatever definition we may give it depends on what they thought the word of man to be.

The Israelites, in common with most of the ancient world and with many peoples all over the world, attached a power to the word which has been lost in modern civilized thought.¹⁴ It is tempting to see in

¹⁴ Cf. Walther Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 32. G. van der Leeuw has written in his *Religion: Its Essence and Manifestation* (London, 1938) pp. 403-5: "The world of the primitive and of antiquity, and above all the religious world, knows nothing whatever of 'empty words,' of 'words, words'; it never says: 'more than enough words have been exchanged, now at last let me see deeds'; and the yearning no longer to have to 'rummage among words' is wholly foreign to it. But this is not at all because the primitive world has a blunter sense of reality than ours; rather the contrary: it is we who have artificially emptied the

this conception a survival of belief in magic, but the conception is not so easily explained; one should rather say that the belief in magic is a perversion of the power of the word. The belief in the power of the word seems to reflect a preliterate culture in which there were no written records to preserve the spoken word. Yet the word has a permanence, especially when it reaches from the present into the future, as it does in promises, threats, wishes, commands. Here the word posits the reality which it signifies and endures in the process which it initiates. Once uttered, it cannot be recalled. The word so conceived is evidently not the *verbum* of Scholastic metaphysics but the externalization of the reality conceived in the heart, the desire. If the will is strong enough, the reality which is posited by the word will infallibly come into being. This is apparent in the words of those whose power is known and recognized, such as kings; but who knows the power which any individual person may possess and communicate to the words which he utters? In this world of thought harsh words may hurt me far more than sticks and stones.¹⁵

The power of the word is most clearly seen in those human utterances in which law and custom demand that a man speak from the heart, such as covenants, in which a man promises to keep certain obliga-

word, and degraded it to a thing. But as soon as we actually *live*, and do not simply make scientific abstractions, we know once more that a word has life and power, and indeed highly characteristic power. . . . Whoever speaks, therefore, not only employs an expressive symbol but goes forth out of himself, and the word that he lets fall decides the matter. Even if I merely say 'Good Morning' to someone I must emerge from my isolation, place myself before him and allow some proportion of my potency to pass over into his life, for good or evil. . . . The word, then, is a decisive power; whoever utters words sets power in motion."

¹⁵ Jacob, *op. cit.*, p. 104, seems to overstate the case when he says that the Hebrew mentality makes no distinction between thought and action. He could have adduced Mt 5:22, 28: "Any one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart." The adultery, nevertheless, is committed in the heart. In Hebrew "to say in one's heart" is "to think." But the Hebrew mentality does distinguish between the word in the heart and the word which proceeds from the mouth; Isaac blessed Esau in his heart and Jacob in his mouth, but it was the spoken word which prevailed. There is an essential ambiguity in the word-thing-deed of *dābār*, and the Hebrew mentality was aware of this; if it were not, it would not have spoken of the "fulfilling" or the "coming" or the "establishing" of the word. The Hebrew mentality distinguished between thought and action, just as it distinguished the triple reality of word-thing-deed in *dābār*; but the distinction is not put in our terms, and it permits affirmations of identity between these realities which our logic rejects.

tions. Such utterances are solemnized by witnesses, but the witnesses do not add to the reality of the word; they simply attest that they saw this reality come into existence. In the Old Testament the power of the word appears in particular in the blessing and the curse, which are solemn utterances spoken from the depths of the heart. Here, as van der Leeuw has put it, the person externalizes himself and looses the power which he possesses. The power is seated in the word. When Isaac was deceived into blessing Jacob instead of Esau (Gn 27), neither Isaac nor Esau thinks of the modern *error circa personam* which invalidates a contract. The blessing is a release of psychic energy which cannot be recaptured and delivered to the proper destinatory. The one who blesses has put something of himself into this solemn word. A similar instance of the enduring reality of the word even when there is an *error circa personam* occurs when Jacob is deceived by Laban and receives Leah instead of Rachel as his wife (Gn 29:20-27). The compiler of the Jacob stories has matched these stories. The man who secured his blessing by misdirecting the solemnly spoken word is himself deceived when another misdirects the solemnly spoken word of the marriage covenant. When Isaac was deceived, he could do nothing but give Esau another and inferior blessing, for it was thought that a man had only one such blessing in him. When Jacob was deceived, he could do nothing but serve another seven years for the wife he desired; his spoken word of acceptance stood against him.

The mother of Micah of Ephraim cursed the thief who stole her silver (Jg 17: 1-2). When Micah in fear of the curse restored the stolen silver, his mother could not withdraw the curse; all she could do was to send a blessing after it to neutralize it. When David heard Nathan's parable of the poor man's ewe lamb, he declared that the man who took it was worthy of death. The king had spoken a word of power, and when Nathan said, "You are the man," the king had pronounced his own death; and nothing but a prophetic assurance that Yahweh would spare him could deliver him from the sentence. But death had been pronounced, and it fell upon the child of David and Bathsheba; the death-bearing word could not be recalled (2 S 12:1-18).

The woman accused of adultery (Nm 5:12-31) must take an oath of execration, which is then to be written. The writing is then washed off into water, and the woman must drink the water. Unless the virtue

in her is strong enough to repel the curse, the curse will destroy her power to bear.

These examples illustrate the Israelite conception of the word as a dynamic reality. I think they also illustrate the fact that the dynamism is rooted in the dynamism of the personal will of the person who utters the word. They show also that the word possesses an enduring reality which may outlive the person who utters the word.

Otto Procksch calls attention to the dynamic and the dianoetic elements in the Israelite concept of the word.¹⁶ Here we notice that Hebrew uses "word" in contexts where in English we use "thing." The word is the reality, and it is the reality as intelligible. In this element the word is thought of as *name*. As we noticed above, the name is the intelligibility of the thing; if we do not know what to call it, we do not know what it is. But in addition, the thing does not become a reality until it gets a name, until it becomes intelligible. The Babylonian epic of creation *Enuma Elish* begins:

When on high the heaven had not been named,
Firm ground below had not been called by name . . .
When no gods whatever had been brought into being,
Uncalled by name, their destinies undetermined—¹⁷

When man gives a name, he posits the reality of the word. To know the name, and still more to confer the name, gives one power of a kind over the thing named.¹⁸ The *OT* contains instances of the change of the name of a conquered king by the conqueror; this indicated his power over the satellite, as a father's power over his child is exhibited in the conferring of the name: Eliakim to Jehoiakim (2 K 23:35) and Mattaniah to Zedekiah (2 K 24:17). Hence we may say that the conferring of a name is an exercise of the dynamism of the person communicating itself to the thing named and thus giving it reality. The knowledge of the name is an exercise of the dynamism of the

¹⁶ Cf. Procksch, *op. cit.* 4, 92.

¹⁷ Translation by Speiser, in Pritchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁸ In Gn 2:19 Yahweh introduces the animals to the man that the man may give them names. He thus "rules" them, as in Gn 1:26-28. In the 125th chapter of the Egyptian Book of the Dead the deceased is to say: "Evil will never happen to me in this land or in this Broad-Hall of the Two Justices, because I know the names of these gods who are in it, the followers of the great God" (the forty-two assessors before whom the deceased is tried). He then addresses each of the forty-two by name.

person in the reverse direction, by which the person includes the thing (the "word") within the scope of his own person. Even in a more metaphysical view of understanding, one of the words to describe the process was *apprehendere*. But Thorleif Boman is no doubt largely correct in the contrast he draws between the Hebrew word *dābār* and the Greek *logos*. The root *ḏbr* is understood by most philologists to signify radically "to drive, to get behind and push." Thus the personality puts itself behind the word and drives it into the external world; but it comes with that which it drives. The Greek *legein*, on the other hand, means radically "to gather, to put in order." This mental process is expressed in the word; but the Hebrew word issues in the deed, the Greek word in understanding.¹⁹ I would myself prefer to substitute *thing* for *deed* in this analysis.

One should not attempt to synthesize a voluntaristic or a pragmatic system of Hebrew thought upon these conceptions. Israelite thought stoutly resists synthesis at every point; the Israelites ignored the paradoxes and contradictions which a speculative synthesis must eliminate. We find certain basic patterns, somewhat loosely organized and not well correlated with each other; these are the background against which the conception of the divine word must be seen, as I trust the following exposition will make clearer.

THE PROPHETIC WORD OF YAHWEH

Oskar Grether collected the statistics on the use of the phrases "word of Yahweh," "words of Yahweh," and "word" in other contexts when it means the divine word.²⁰ He found that the phrase "word of Yahweh" in 225 of 241 occurrences, about 93 per cent, designates the word of Yahweh received or declared by a prophet, and concludes rightly that it is a technical term for the prophetic experience. When the plural "words of Yahweh" is used, over half of the occurrences designate the prophetic word. When the word is used outside of the genitive relationship with Yahweh, about 300 occurrences, over three fourths of these designate the prophetic word.

Jer 18: 18 reads: "Instruction (*tōrāh*) shall not pass from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor word from the prophet." We have here three classes of men whose mission it was to speak with a certain

¹⁹ Cf. Boman, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-56.

²⁰ Cf. Grether, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-80.

authority. *Tôrâh* was traditional instruction, particularly in the cult, but also in moral and religious matters, and there is no doubt that Malachi, the last of the prophets, expresses the ancient attitude of Israel towards the priest and his instruction (Mal 2:7): "The lips of the priest shall guard knowledge, and they shall look for *tôrâh* from his mouth; for he is the messenger of Yahweh of hosts."²¹ The sage gave counsel in virtue of his wisdom, which was a gift of Yahweh; when he possessed wisdom in an excellent degree, like Ahithophel, his counsel was as if one consulted an oracle of God (2 S 16:23).²²

These three had in common that they spoke with a certain authority; they differed in the type of charism which gave them authority. The priest was a vessel of tradition, a priestly tradition which ultimately went back to the foundations of Israel; he was its custodian and interpreter in his own generation. The sage spoke in virtue of a gift which enabled him to form wise sayings; but the sayings, like those of the priest, were his own. The word of the prophet differed from *tôrâh* and wisdom and excelled them. The most frequent phrase to describe the prophetic experience is "the word of Yahweh came to X." This is somewhat nuanced from what appears to be the synonymous expression, "Yahweh said to X." When the word of Yahweh comes, the background of the word as a dynamic entity with its own distinct reality comes into view. The word is a *something* which the prophet receives. As a something it is an expansion of a living personality, who in this case is Yahweh Himself; and it has the power which only that uniquely powerful personality can give it. Its first effect is upon the prophet himself. When Yahweh puts His hand to the mouth of Jeremiah, He puts His word in the mouth of the prophet (Jer 1:9). It is the conscious possession of the word which distinguishes the true prophet from the false, and revelation from human invention:

Thus says the Lord of hosts:
 "Listen not to the words of the prophets
 Who prophesy to you!

²¹ J. L. McKenzie, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74 (1955) 22-27; Gunnar Ostborn, *Tora in the Old Testament* (Lund, 1945); Joachim Begrich, "Die priesterliche Tora," *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 66 (1936) 63-88.

²² Cf. P. A. H. de Boer, "The Counsellor," *Supplements to Vetus testamentum* 3 (1955) 42-71.

They fill you with vain hopes;
 They speak a vision from their own minds,
 Not from the mouth of the Lord,
 Saying continually to those who despise the word of the Lord,
 'All shall be well with you,'
 While to every one who follows the stubborn promptings of his own mind they
 say,
 'No harm shall come upon you.'
 For which of them has stood in the council of the Lord,
 To see and hear His word? . . .
 I sent not the prophets, yet they ran;
 I spoke not to them, yet they prophesied.
 But if only they had stood in my council,
 And had listened to my words,
 They would have turned my people from their evil course,
 And from their evil doings. . . .
 I have heard what the prophets say,
 Who prophesy lies in my name, saying,
 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.'
 Will the mind of the prophets ever turn,
 Who prophesy lies, who prophesy the delusion of their own minds,
 Thinking to make my people forget my name—
 Through their dreams which they tell one another—
 As their fathers forgot my name for the Baal?
 The prophet who has a dream,
 Let him tell his dream!
 And he who has my word,
 Let him speak my word in sincerity!
 What has the straw to do with the wheat?"
 Is the oracle of the Lord (Jer 23:16-18, 21-22, 25-28).²³

The word is not the only prophetic experience, but it is the distinctive prophetic experience, the possession of which makes a man a prophet. Both Grether and Procksch call our attention to instances in which the vision is rendered intelligible by the word.²⁴ Micaiah ben Imlah first describes his vision (1 K 22:17) and then explains with the preface, "Hear the word of Yahweh" (1 K 22:19-23). Isaiah's temple vision is followed by the word of Yahweh (Is 6:1 ff.); Ezekiel's vision of the chariot is followed by the word (Ez 1:1-2:8), as is Amos' vision of the plumb line (Amos 7:7-9) and the basket of fruit (Amos 8:1-3),

²³ Quoted from *The Complete Bible: An American Translation* (Chicago, 1939).

²⁴ Cf. Grether, *op. cit.*, p. 98; Procksch, *op. cit.* 4, 92-93.

and Jeremiah's vision of the boiling pot (Jer 1:13-19). Amos' vision of the basket of fruit and Jeremiah's vision of the almond-tree twig (Jer 1:11-12) both exhibit a peculiar conception of the power of the word. The word *qayış*, "basket," suggests the word *qēş*, "end"; the word *šāqēd*, "almond," suggests the word *šōqēd*, "watching." It would be a mistake to consider these mere plays on words. Here again the power-laden word posits the reality which it signifies, and by doing so it makes the vision intelligible. Baskets and almonds are commonplace articles; no one else who sees them thinks of them as heavy with portent of disaster. But to the prophet the names of these articles are the word of Yahweh, which is not spoken idly nor without meaning. Why would Yahweh show the prophet a *qayış* or a *šāqēd*? The word itself tells why. And the mind of the prophet, apprehending the *qayış* or the *šāqēd*, transforms the reality, the thing (Hebrew "word"), into the reality, the word-thing, of *qēş* or *šōqēd*. The dianoetic becomes the dynamic.

The word of Yahweh received is a dynamic agent upon the prophet himself. It is put most simply in Amos 3:8:

The lion roars—who does not fear?

The Lord Yahweh speaks—who does not prophesy?

Jeremiah spoke of the assimilation of the word as a putting of the words in his mouth; Ezekiel, with a more detailed imagery, ate the scroll on which the words were written. Although it was a scroll full of threats and curses, he found it sweet to his taste (Ez 2:9—3:3). We do not suppose that Ezekiel literally performed this symbolic action; he meant to convey his conviction that the word of Yahweh passed into the prophet, and furthermore that he entirely accepted the word. It was disaster for his nation, but the word of Yahweh was sweet whatever it conveyed. Jeremiah too found the word of Yahweh his joy and delight (Jer 15:16). But he did not always find it a joy. To proclaim the threatening word of Yahweh to an incredulous people made him a laughingstock, a reproach, and a derision. For this reason he tried to withhold it and to keep silence. But he found it impossible to contain; the word of Yahweh was like a burning fire shut up in his bones (Jer 20:7-9). The word which the prophet received was an irrepressible power imposed upon him by a stronger personality; and

the strength of that other personality bore down any attempt to suppress the word. Micah described the prophetic experience in similar terms (Mi 3:8):

But I am full of power, the spirit of Yahweh, justice, and strength,
To announce to Jacob his iniquity, and to Israel his sin.

To Jeremiah the word of Yahweh is "fury," which he is weary of attempting to contain; therefore he is to pour it out on all his people (Jer 6:11). With such passages before us, it is not enough to represent the biblical conception of the prophetic experience of the word as a simple hearing. It is the experience of a distinct and compelling reality. The word of Yahweh, like the word of man, is a release of the power of the personality which utters it. He who receives the word is invaded by the personality of the speaker; when the speaker is Yahweh, the transforming influence of the word exceeds the influence of any human speech.

It is a commonplace among interpreters that the spirit of Yahweh plays little or no part as an inspiring agent in the classical prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries; it does not become prominent until the Exile. Yet the difference between word and spirit is not as great as might appear. For the spirit is the breath of Yahweh, and the word is produced with the breath; he who hears the word of Yahweh, also feels His spirit.²⁵ It is emphasis on word rather than spirit which gives classical prophecy its distinctive character. The spirit is an inspiring agent to action rather than to speech, especially in Jg and S. It falls upon Othniel (Jg 3:10), Gideon (Jg 6:34), Jephthah (Jg 11:29), and Samson (Jg 14:6, 19; 15:14) and moves them to extraordinary feats of strength or heroism. It falls upon Saul and moves him to ecstatic prophecy (1 S 10:10) and to the campaign in defense of Jabesh-gilead (1 S 11:16). It falls upon David when he is anointed king (1 S 16:13). The spirit also is a creative force (Gn 1:2) and a principle of life (Gn 2:7; Ps 104:30). But the spirit, like the wind with which it is identified, is violent and unpredictable and mysterious. The word, on the contrary, is the principle of intelligibility; it defines what it signifies and identifies the speaker. Unless the word comes with the spirit, there is no revelation and response, no personal encounter.

²⁵ Cf. Jacques Guillet, *Thèmes bibliques* (Paris, 1951) pp. 208-55.

THE DYNAMISM OF THE PROPHETIC WORD

This is the effect of the word upon the prophet; but the effect of the word of Yahweh declared by the prophet is even more profound and exhibits the true dynamism of the word in its distinct reality. Frequently the word of Yahweh is said "to be fulfilled" (as in 1 K 2:27, the word which predicted the downfall of the priestly house of Eli) or "to be established" (as in Jer 29:10, the promise of restoration from exile). In these phrases is described the coming into existence of the thing signified by the word, the "fulness" of the reality of word-thing. When man speaks, his word may not be established (Is 8:10); when this happens his word is not true.

The word of Yahweh may be called sacramental in the sense that it effects what it signifies. When Yahweh posits the word-thing, nothing can prevent its emergence; and it is through the word which identifies the object that He brings it into being. Events occur according to the prophetic word of Yahweh, such as the annihilation of the house of Jeroboam proclaimed by Ahijah (1 K 15:29) and of the house of Baasha proclaimed by Jehu (1 K 16:12), and the foundation of Jericho by Hiel in the lives of his first-born and his youngest proclaimed by Joshua (1 K 16:34). So Ahaziah died according to the word of Elijah (2 K 1:17); the famine of the siege of Samaria was ended according to the word of Yahweh (2 K 7:16); and the deaths of Ahab and Jezebel (2 K 9:26, 36) and Jehu's extermination of the house of Ahab occur according to the word of Yahweh proclaimed by Elijah (2 K 10:17). That we meet in such passages more than the idea of prediction-fulfilment is shown by other passages which more explicitly affirm the power inherent in the word as agent. When Yahweh puts His word in the mouth of Jeremiah, the prophet receives power over peoples and kingdoms to uproot and to tear down, to destroy and to ruin, to build and to plant (Jer 1:9-10). The power of the prophet lies simply in his charism to utter the prophetic word; through his utterance he effects the destruction and the building which he proclaims. The word of Yahweh is like fire, like a hammer that shatters rock (Jer 23:29). Yahweh hews with the prophets and kills with the words of his mouth (Hos 6:5). Probably the same belief is reflected obscurely in a more popular form when the elders of Bethlehem come trembling to meet Samuel and ask whether his coming is "peace" (1 S 16:4); for a

prophet's utterance is power-laden and fearful. It appears also in the popular anecdote of Elisha and the irreverent small boys, who were immediately devoured by bears when the prophet cursed them in the name of Yahweh (2 K 2:24). The curse of any one was fearful, but the curse of the prophet was sure to effect what it signified.

The word which goes out of the mouth of Yahweh is righteousness and it does not return (Is 45:23). For a word to "return" would be to lose its reality, to fail of its destiny to become a word-thing. This is more explicit in Is 55:10-11:

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
 And does not return thither until it has watered the earth,
 And makes it give birth and sprout, and gives seed to the sower and bread to
 the eater,
 So it shall be, the word which proceeds from my mouth, it shall not return to
 me empty,
 Unless it accomplishes what I will, and does that for which I sent it.

The rain and the snow do not "return"; neither does the word uttered by Yahweh. It is as infallible in its mission as the forces of nature. Like the forces of nature, it is endowed with a distinct active reality. As it does not return to Yahweh, so Yahweh does not take it back (Is 31:2). In a sense, the word of Yahweh partakes of the eternity of Yahweh Himself (Is 40:6-8):

All flesh is grass, and its beauty like the blossom of the field;
 The grass withers, the flower fades when the wind of Yahweh blows upon it; so
 the people is grass;
 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of Yahweh stands forever.

This does not mean, obviously, that the word-thing posited by the reality of Yahweh is as eternal as Yahweh; the word is here considered as an externalization of the personality of Yahweh, as an expression of His will. It endures, therefore, as long as the will which it expresses. There is no agent which can destroy it, corrupt it, or frustrate it.

We may notice the dynamic reality of the word in Is 9:8: "The Lord has sent a word on Jacob, and it will fall upon Israel." What gives this verse its peculiar force is the succeeding context, which describes a series of coming disasters. Procksch has aptly spoken of the "explo-

sive force" of the word in this passage, and the line does seem in a strange way to anticipate the modern delayed-action bomb, which falls quietly to lie upon the ground until it is fused.²⁶ The word of Yahweh does not always realize itself instantly, and this makes it more terrifying; once uttered, it falls upon its object, and no one knows when it will fulfil itself. But it will infallibly fulfil itself, and the full reality will be that designated by the word.²⁷

Grether and Procksch have drawn our attention to the word of Yahweh as the nerve or the hinge of biblical history.²⁸ When we recall the fact that the history of the Old Testament is compiled from more sources than we can count, composed orally or in writing over a period of several centuries, it is indeed remarkable that the compilers, without planning it so, forged a chain of history whose links are the word of Yahweh. The first event recorded in the Old Testament as we have it is the utterance of God which initiates the creative process (Gn 1:3).

²⁶ Cf. Procksch, *op. cit.* 4, 95.

²⁷ Wis 18:14-16 demands special treatment (*The Complete Bible: An American Translation*):

"For when gentle silence enveloped everything,
And night was midway of her swift course,
Your all-powerful word leaped from heaven, from the royal throne,
A stern warrior, into the midst of the doomed land,
Carrying for a sharp sword your undisguised command,
And stood still, and filled all things with death,
And touched heaven but walked upon the earth."

Here the word is the agent of the destruction of the first-born of Egypt (Ex 12:29-30). In Ex the agent is Yahweh Himself (12:29) or Yahweh and "the destroyer" (12:23), not otherwise identified. Grether, *op. cit.*, p. 150, is right in saying that such a heightened personification is not found in the Hebrew books of the OT. Bousset-Gressmann state categorically that the passage is more than a poetic personification; cf. *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (Tübingen, 1926) p. 347. Joseph Reider states with equal assurance that "the personification of *logos* here is purely poetical"; *The Book of Wisdom* (New York, 1957) p. 210. I would incline to the opinion of Bousset-Gressmann, who include the passage among instances of the hypostatization of divine attributes as a substitute for God and the divine name which is characteristic of later Judaism. Where Ex spoke of Yahweh Himself, the Alexandrian poet spoke of His word, as elsewhere the writers of this period spoke of the name or the presence or the angel. "Word" here has no particular force, although the antecedents of its conception as a distinct reality are found in a number of the passages cited in this article. But none of these passages suggest a personal reality like that of Wis. This new element is to be attributed to the general doctrine of hypostatization rather than to a development of the concept of word.

²⁸ Cf. Grether, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-35; Procksch, *op. cit.* 4, 94. Cf. also Johannes Hempel, "Wort Gottes und Schicksal," *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet* (Tübingen, 1950) pp. 222-32.

In the subsequent history the word of Yahweh occurs frequently; we notice that it comes at Israel's crises of history, declaring that which it brings to pass. Yahweh Himself announces that He will destroy man by a deluge (Gn 6:7). The history of salvation is initiated by Yahweh's call to Abraham to go out from his country to a land which Yahweh will show him (Gn 12:1). The first step in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their formation into the people of the covenant is the word of Yahweh to Moses (Ex 3). In the review of the history of the Exodus and the wandering which is found in the historical prologue to Dt (1-3), the word of Yahweh moves the Israelites at each step from Horeb to Canaan (Dt 1:6; 2:2; 2:18; 2:31; 3:1; 3:27-28). The word of Yahweh occurs even more frequently in the book of Joshua. The call of Samuel ends the period of the Judges and opens the period of transition to the monarchy (1 S 3). The word of Yahweh authenticates the desire of the Israelites for a king (1 S 8:7) and designates Saul as the king (1 S 9:17; 10:17-24). It is the word of Yahweh which rejects Saul (1 S 15:10) and selects David as his successor (1 S 16:12). At the high point of David's reign the word of Yahweh given to Nathan establishes the eternity of the dynasty of David (2 S 7). But it is the word of Yahweh to the same Nathan which sets in motion the disasters which follow David's sins of adultery and murder (2 S 12). It is the word of Yahweh declared by Shemaiah to Jeroboam which divides the kingdom of Israel in two (1 K 11:31 ff.). The word of Elijah declares and consummates the fall of the house of Ahab (1 K 19:1-9; 21:17-24), and a prophetic messenger declares the word of Yahweh which makes Jehu the king who executes the word of the prophet (2 K 9:6-10). In the great crisis of the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, the word of Yahweh to Isaiah declares and accomplishes the deliverance of Jerusalem (2 K 19:20-24).

While certain questions are and ought to be raised about the historical character of some of these episodes and about the sincerity of some of these prophets, these questions have no relevance to our present study, which is the biblical belief in the word of Yahweh. There can be no doubt that the character of the compilation itself as outlined in these passages shows the Israelite conception of history as a process governed by Yahweh and moved to a term intended by Him. History also is "the word of Yahweh," a reality which fulfils the utterance of

Yahweh. The word of history is dynamic and dianoetic: dynamic in that it accomplishes what it signifies, dianoetic in that it makes the historical process intelligible. History is then revelation of the purpose of Yahweh, but it is more; as the word is a release of the psychic energy of the personality, so history is a revelation of the character and personality of Him whose word it is. The word affirms not only the thing signified but also the person who utters it. -

We may conclude our survey of the dynamic and dianoetic word of the prophet by noticing that there is nothing in ancient Near Eastern religion and literature which suggests this Israelite conception of the word. One may adduce the "determination of the fates" mentioned above; but there is no true parallel. The determination of the fates is a vague and undefined conception compared to the Israelite divine word in history and prophecy. The difference, it seems, lies in the Israelite conception of the word as an extension of the personality; the divine word in Mesopotamia was also a power-laden entity, but we observed that it lapses into magic. Israelite belief transformed an idea which was common and made of it what it is not in Mesopotamia or Egypt: the self-revelation of Yahweh the speaker. The word is communication, a personal encounter between the speaker and the listener, and it demands a response.

THE CREATIVE WORD OF YAHWEH

When we turn to the word of Yahweh as a creative agent, we reach a point of contact with the literature of Mesopotamia and Egypt quoted above; for it is in this capacity that the divine word appears most frequently.²⁹ The creative word of Yahweh, according to modern

²⁹ Boman, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51, insists with perhaps more energy than is necessary that there is no *sermo operatorius* in the OT which corresponds to the divine word in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Boman does not include in the canon Wis, which reads (9:1) "Who made all in your word." Even Ps 33:6, Boman thinks, is merely a conversion into the passive of the sentence: "And God said: Let there be a heaven." Boman is no doubt correct in insisting that the Israelite conception of the creative word is to be distinguished from the creative word of Egypt and Mesopotamia; but it is not easy to draw the distinction as sharply as he desires. Whether the Yahwist in the creation account of Gn 2 deliberately rejected the foreign ideology (Egyptian) as implying emanation and chose instead the more primitive conception of creation by work is a challenging assumption. The mind of the Yahwist was more subtle and sophisticated than appears on the surface, and it is not impossible that he wished to convey this idea. Certainly it was foreign to his thought to conceive the divine word as a god, as it was conceived in the theology of Memphis.

critical dating of the books of the Old Testament, is a comparatively late phenomenon in Israelite literature, appearing first, in all probability, in Second Isaiah about 550 B.C. As we have seen, "to call the hosts of heaven by name" (Is 40:26) is to bring them into being; so also to call the heavens so that they stand up (Is 48:13). But, as Grether points out, Second Isaiah combines two concepts of creation: by word and by work.³⁰ The hand of the workman appears in 40:12, 22; 48:13. This is without doubt the older Israelite conception and is found in Gn 2.

The same combination appears in Gn 1, which is most probably to be dated after Second Isaiah; here Elohim is said to "make" various parts of creation. But the "making" has been sharply reduced in concreteness from the making described, for example, in Gn 2:7, and is in the final form of the text scarcely more than a restatement of the accomplishment of the creative word. If Gn 1 is to some extent consciously a response to the Mesopotamian creation myth, as it probably is, it is interesting to note that the creation of Marduk (which is only imperfectly preserved) is creation by work and not by word.³¹ The emphasis in Gn 1 evidently falls on the creative word, and it must have been the deliberate purpose of the writer to propose a more subtle and less anthropomorphic idea of creation by substituting the word. Therefore it is vital to his scheme that Yahweh pronounces the name of the things He creates, thus giving them reality and intelligibility. The creation by word is still more explicit in Ps 33:6, 9:

By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made,
 And by the breath of His mouth all their hosts. . . .
 He spoke, and it came to be;
 He commanded, and it arose.

And in Ps 147:15-18:

He counts the number of the stars,
 To all of them He gives names. . . .
 He sends His utterance to the earth
 His word runs very swiftly.
 He gives snow like wool,
 He scatters frost like ashes.

³⁰ Cf. Grether, *op. cit.*, p. 137; J. L. McKenzie, in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 14 (1952) 26-33.

³¹ Cf. translation by Speiser, in Pritchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

He casts His ice like crumbs,
 Who can withstand His cold?
 He sends His word and melts them,
 When He blows with His wind the waters flow.

Here the word appears again as an agent with a distinct reality; it accomplishes the will of Yahweh in nature as it does in history. It may be said that in this conception of the word nature, like history, is the word of Yahweh; like history, it is a revelation of Himself. Another Psalm tells how the word-thing which Yahweh utters in His creative act is heard (Ps 19:2-5):

The heavens tell the glory of El,
 And the sky declares the work of His hands.
 Day pours forth speech to day,
 And night declares knowledge to night.
 There is no utterance and no words,
 Their voice is not heard,
 But their voice goes forth in all the earth,
 And their words to the end of the world.

Heaven and sky, day and night, and all the course of nature do not themselves speak, but they are nevertheless heard because they are a word, the word-thing emitted by their creator. What they speak is the personality of Him who utters the word. Man experiences Yahweh in what Yahweh has created.

THE LAW AS WORD

Modern critics attach great importance to the "Deuteronomic" movement in Israelite religion and literature. The opinions of scholars on this movement are too varied and numerous to admit of simple classification, and a full examination of these opinions would be out of place here.²² For our present purpose it is sufficient to notice that the Deuteronomic movement produced the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic edition of Israelite history—a work which some scholars would call an independent Deuteronomic history extending from the conquest of Canaan to the end of the kingdom of Judah in 587 B.C. The earliest phases of this movement cannot be dated before the seventh century B.C. Hence, with reference to our topic, the Deu-

²² Cf. A. Robert and A. Feuillet, *Introduction à la Bible* (Tournai, 1957) 367-71, 812-13.

teronomic movement presupposes the idea of the prophetic word which we have sketched.

The Deuteronomic movement seeks to catch the fleeting charism of the prophetic word and to fix it in a formula. This formula is law understood in a broad sense as a code of life; and the Deuteronomic revision of Israelite law differs from earlier legal codes in its effort to make this revealed word such a code of life. Israelite law codes contain several words for law, each of which identifies a particular type of law; it is not always easy to determine the type designated, but the words are not mere poetic synonyms introduced for variety of language. These words are *dābār*, "word"; *mišpāṭ*, "judgment"; *mišwāh*, "commandment"; *ḥuqqāh*, "statute" (following the customary English traditions). Albrecht Alt proposed a distinction between casuistic law, which states a judicial precedent and is couched in a conditional form, and apodictic law, which is a direct imperative; this distinction is accepted by all scholars, although the origin of these two formulae is no doubt more complex than Alt thought.³³ The use of "word" to designate an apodictic law is older than the Deuteronomic movement, and indeed older than the use of "word" to indicate the charism of the prophet. Such a law was understood as a direct command of Yahweh. Thus Moses is said to write on tablets the words of the covenant, the ten words (Ex 34:28). The ten words are called the covenant (Dt 4:13); these are the ten words which Yahweh spoke on the mountain in the midst of fire (Dt 10:4). The Decalogue was the "word" of Yahweh in the most basic and fundamental manner. One does not see in this conception of word either the dynamism or the hypostatization of the word which appears in the prophets, but it is the rudimentary phase of the same development.

Deuteronomy extends this conception of word to the entire law given in the book. No one is to add to or subtract from this word (Dt 4:2). Indeed, this word is set against the word of the prophet, which is not to be accepted as true unless it harmonizes with the word of the law (Dt 13:1-5). Yahweh has brought this word near to Israel and put it in the mouth and heart of Israel that they may keep it (Dt 30:14). For this word is the life of Israel (Dt 32:47); man does not live by

³³ Cf. Albrecht Alt, "Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts," *Kleine Schriften* 1 (Munich, 1953) 278-332.

bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh (Dt 8:3).⁴⁴ It seems most probable here that the Deuteronomic compilers have been affected by the prophetic conception of the word, which they now apply to their compilation of law. In some respects this may be called a weakening of the concept. The written word has not the vitality and the urgency of the spoken word, nor is it so readily perceived as an externalization of the person. The sense of communication is less vivid. It is a step removed from the experience of hearing. The Deuteronomic compilers were not unaware of this, and they conceived Israel as a living reality in which through their compilation each generation experienced anew the revelation of Horeb. So the word is "near" (Dt 30:14); the covenant is made with the present generation, and the compilers insist that the Israelites hear the word "today" (Dt 4:40; 5:3; 11:26-28). The sense of immediacy would be preserved by the tradition of the saving deeds of Yahweh, kept real by their recounting in each generation (Dt 6:20-25; 8:1ff.; 11:2-8).

Here we are only a step from the last development of the concept of word: the sacred books, and in particular the *tôrâh*, the Law, as

⁴⁴ Boman remarks that the layman could easily misunderstand Dt 8:3 by thinking that the word of God is a substance which man can eat. The meaning of the verse, as is generally understood, is that man can live "by everything which the command of God makes." Here and in other passages in which the word of God appears as a distinct entity, he says, it is evident that the spoken word is conceived metaphorically. At the risk of being thought a layman and of running against a general consent, I must depart from Boman here. When he says metaphorical, he seems to dismiss the whole thing as not serious. I take it that metaphorical (*bildlich*) means the conscious use of metaphor to describe an object in terms of another object to which it is similar, but with which it is not identical; the cloud is not the daughter of earth and water nor the nursling of the sky, if one must be precise about it. But I object to the reduction of characteristic Hebrew patterns of thought and speech to mere metaphor, which is only an obstacle to the genuine insight of truth through dialectics. Poetry also expresses truth, and it often expresses it better than dialectics. To the Israelites, as to us, the reality of the word was more than a *status vocis*. We have our way of affirming this reality, they had theirs. To us their way is metaphorical. But when the Israelite said that man lived by the word which proceeded from the mouth of Yahweh, he did not conceive it as an edible substance. He believed that life in its origin and continuance depended upon the word of Yahweh that life should exist and remain. For man, who can obey the word of Yahweh or resist, the word which gives him life is not a simple fiat, but a word which determines the manner in which he should live. The animals sustain their lives by food; man cannot sustain his by food alone, for to reject the word of Yahweh is death. This was not mere metaphor.

the word of God. It is in this sense that the "word" is mentioned in Ps 119, the praise of the Law; it has become synonymous with command, statute, ordinance, precept, law, way, decree. Ps 119 groups these words in each of its strophes and finds a new formula of praise for each. The Law has assimilated into itself the word of the prophet, the *lórah* of the priest, and the wisdom of the sage; each of these earlier charisms has lost its identity in the Law.

I remarked above that this development was to some extent a weakening of the older concept of word. It should be added that the conception of the written word of God is a revolutionary religious development of incalculable influence. The concept has been weakened, but some of the dynamism and dianoeticism of the prophetic word has passed to the collection of the sacred books. They become the self-revelation of the personality of Yahweh, and only in them can one experience the mysterious being whom the prophets knew. They acquire the creative and vivifying power which was attributed to the spoken word.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At the risk of oversimplifying and overschematizing, I think we can say that the developments and refinements of the Israelite idea of word show a certain consistency of pattern. The basis of this consistency lies in the conception of the spoken word as a distinct reality charged with power. It has power because it emerges from a source of power which, in releasing it, must in a way release itself. The basic concept of the word is the word-thing. The power of the word, as we have said so often, posits the reality which it signifies. But in so doing it also posits the reality which speaks the word. No one can speak without revealing himself; and the reality which he posits is identified with himself. Thus the word is dianoetic as well as dynamic. It confers intelligibility upon the thing, and it discloses the character of the person who utters the word.

Most Old Testament scholars, I think, wonder why any one has ever thought it necessary to appeal to any source beyond the *OT* to explain John's application of *logos* to Jesus Christ. The scope of this paper does not include the *NT* use of the term; but we may briefly suggest the

connection.⁸⁵ A survey of *OT* use such as I present here indicates that *OT* thought is a sufficient explanation for the appearance of the term. If we place the *NT logos* against this background, which I have called rich and complex, I think we shall see how *logos* is one of the great *NT* "fulfilments." And I think we shall see better the meaning of Jesus Christ to the author of the fourth Gospel and the Church for which he spoke. It was scarcely by mere coincidence or by the casual influence of Stoicism or Philo Judaeus that John has begun his prologue with the Word, thus concluding what Edmond Jacob calls "a unique history which begins with the word of God pronounced in creation and ends with the word made flesh."⁸⁶ In Jesus Christ is fulfilled the word as a distinct being; as a dynamic creative entity; as that which gives form and intelligibility to the reality which it signifies; as the self-revelation of God; as a point of personal encounter between God and man.

⁸⁵ I cannot forbear from translating this paragraph from Eichrodt, *op. cit.* 2, 37-38: ". . . The *NT* conception is rooted in the original characteristics of word and spirit. The word retains its proper function as revealer of the divine will, not only where, endowed with its own *dynamis*, it shows itself powerful as the joyous message of divine salvation, grows, expands, runs, cannot be bound, and as judge of the intention and thoughts of the heart, sets each man before the decision, but especially where, through its identification with Jesus, it becomes an independent person. . . . The designation of Christ as the *Logos* in Jn 1:1 is as closely connected with the *OT* conception as it is in sharp contrast to the Hellenistic *logos*, in that it knows nothing of either a world-mind in the pantheistic sense nor of a 'saving idea' in the idealistic-mystic sense, but sees embodied in the personal life of a human being the will of a personal God for the world and the kingdom in all its dynamic movement. By the recapitulation of the main elements of biblical revelation in a 'Word' the revelation, as the disclosure of the divine will, opposes the personal-spiritual mode of the divine dealing with men to all physical divinization or mystical union, and thereby preserves the mystery of the divine majesty while at the same time it brings into unity creation and salvation, order and new creation, the static and the dynamic, present and future; all this was possible only through the application of the *OT* conception of the word of God in its fulness to the Saviour and can therefore be understood only in the light of the *OT*."

⁸⁶ Jacob, *op. cit.*, p. 104.