

to discredit it, but rather because, as in the time of Philo, the belief in revelation is held to have no greater historical validity than the myths of the Greeks, though in modern times a greater verisimilitude is lent to this argument by the greater knowledge we now possess of similar myths among other peoples. Logically the argument is still, as Philo characterized it, the refusal to distinguish between Scripture and myth, except that nowadays more people are apt to refuse to distinguish between them.

When they deny the belief that God is infinite in the three senses in which He has been described as infinite it is again not because new facts have been discovered to discredit this belief but rather because, like Job of old, they refuse to acknowledge that one cannot find out the deep things of God and to attain unto the purpose of the Almighty. Logically it is still the same old question whether God is like the world or unlike the world, whether He is part of nature or is above nature, leading on the one hand to the assertion that our knowledge of nature is now greater than in the past and on the other hand to the contention that with all our increased knowledge of nature the facts thereof, not only in their raw state but even in their scientific correlations, are still susceptible of the age-old interpretation of rationalized scriptural theology.

The Philonic type of religious philosophy may be described after Matthew 9:17 as a process whereby old wine is put into new bottles. The speculation about God in modern philosophy, ever since the seventeenth century, is still a process of putting old wine into new bottles. There is only the following difference: the wine is no longer of the old vintage of the revelational theology of Scripture; it is of the old vintage of the natural or verbal theology of Greek philosophy. Sometimes, however, even the bottles are not new; it is only the labels that are new — and one begins to wonder how many of the latter-day philosophies of religion would not prove to be only philosophies of labels.

2

EXTRADEICAL AND INTRADEICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF PLATONIC IDEAS *

THE history of philosophy, especially that philosophy which hired itself out as a handmaiden to theology, is a succession of conflicting views and of attempts to reconcile them. Philosophy, which affects a language of its own, would describe it as a dialectical process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Theology, which occasionally stoops to speak the language of ordinary men, would describe it as a process of peacemaking between mutually misunderstood friendly opinions. But, while in theology peacemakers are pronounced blessed and are they who inherit the kingdom of dogma, in philosophy synthesizers are often blasted and castigated as infringers upon the Law of Contradiction.

In my talk tonight I shall deal with two opposite interpretations of Platonic ideas and the attempts to reconcile them, tracing their history through successive generations of descendants of these Platonic ideas down to the philosophies of Descartes and Spinoza. I shall try to tell the story briefly, simply, sketchily, confining myself to highlights and to the main plot of the story, without going into the intricacies of the topics that come into play. My purpose in selecting this topic for a lecture dedicated to the memory of Whitehead is to illustrate to some extent the truth of his saying that "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."¹

* Delivered as the Alfred North Whitehead Lecture at Harvard University, 1960. Published in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 22 (1961): 3-32. Parts of Sections I and II, in expanded form, were delivered as the Grace A. and Theodore de Laguna Lecture at Bryn Mawr College, 1957, and as one of the three Walter Turner Candler Lectures at Emory University, 1959.

¹ A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York, 1929), p. 53.

I. LOGOS

Among the things which Plato somehow left unexplained about his theory of ideas is the question of how these ideas are related to God. His statements on this point create conflicting impressions. Sometimes he uses language which lends itself to the interpretation that the ideas have an existence external to God, either ungenerated and coeternal with God² or produced and made by God.³ They are thus extradeical. Sometimes, however, he uses language which lends itself to the interpretation that the ideas are the thoughts of God.⁴ They are thus intradeical. Modern students of Plato, from Karl Friedrich Hermann to our own Raphael Demos, try to solve these as well as all other real or seeming contradictions by a method which may be called the method of periodization. They assume that these different views about ideas in their relation to God were held by Plato at different periods of his life, and so they classify his dialogues according to certain chronological schemes and speak of early dialogues, middle dialogues, and later dialogues.

In antiquity, however, students of Plato did not know of this convenient method of exegesis. They followed another method, equally convenient. It may be described as the method of selection and rejection. What the followers of this method did was simply to select one set of statements in Plato and accept them as representative of his true philosophy and to reject all the other statements as of no account. And so among the early students of Plato, there were two opposing interpretations of his ideas in their relation to God. According to one interpretation, the ideas have a real existence outside of God: they are extradeical. According to another interpretation, which identifies Plato's God with mind, they are

² *Timaeus* 28 A, 29 A, 52 B; *Philebus* 15 B.

³ *Republic* X, 597 B-D.

⁴ Early modern students of Plato who found such a view in Plato are listed by Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* II, 1, 4th ed. (Leipzig, 1921), 664 n. 5 (*Plato and the Older Academy*, London, 1876, 243 n. 53).

thoughts of God: they are intradeical.⁵ The problem concerning Platonic Ideas in their relation to God is brought out most poignantly in a statement which comes from the third century, but may reflect earlier traditions. "Plato," it says, "asserted that there are three first principles of the universe, God and matter and idea," and then, referring to the passages which gave rise to the two opposite interpretations of Plato, it goes on to say that, with respect to the idea, Plato at one time says that "it subsists by itself" and at another time says that "it is in thoughts [of God]."⁶

It is to be noted, however, that in the various passages restating the intradeical interpretation, two modes of expression are used. In the passage quoted, the expression used is that the idea is in thoughts (*ἐν νοήμασι*). Similarly in two other passages, the expression used is that "the idea is an incorporeal substance in the thoughts (*ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι*) and fancies of God"⁷ or that "the ideas are substances separate from matter, subsisting in the thoughts and fancies of God, that is, of mind."⁸ But in a fourth passage, the expression used is that "the idea, in relation to God, is His act of thinking (*νόησις*)" and that "whether God be mind (*νοῦς*) or something mental, He has thoughts (*νοήματα*), and these thoughts are eternal and immutable, and, if this be so, there are ideas," and the author then goes on to explain that by saying that there are ideas he means that God acts by certain rules and plans and that the order observed in nature is not the result of mere chance.⁹ Similarly in a fifth passage, the expression used is that the idea is "the thought (*διάνοια*) of God."¹⁰ The difference between these two modes of expression on the face of them would seem to be quite striking. But still, taken in their textual and historical setting, the two mean the same, the difference

⁵ On this interpretation, see M. Jones, "The Ideas as Thoughts of God," *Classical Philology*, 21 (1926): 317-326.

⁶ Pseudo-Justin Martyr, *Cohortatio ad Graecos* 7 (PG 6, 256A).

⁷ Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Placitis Philosophorum* I, 3, 21.

⁸ *Ibid.* I, 10, 3 (309).

⁹ Albinus, *Didaskalos* (ed. P. Louis) IX, 1 and 3.

¹⁰ Hippolytus, *Refut. Omn. Haer.* (ed. P. Wendland) I, 19, 2.

between them being only verbal. When in the third passage, for instance, ideas are spoken of as substances separated from matter and as subsisting in the thoughts of God, it means the same as when in the fourth passage ideas are spoken of as the well regulated and planned process of God's thinking and thoughts. The different form of expression used in the third passage, as well as in the first and second passages, is only to show pointedly how, on the one hand, Plato differed from Aristotle who "admitted the existence of forms or ideas, but not as separated from matter or as patterns of what God has made"¹¹ and how, on the other hand, he differed from Zenonian Stoics, who "profess that the ideas are nothing but the conception of our mind."¹² In fact, all those who interpreted the Platonic ideas intradecally were already under the influence of the Aristotelian teaching that in God, because He is immaterial and a mind (νοῦς) which is always actual, the process of thinking (νόησις) and the object of thinking (νοούμενον) are identical with His own self.¹³ Even Plotinus, who in his interpretation of Plato, as we shall see later, does not identify God with mind, but still believes that according to Plato the ideas are intramental, argues, quite evidently on the basis of that Aristotelian teaching, that though in our thought we distinguish between Nous, which is that which thinks, and the ideas, which are the object of its thinking, still they are both one and even identical, seeing that Nous is always in a state of "repose and unity and calm,"¹⁴ that is, in a state of actuality, for in Nous, as he says elsewhere, there is no transition "from the potentiality of thinking to the actuality of thinking."¹⁵

While these two contrasting methods of interpreting the Platonic ideas were followed by pagan philosophers, a new method — one less convenient but more subtle — was intro-

¹¹ Pseudo-Plutarch, *op. cit.* I, 10, 4.

¹² *Ibid.* I, 10, 5.

¹³ Aristotle, *Metaphysica* XII, 9, 1074b, 34; 1075a, 3-5.

¹⁴ Plotinus, *Enneades* III, 9, 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* II, 5, 3.

duced by the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria. His method may be described as that of harmonization. According to this method, all the statements in Plato, however contradictory they may appear to be, are assumed to be true, and out of all of them a harmonious composite view is molded, in which all the apparently contradictory statements are made to live in peace with each other. Such a method of interpretation was used by Jewish rabbis in their effort to harmonize contradictory statements in the Hebrew Scripture and by Augustine, in his *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, as a way of harmonizing the contradictory statements in the Gospels.

Philo's interpretation of Platonic ideas occurs in his various comments on the story of creation in the Book of Genesis. A composite summary of these comments may be stated as follows: When God by His own good will decided to create this world of ours, He first, out of the ideas which had been in His thought from eternity, constructed an "intelligible world," and this intelligible world He placed in the Logos, which had likewise existed previously from eternity in His thought. Then in the likeness of this intelligible world of ideas, He created this "visible world" of ours.¹⁶

Students of Plato cannot fail seeing a resemblance between this version of the story of creation of the Book of Genesis with the story of creation in Plato's *Timaeus*. As told by Plato in the *Timaeus*, there is a God, who is called the Demiurge, the Creator. Then, besides the Demiurge, there is a model (*παράδειγμα*),¹⁷ which is coeternal with the Demiurge. This model is called the "intelligible animal"¹⁸ and contains in itself "intelligible animals."¹⁹ The Demiurge is said to have looked at the intelligible animal and in its likeness he created this world of ours, which is called "the visible animal."²⁰

Comparing these two accounts of the creation of the world, one can readily see that what Philo was trying to do was to

¹⁶ *Opif.* 5, 20ff. Cf. chapter on "God, the World of Ideas, and the Logos," in my *Philo*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), I, 200-294.

¹⁷ *Timaeus* 29 B.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 39 E.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 30 C.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 29 D.

interpret the story of creation of the Book of Genesis in terms of the story of creation in the *Timaeus*. In fact, we know that this was his purpose.

But, though there is a resemblance between these two accounts of creation, there are also some differences. I shall mention here three such differences.

The *first* difference between them is that in the *Timaeus* the contrast between the pre-existent ideas and the created world is described as a contrast between the "intelligible animal" (ζῷον νοητόν) and the "visible animal" (ζῷον ὁρατόν), whereas in Philo the contrast is described as one between the "intelligible world" (κόσμος νοητός) and the "visible world" (κόσμος ὁρατός). At first sight the change would seem to be only verbal and of no significance. But upon further study of Plato's and Philo's philosophies we may discover that it involves two problems upon which Philo differed from Plato. To begin with, it involves the problem of the existence of a world-soul. To Plato, there is a world-soul, a soul which exists in the body of the world, just as there is a soul which exists in the body of any living being. The world is therefore to him a visible animal, and the ideas are therefore described by him as an intelligible animal. To Philo, however, there is no world-soul. Though occasionally he uses the expression "soul of the world," he never uses it in the sense of a soul immanent in the world. The function of the Platonic, as well as the Stoic, world-soul, which is a soul immanent in the world, is performed in Philo's philosophy partly by the Logos, which with the creation of the world becomes immanent in it, and partly by what he calls the Divine Spirit, which is an incorporeal being not immanent in the world. Without a soul, the world to Philo was not an animal being. Then, it involves the problem of the existence of ideas as segregate beings. To Plato in the *Timaeus*, the intelligible animal contains only the ideas of the four kinds of living creatures in the universe, namely, the celestial bodies, birds, fishes, and land-animals.²¹ There is no

²¹ *Ibid.* 39 E.

evidence that it contains even the ideas of the four elements, though such ideas are mentioned or alluded to in the *Timaeus*.²² All the ideas, therefore, with the exception of those of living creatures, exist in segregation from each other. To Philo, however, all the ideas are integrated into a whole, namely, the intelligible world; and their relation to the intelligible world is conceived by him as that of parts of an indivisible whole, which as such have no real existence of their own apart from that of the whole.

The *second* difference between them is that in the *Timaeus* there is no mention of a place where the ideas exist, whereas in Philo the ideas are said to have their place in the Logos. Now, while the term Logos occurs in Greek philosophy, having been used ever since Heraclitus in various senses, it was never used in the sense of the place of the Platonic ideas. We must therefore try to find out how Philo happened to come to this concept of a Logos as the place of the Platonic ideas.

In trying to find an answer to this question, let us start by examining carefully the passage in which Philo introduces the Logos as the place of ideas. In that passage, he begins by saying that, just as the plan conceived by the mind of an architect, prior to its execution, exists in no other place but the soul of the architect, so the intelligible world of ideas, prior to creation of the visible world, existed in no other place but "the divine Logos." He then adds the following rhetorical question: "For what other place could there be . . . sufficiently able to receive and contain, I say not all, but any one" of the ideas of this intelligible world?²³ This rhetorical question quite evidently contains a challenge. It implies that somebody did suggest some other place for the ideas and Philo, convinced that that other place, or any other place that might be suggested, could not properly be the place of the ideas,

²² *Ibid.* 51 Bf. Cf. R. D. Archer-Hind in his introduction to his edition of the *Timaeus* (London, 1888), 34-35; F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* (London, 1937), 188-191.

²³ *Opif.* 5, 20.

challenges that somebody as well as anybody else to show whether any other place could properly be the place of the ideas. Fortunately we are able to identify that somebody who suggested another place for the ideas. It is Plato. In several passages Plato touches upon the question of the place of the ideas. In one of these passages, he states that the idea of beauty, and quite evidently any of the other ideas, is "never anywhere in anything else,"²⁴ a statement on the basis of which Aristotle generalizes that Plato's ideas are "nowhere"²⁵ or "not in place."²⁶ In other passages he speaks of the ideas as existing in a "supercelestial place"²⁷ or in an "intelligible place."²⁸ Combining these passages, we may conclude that what Plato means to say is this: the ideas do not exist in any place in the visible world, but they exist in the "supercelestial place" or "intelligible place," which is outside the visible world. But what is that supercelestial or intelligible place outside the world? It can be shown, I believe, that Philo took this supercelestial or intelligible place of Plato to mean an infinite void outside the world, for, though Plato explicitly denied the existence of a void within the world,²⁹ there are statements in his writings which could have been interpreted by Philo to refer to the existence of a void outside the world. It happens, however, that Philo, under the influence of Aristotle, denied the existence of a void even outside the world.³⁰ And so, with the elimination of what Plato designated as the place of the ideas, he locates the ideas in "the divine Logos" and, challenging one and all, he asks rhetorically, "for what other place could there be" for the ideas?

But how did Philo come to substitute the Logos as the place of ideas for Plato's infinite vacuum outside the world? The answer is that he came to it by a process of reasoning arising from a passage in Plato's own works. He started, we may imagine, with a passage in *Parmenides* (132 BC), in which

²⁴ *Symposium* 211 A.

²⁵ *Physica* III, 4, 203a, 9.

²⁶ *Ibid.* IV, 2, 209b, 34.

²⁷ *Phaedrus* 247 C.

²⁸ *Republic* VI, 509 D; VII, 517 B.

²⁹ *Timaeus* 80 C.

³⁰ Cf. *Philo*, I, 241-242.

Socrates, who poses as one not altogether convinced of the existence of ideas as real beings, raises the question whether an idea may not be only a "thought (*νόημα*), which cannot properly exist anywhere except in souls (*ἐν ψυχαῖς*)."³¹ Souls here means human souls, for it is in this sense that the term was understood by Aristotle in a passage where, with evident reference to this passage in the *Parmenides*, he says that "it has been well said that the soul is a place of forms or ideas," adding, however, "that this does not apply to the soul as a whole but only to thinking soul (*ψυχῇ νοητικῇ*)."³²

Now it can be shown that Philo made use of this statement of Aristotle,³² and we may be justified in assuming that he also knew the original statement in *Parmenides*. Let us then imagine that, on reading these two statements, Philo asked himself: if ideas, according to those who question or deny their real existence, exist in a human thinking soul, which exists in a body, why should not those who believe in the existence of real ideas say that they exist in a thinking soul which does not exist in a body? Does not Plato himself believe in a bodiless pre-existent soul as well as in a bodiless immortal soul? And so Philo has arrived at the conclusion that the ideas exist in a bodiless thinking soul. It is perhaps on the basis of these passages, too, and by the same kind of reasoning that those who interpreted the Platonic ideas intradecally came to identify the God of Plato's philosophy with its Nous.

Then, let us further imagine that, on having arrived at this conclusion. Philo began to look for a single Greek word for the expression "thinking soul" used by Aristotle. It happens that the Greeks, by the time of Philo, had two words for it, *nous*, "mind," and *logos*, "reason." Philo, therefore, had before him the choice of one of these two words, and he decided in favor of Logos. What made him decide in favor of Logos may be assumed to be a threefold consideration. First, that which was to contain the intelligible world of ideas as the model for the visible world that was to be created was,

³¹ *De Anima* III, 4, 429a, 27-28.

³² Cf. *Philo*, I, 233, 247.

according to Philo, to serve as a sort of instrument by which the visible world was to be created by God.³³ Second, the Greek term "Logos," which besides "reason" means also "word," is used in the Greek version of Scripture as a translation of the Hebrew term *dabar*, "word," so that in the verse "by the word of the Lord the heavens were established" (Ps. 33/32:6) the Logos is represented as a sort of instrument by which the world was created. Third, a parallel to this use of the term Logos in the scriptural verse quoted may have been seen by Philo in Plato's statement that all animals and plants and inanimate substances "are created by *logos* [that is, reason] and by divine knowledge that comes from God."³⁴

It is this threefold consideration, we may assume, that has led Philo to decide in favor of the use of the term Logos to that of Nous. An indication that the term Logos is used by him as the equivalent of Nous, as well as a substitute for it, in the sense of a bodiless Nous, in contrast to the embodied Nous implied in Aristotle's statement that the "thinking soul" is the place of ideas, is his statement that the Logos is "the Nous above us" in contrast to the human thinking soul which is "the Nous within us."³⁵ And as an indication that it is the scriptural verse that caused him to decide in favor of the Logos is his use of the term Wisdom (*σοφία*) as the equivalent of Logos and his description of Wisdom also as that "through which the world came into existence,"³⁶ for in Scripture, corresponding to the verse "by the word (*logos*) of the Lord the heavens were established" (Ps. 33/32:6) there is the verse "by wisdom (*sophia*) God founded the earth" (Prov. 3:19).

Since by Logos is meant Nous, when Philo speaks of the Logos as the place of the intelligible world, he means thereby that the relation of the Logos to the intelligible world, and hence also to the ideas which constitute the intelligible world, is after the analogy of the relation of the thinking mind to

³³ Cf. *ibid.*, I, 261-282.

³⁴ *Sophist* 265 C.

³⁵ *Heres* 48, 236.

³⁶ *Fug.* 20, 109; cf. *Deter.* 16, 54.

its object of thought. Now, according to Aristotle, in the case of immaterial things, the thinking mind is identical with its object of thought.³⁷ The Logos is, therefore, conceived by Philo as being identical with the intelligible world and hence also with the ideas which constitute the intelligible world.³⁸

The *third* difference between Philo and the *Timaeus* is his departure from the representation of the ideas in that dialogue as ungenerated³⁹ and as being outside the Demiurge, so that they were looked at by the Demiurge and were used by him as a model in the creation of the visible world.⁴⁰ Philo undoubtedly knew of the other kind of statements about the ideas in the other dialogues of Plato and presumably he would also know of the two contrasting interpretations current in his time. Neither of these interpretations, however, was acceptable to him. The extradeical interpretation was unacceptable, because it implied the existence of eternal beings besides God, but to Philo, besides God, there could be no other eternal being.⁴¹ Nor could the intradeical interpretation be acceptable to him. For, if it meant that the ideas were in thoughts of God as real beings really distinct from Him, then it implied that in God there existed something other than himself. But this was contrary to Philo's interpretation of the scriptural doctrine of the unity of God as meaning absolute simplicity.⁴² And if it meant that the ideas were thoughts of God and hence identical with Him, then it meant a denial of the existence of ideas as such, but, according to Philo, those who denied the existence of incorporeal ideas are condemned in Scripture as "impious" and "unholy,"⁴³ for, on the basis of certain scriptural verses and a Jewish tradition, he held that the belief in the existence of ideas as real beings was one of the fundamental teachings of Moses.⁴⁴ And so, what did he do? He introduced a new interpretation of the Platonic ideas in their relation to God. According to this new interpreta-

³⁷ *Metaphysica* XII, 9, 1075a, 3-4.

³⁸ Cf. *Philo*, I, 248-252.

³⁹ *Timaeus* 52 A.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 28 A.

⁴¹ Cf. *Philo*, I, 322.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 172-173; II, 94ff.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 181-186.

tion, the Logos, together with the intelligible world of ideas within it, at first, from eternity, existed as a thought of God; then, prior to the creation of the world, it was created as a real incorporeal being distinct from God.

In Philo, then, Platonic ideas were integrated into an intelligible world of ideas contained in a Nous called Logos, so that the original problem of the relation of Platonic ideas to God became with him a problem of the relation of the Nous or the Logos to God, and the problem was solved by him by the assumption of two successive stages of existence in the Logos, an intradeical one followed by an extradeical.

From now on, in the history of philosophy, ideas will be treated either, after the manner of Plato himself, as segregated beings, or, after the manner of his interpreter Philo, as integrated into an intelligible world placed in a Logos or a Nous, and the original problem of extradeical and intradeical, or the solutions thereof, will be applied either to the ideas themselves or to the Logos or Nous.

II. TRINITY ⁴⁵

Philo preached his philosophical sermons in the synagogues of Alexandria at the time when Jesus, known as Christ, preached his hortatory and admonitory sermons in the synagogues of Galilee. About half a century later there appeared one of the four standard biographies of Christ, the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel according to St. John. This biography of Christ is based upon the theory, introduced by Paul, that before Christ was born there was a pre-existent Christ, an ideal Christ, an idea of Christ. This pre-existent idea of Christ, which in the epistles of Paul is called Wisdom or perhaps also Spirit is described in this biography of Jesus by the term Logos, which is conventionally rendered into English by the

⁴⁵ This section is based upon the chapters dealing with the Trinity in my *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, I (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 141-364. (Henceforth *Church Fathers*.)

term Word. And we are all acquainted with the opening verse in the Gospel according to St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1). Then, like the Logos of Philo, which became immanent in the created world, the Logos of John, which is the pre-existent Christ, became immanent, or, as it is commonly said, incarnate, in the born Christ. And we are all, again, acquainted with the verse toward the close of the Prologue of the Gospel according to St. John: "And the Word was made flesh" (1:14).

In this Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, there are similarities between the Logos of Philo and the Logos of John. But two main characteristics of the Philonic Logos are missing in the Johannine Logos, or, with regard to one of them, it is not clearly stated. There is no hint at all that the Logos of John, which is the idea of Christ, contains in itself the intelligible world of ideas and there is no clear statement that before its incarnation it had two stages of existence, one from eternity as the thought of God, and then, with the creation of the world, as a real being distinct from God.

These two missing characteristics were supplied in the second century by those Church Fathers known as Apologists, who, having been born pagans, were before their conversion to Christianity students of philosophy. As they themselves tell us, what has led them to their conversion was the reading of Scripture, the Hebrew Scripture, naturally in the Greek translation. From internal evidence of their writings, we may gather that they used the works of Philo as a sort of commentary upon Scripture. From these works of Philo they became acquainted with Philo's interpretation of Platonic ideas, at the center of which was the term Logos. When, therefore, in the Fourth Gospel they read the opening sentence, "In the beginning was the Logos," they identified this Logos with the Philonic Logos and thus, without the Johannine Logos ceasing to mean the pre-existent Christ, it acquired the two main characteristics of the Philonic Logos.

To begin with, like the Philonic Logos, the Johannine Logos began to contain the intelligible world of ideas, so that it was no longer a single idea, the idea of Christ, but it became the place of the intelligible world consisting of all ideas. Then, again, like the Philonic Logos, it was made to have two stages of existence prior to its incarnation: first, from eternity it was within God and identical with Him; second, from about the time of the creation of the world it was a generated real being distinct from God. Once these two innovations were introduced, Fathers of the Church began to look in the New Testament for proof-texts in support of them. For the first of these two innovations, two Fathers of the Church, Origen and Augustine, at one time thought that they had found a supporting proof-text in Jesus' saying, "I am not of this world" (John 8:23), from which they tried to infer that there was another world, and that that other world was the intelligible world of ideas.⁴⁶ Ultimately, however, this inference was rejected, for different reasons, by both of them.⁴⁷ A satisfactory proof-text for this first innovation was, however, discovered by them in the verse stating that through the Logos were all things made by God (John 1:3). Following Philo in his description of the Logos, they interpreted this verse to imply that the Logos was used by God as a sort of architect's blueprint, which contained the plan for the structure of the world and thus it contained the intelligible world of ideas.⁴⁸ As for the second innovation, again, two of the Fathers of the Church, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria,⁴⁹ took the verse "In the beginning was the Logos" to mean that "in the beginning of the creation of the world the Logos came into being." Now the Greek $\eta\upsilon$ which is used in this verse for the English "was," in classical Greek means "was" and not "came into being," for the latter of

⁴⁶ Origen, *De Princ.* II, 3, 6; Augustine, *De Ordine* I, 11, 32 (PL 32, 993).

⁴⁷ Origen, *loc. cit.*; Augustine, *Retractiones* I, 3, 2.

⁴⁸ Origen, *In Joannem* XIX, 5 (PG 14, 568BC); Augustine, *In Joannem* I, 9; cf. *Church Fathers*, pp. 277-278, 283-284.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Church Fathers*, pp. 198, 213-214.

which the Greek would be $\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\tau\omicron$. But their interpretation of $\eta\upsilon$ as meaning "came to be" may be justified on the ground that in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scripture, the Septuagint, the Greek $\eta\upsilon$, through its use as a translation of the Hebrew *hayah*, which means both "was" and "came to be," acquired the additional meaning of "came to be."⁵⁰

Following Philo, too, these early Fathers of the Church added to the Logos another pre-existent incorporeal being, the Holy Spirit, thus together with God and the Logos making three pre-existent real beings, subsequently to become known as hypostases or persons. Now the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the New Testament, but it is not clear whether it is meant to be the same as the pre-existent Christ, and hence the same as the Wisdom of Paul and the Logos of John, or whether it is meant to be a pre-existent being different from the pre-existent Christ. The Apostolic Fathers, who flourished before and up to the middle of the second century, were still uncertain about it. But the Apologists, under the influence of Philo, definitely declared the Holy Spirit to be distinct from the Logos. Like the Logos, the Holy Spirit was held by them to have been at first intradeical and then became extradeical.

But on one point did the Apologists differ radically from Philo.⁵¹ To Philo, who followed the traditional Jewish conception of God as the maker of things after the analogy of an artisan, the Logos entered its second stage of existence by an act of making or creating, except that the making was out of nothing, since God is an omnipotent artisan and is in no need of material for any of his acts of making. Consequently, like any product of an artisan's making, which is not the same as its maker, the Logos is not the same as God. Though Philo applies to the Logos several terms meaning divine, he never applies to it the term God in the real sense of the term. The Apologists, however, who followed the Christianized mytho-

⁵⁰ Cf. below, "Philosophical Implications of Arianism and Apollinarianism," p. 139.

⁵¹ On what follows, see the chapter on "The Mystery of Generation," in *Church Fathers*, p. 287-304.

logical conception of God as the begetter of things, after the analogy of natural procreation, conceived of the entrance of the Logos into its second stage of existence as having been effected by an act of begetting or generating and consequently, as in any act of natural generation, where that which is generated is like that which generated it, the Logos to them is God like the God who generated it. Later Christian theologians, Augustine, followed by Thomas Aquinas, tried to explain the Godship of the Logos by referring to the philosophic principle that all living beings reproduce their kind. They illustrated it by quoting the Aristotelian statement that "man begets man,"⁵² to which St. Augustine added "and dog dog"⁵³ and which St. Thomas paraphrased by saying "as a man proceeds from a man and a horse from a horse."⁵⁴ Subsequently the term God was extended to the Holy Spirit, so that each of the persons, the Father, the Son or Logos, and the Holy Spirit, was God.

These three persons of the Trinity, however, though each of them a real being and each of them God and each of them really distinct from the others, constituted one God, who was most simple and indivisible. Consequently, the Logos, in so far as it was really distinct from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, was extradeical: but, in so far as it was an indivisible part of an indivisible triune God, it was intradeical. This was a new kind of harmonization of extradeical and intradeical. It may be described as harmonization by unification, which was added by the Apologists to the Philonic harmonization by succession. How three distinct real beings, each of them God, could be harmonized and unified into one God, without infringing upon the Law of Contradiction, the Fathers of the Church tried to explain by various analogies up to a certain point, but beyond that point they admitted that the Trinity was a mystery.

⁵² *Metaphysica* VII, 7, 1032a, 23-24; cf. IX, 8, 1049b, 27-29.

⁵³ *Cont. Maximin.* II, 6.

⁵⁴ *Sum. Theol.* I, 27, 2c.

As part of the mystery of the Trinity is the conception of the relation of the ideas within the Logos to the triune God. According to Philo, so also according to the Church Fathers, the ideas within the Logos were identical with the Logos. But, whereas to Philo, by reason of their being identical with the Logos, they were, like the Logos during its second stage of existence, extradeical, to the Apologists, despite their being identical with the Logos, they were not, like the Logos during its second stage of existence, both extradeical and intradeical by unification: they were only intradeical. The reason for this is as follows: It happens that among the Church Fathers from the earliest times there existed the view that the distinction between the persons of the Trinity is only with respect to some causal relationship existing between them, which later came to be described by the terms paternity, filiation, and procession. In every other respect they are one, their unity consisting in the indivisible unity of the one God which they all constitute. Since they all constitute one God, whatever is said of any of the persons of the Trinity, with the exception of the terms which describe the one single distinction between them, applies to the one indivisible God which they all constitute. Accordingly, when the intelligible world of ideas is said to exist in the Logos and to be identical with the Logos, it really means that it exists in the one indivisible God, which the three persons constitute, and it is with that one indivisible God that it is identical.

This, then, was the philosophic situation during the second century after the Christian era. Three interpretations of Platonic ideas existed side by side. Among pagan philosophers, the Platonic ideas were treated as segregated beings, and were interpreted either (1) extradeically or (2) intradeically. In Philo and the Church Fathers they were treated as integrated into an intelligible world placed in a Logos, but, whereas to Philo the Logos together with the ideas within it (3) was both intradeical and extradeical by succession, to the Apologists (4) the Logos was extradeical and intradeical both by

succession and by unification, but the ideas were only intradeical.

Then, in the third century, something new happened both in Christian philosophy and in pagan philosophy. Christian philosophy had its center in Alexandria under Origen and pagan philosophy had its center in Rome under Plotinus.

Both Origen and Plotinus start their philosophy with three principles, which are coeternal. Both of them call these principles hypostases.⁵⁵ Both of them describe the first hypostasis, who is God, as Father.⁵⁶ Both of them describe the second hypostasis as being eternally generated from the first⁵⁷ and call him son⁵⁸ and image.⁵⁹ Both of them make their second hypostasis contain the intelligible world of ideas.⁶⁰ So far forth they are in agreement. But then they begin to differ. Origen, as in Christianity, calls his second hypostasis Logos. Plotinus calls it Nous. In direct opposition to those who called it Logos, he explicitly denies that the second hypostasis is the Logos of the first⁶¹ and, especially aiming at the Christian use of Logos as a technical term designating the second hypostasis only, he says: "The Soul is a *logos* and a certain *energeia* of the Nous, just as the Nous is of the One."⁶² Again, the third hypostasis is called by Origen, as in Christianity, Holy Spirit; Plotinus calls it Soul⁶³ and, again, in direct opposition to those who called it Spirit, he uses the term spirit in a material sense and therefore argues that it cannot be Soul.⁶⁴ Then, also, following Christian tradition, Origen calls his Logos God; and, while a real being distinct

⁵⁵ Origen, *De Princ.* I, 2, 2; *In Joan.* X, 21 (PG 14, 376B); *Cont. Cels.* VIII, 12 (PG 11, 1533C); Plotinus, *Enneades* II, 9, 2; V, 1, 7; V, 8, 12; VI, 7, 29.

⁵⁶ Origen, *De Princ.* I, 2, 6; Plotinus, *Enneades* III, 8, 11.

⁵⁷ Origen, *De Princ.* I, 2, 4; *In Jeremiam*, Hom. IX, 4 (PG 13, 357A); Plotinus, *Enneades* V, 1, 6; VI, 8, 20.

⁵⁸ Origen, *De Princ.* I, 2, 4; Plotinus, *Enneades* III, 8, 11.

⁵⁹ Origen, *De Princ.* I, 2, 6; Plotinus, *Enneades* V, 1, 7; V, 4, 2; V, 6, 4; V, 9, 2; VI, 2, 9.

⁶⁰ Origen, cf. above at n. 48; Plotinus, *Enneades* V, 9, 9.

⁶¹ *Enneades* VI, 7, 17.

⁶² *Ibid.* V, 1, 6.

⁶³ *Ibid.* V, 1, 10.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* IV, 7, 3-4.

from his first hypostasis, it constitutes with it one God. Plotinus, however, is reminiscent of Philo. Like Philo, who calls his Logos simply "God," without the definite article "the," in contrast to the true God, who is called "the God," with the definite article "the,"⁶⁵ Plotinus calls his Nous God in the sense of *πᾶς*, "all," that is, in an indefinite sense, in contrast to God in the sense of *τίς*, that is, a certain particular God.⁶⁶ Again, like Philo, who describes his Logos as "the second God"⁶⁷ in contrast to the true God who is "the first God,"⁶⁸ Plotinus describes his Nous as "the second God"⁶⁹ in contrast to the God, whom he usually refers to as "the First"⁷⁰ or whom he may have even described as "the first God."⁷¹ Accordingly, to Origen, the Logos is eternally both extradeical and intradeical by unification, but the ideas within it are intradeical, whereas, according to Plotinus, the Nous, together with the intelligible world of ideas within it, are extradeical.

How did these two systems at once alike and different originate?

Here I am going to suggest an answer for which there is no direct documentary evidence. There is only circumstantial evidence, the kind of evidence on which a defendant standing trial for murder may be acquitted by a jury of his peers, and on which, I believe, a student of the history of philosophy may venture to build a theory even at the risk of being condemned by fellow historians as indulging in flights of fancy.

My explanation is this: Both Plotinus and Origen were students at one time, though not at the same time, of Ammonius Saccas in Alexandria. "Ammonius," according to Porphyry as quoted by Eusebius, "was a Christian, brought up in Chris-

⁶⁵ *Somm.* I, 39, 239-240.

⁶⁶ *Enneades* V, 5, 3.

⁶⁷ *Qu. in Gen.* II, 62; cf. *Leg. All.* II, 21, 86.

⁶⁸ *Migr.* 32, 181; 35, 194; *Mos.* II, 26, 205.

⁶⁹ *Enneades* V, 5, 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* V, 5, 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* III, 9, 9, according to some readings of the text. See ed. Bréhier (Paris, 1925) and ed. Henry and Schwyzler (Paris, 1951) *ad loc.*

tian doctrines by his parents, yet, when he began to think and study philosophy, he immediately changed his way of life to conform to that required by the laws."⁷² We may assume, I believe, that during his Christian period, like Clement of Alexandria,⁷³ he interpreted Plato in terms of the Philonic twofold stage theory and applied the same interpretation to the Johannine Logos and, by reason of the mystery of the Trinity, while the Logos during its second stage of existence was both extradeical and intradeical by unification, the ideas within it were only intradeical. Then, when Ammonius gave up Christianity, we may further assume, he gave up the interpretation of Plato in terms of the Philonic twofold stage theory and substituted for it the theory of eternal generation; he also gave up the primarily Biblical term Logos and the strictly Biblical term Holy Spirit and substituted for them the purely philosophical terms Nous and Soul; finally, discarding the Christian mystery of the Trinity, his Nous, the substitute for the Christian Logos as the place of the intelligible world of ideas, was no longer equal with God, no longer the same as God, and no longer forming together with God and the Soul one God, and hence no longer intradeical and extradeical by unification. Plotinus, a pagan, adopted this new philosophy of Ammonius in its entirety. Origen, a Christian, adopted from it only the concept of eternal generation, which he applied to the Christian Logos, but this he did only on purely Christian religious grounds, considering the principle of eternal generation less open to misunderstanding and misinterpretation than the twofold stage theory.

Truly speaking, then, the philosophy of Plotinus, known as Neoplatonism, in so far as its theory of ideas is concerned,

⁷² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* VI, 19, 7. It must be noted that Eusebius denies the apostasy of Ammonius (VI, 19, 9-10). Among modern scholars, some say that Eusebius was mistaken in denying the apostasy of Ammonius Saccas (cf. Lawlor and Oulton's note on VI, 19, 10 of their English translation of Eusebius), while others say that Porphyry was mistaken in making Ammonius Saccas born a Christian (cf. Bardy's note on VI, 19, 7 of his French translation of Eusebius).

⁷³ *Church Fathers*, p. 266-270.

is a paganized version of the Christian version, which in turn is a Christianized version of the Philonic Jewish version of Plato's theory of ideas. Thus the theory of ideas of both Origen and Plotinus are a third generation of the Platonic ideas.

In Christianity, the Origenian harmonization of extradeical and intradeical by the method of unification prevailed and it became the orthodox creed of the Church. But it met with opposition. It was felt by many Christians, described by Origen as those "who sincerely profess to be lovers of God,"⁷⁴ that the conception of a God, in whom there was a distinction of three real beings each of whom was God, was incompatible with the conception of the unity of God, which was the common profession of all Christians. The various attempts at explaining the unity of God ultimately meant the reduction of the conception of unity to a relative kind of unity,⁷⁵ which to them was unacceptable. They had before them, therefore, two choices, either to deny that the Logos was God or to deny the reality of its existence.⁷⁶ Some followed the first alternative. They are the Arians. Others followed the second alternative. This had many exponents. But we shall refer to them, after one of its exponents, as Sabelians. Denying the reality of the Logos, in a passage in which they refer to the Logos as the Son, they declared that "the Father is Son and again the Son Father, in hypostasis one, in name two."⁷⁷ And when the Holy Spirit was proclaimed by orthodoxy to be also God, they declared that "the term Father and Son and Holy Spirit are but actions and names."⁷⁸ In other words, they rejected the orthodox conceptions of the Logos as being simultaneously both extradeical and intradeical by unification and made it only intradeical, in the sense of identical, and, of course, with it also the ideas within it were intradeical.

⁷⁴ *In Joan.* II, 2 (PG 14, 108C); cf. *Church Fathers*, pp. 580ff.

⁷⁵ *Church Fathers*, p. 312ff.

⁷⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, chapter on "Heresies," p. 575ff.

⁷⁷ Athanasius, *Orat. cont. Arian.* IV, 25 (PG 26, 505C).

⁷⁸ Epiphanius, *Adv. Haer. Panar.* LXII, 1 (PG 41, 1052B).

In pagan philosophy, similarly, the Plotinian conception of a *Nous*, in which the ideas integrated into an intelligible world was located, prevailed until the pagan schools of philosophy were closed by the order of Emperor Justinian in 529. But one notable exception is to be mentioned, and that is the theory of Ammonius Hermiac, who was at the head of the pagan school of philosophy in Alexandria at about the middle of the fifth century. In his commentary on the *Isagoge*, a work by Porphyry, who was a student of Plotinus, this Ammonius tries to answer questions raised by Porphyry with regard to the ideas of Plato — questions not with regard to the relation of the ideas to God but rather with regard to their relation to individual things in the world. After solving in his own way the phase of the problem with regard to ideas which was raised by Porphyry, Ammonius, of his own accord, tries to solve the problem of the relation of the ideas to God. His answer is contained in the following statements. First, he says, "He who fabricates all things contains in himself the paradigms of all things"⁷⁹ and "if He knows that which He makes, it is at once evident that the forms exist in the Fabricator."⁸⁰ Then, trying to prove that this is also the view of Plato, he says⁸¹ that Plato, who, in contradistinction to Aristotle, describes the ideas as being "intelligible, subsisting in themselves" (*νοητὰ, αὐτὰ καθ' ἑαυτὰς ὑφ' ἑστῶσαι*),⁸² as being "really substances" (*ὄντως οὐσίας*),⁸³ and as "first substances" (*πρώτας οὐσίας*),⁸⁴ means thereby that "God contains in himself the models of the genera and species." Here then we have in pagan philosophy a continuation or revival of the old pre-Plotinian, or rather pre-Philonic, treatment of

⁷⁹ *Ammonius in Porphyrii Isagoge sive V Voces* (ed. A. Busse), p. 41, ll. 20-21.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42, ll. 5-6.

⁸² Reflecting Plato's description of ideas as *νοητὰ* (*Timaeus* 30 C) and as things which are *αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ ὄντα* (*Timaeus* 51 B).

⁸³ Reflecting Plato's description of ideas as *οὐσία ὄντως οὐσα* (*Phaedrus* 247 C).

⁸⁴ Not found in Plato as a description of ideas, but it probably reflects Plato's description of ideas as *αἰδιος οὐσία* (*Timaeus* 37 E).

ideas as beings segregated from each other and as the thoughts of God.

Thus beginning with the third century both in pagan philosophy, as represented by the Neoplatonism of Plotinus, and in Christian philosophy, as represented by orthodoxy and Sabellianism, the Platonic ideas were integrated into an intelligible world. In pagan philosophy it existed in a *Nous* which was extradeical; in Christian philosophy it existed in a *Logos* which was either, as in orthodoxy, both extradeical and intradeical by unification or, as in Sabellianism, only intradeical. As for the ideas within the *Logos* or *Nous*, in Christianity they were purely intradeical; in Neoplatonism they were extradeical along with the *Nous* with which they were identical.

III. ATTRIBUTES

Six hundred and twenty-two years roll by since the rise of Christianity and a new religion appears — Islam. In the Scripture of this new religion, the Koran, God is described by what the followers of this religion like to refer to as "the ninety-nine most beautiful names of God," such, for instance, as "the living," "the powerful," "the wise," and so forth up to ninety-nine. Early in the history of this religion there arose a view, first with regard to only two of that list of ninety-nine names and then also with regard to other names of that list, that each name by which God is designated reflects some real being existing in God as something distinct from His essence, but inseparable from it and coeternal with it. Thus, for instance, when God is described as living or wise or powerful, it means that life or wisdom or power exist in Him as real, eternal beings, distinct from His essence. These real beings in God corresponding to the names by which God is designated are known in Arabic by two terms, one of which, as we shall see, came to be known to philosophers of the West as "attributes."

This view, it can be shown, could not have originated in Islam spontaneously but it could have originated under Christian influence in the course of debates between Muslims and Christians shortly after the Muslim conquest of Syria in the VIIth century.⁸⁵ In these debates, we may assume, Christians tried to convince the Muslims that the second and third persons of the Trinity are nothing but the terms "wisdom" and "life" or "wisdom" and "power," which in the Koran are predicated of God, and that there is nothing in the Koran against the Christian belief that the predication of God of either pair of these terms reflects the existence in God of real beings, or persons or hypostases, as they called them. The Muslims could find no flaw in the reasoning and no objection to the conclusion. They therefore accepted the view that in God there were real beings to correspond to certain terms predicated of Him in the Koran. But then, when the Christian debaters continued to argue that these two persons of the Trinity, the second and third, are each God like the first person, the Muslims balked and quoted against them the Koranic verses, "say not three . . . God is only one God" (4:169) and "they surely are infidels who say, God is the third of three, for there is no God but one God" (5:77). Thus there had arisen in Islam the belief, which became the orthodox belief, that certain terms predicated of God have, corresponding to them, real existent beings in God, called attributes, which are coeternal with God, but eternally inseparable from Him, and because they were eternally inseparable from God and because also they were not called God, the unity of God, so vehemently insisted upon in the Koran, is preserved.

That this is how the problem of attributes had originated in Islam can be shown by arguments evidential, terminological, and contextual. To begin with, among Muslims themselves

⁸⁵ See my papers "The Muslim Attributes and the Christian Trinity," *Harvard Theological Review*, 49 (1956): 1-18, and "The Philosophical Implications of the Problem of Divine Attributes in the Kalam," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 79 (1959): 73-80.

there were those who in this doctrine of attributes saw an analogy to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Then, the two Arabic terms for what we call "attributes," namely *ṣifāt* and *ma'ānīyy*, are translations of two Greek terms, *χαρακτηριστικά* and *πράγματα*, which were part of the technical vocabulary of the Trinity. Finally, the two "most beautiful names of God," which originally were taken by Muslims to reflect real attributes in God, correspond exactly to the names by which the second and third persons of the Trinity came to be known to Muslims through Christians writing in Arabic.

This, we imagine, is how the theory of attributes was introduced in Islam.

No sooner, however, had the belief in real attributes been introduced than there arose opposition to it. This opposition was like the Sabellian opposition in Christianity to the reality of the second and third persons of the Trinity. It saw in the assumption of real attributes, even though not called Gods, a violation of the true unity of God. Like Sabellianism in Christianity, therefore, which declared the second and third persons of the Trinity to be mere names of God designating His actions, this opposition declared the terms predicated of God in the Koran to be only names of God, designating His actions, and hence the so-called attributes are not real beings and other than the essence of God: they are identical with His essence.

And so the controversy in Christianity over the persons of the Logos and the Holy Spirit in their relation to God the Father, became in Islam a controversy over the relation of the attributes to God. The orthodox Muslim position was like, though not exactly the same as, orthodox Christian position. The attributes, like the second and third persons of the Trinity, were both extradeical and intradeical, except that, unlike the second and third persons of the Trinity, which were intradeical and extradeical by unification, that is, they were at once the same as God and other than He, these orthodox Muslim attributes were intradeical and extradeical by

location, that is, they were in God but other than He. The unorthodox position of the Antiattributists in Islam corresponds to Sabellianism in Christianity.

The Muslim attributes are not ideas. They lack the essential characteristic of the Platonic ideas, that of being pre-existent patterns of things that come into existence. But they may be considered as the fourth generation of Platonic ideas through two generations of Logos, being as they were direct descendants of Logos and the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity. It can be further shown that with the gradual introduction of Greek philosophy into Islam, the problem of attributes became identified with the problem of Platonic ideas, or rather with the problem of universals, as the problem of Platonic ideas was known by that time, and with that the controversy between Attributists and Antiattributists in Islam became a controversy over universals as to whether they were extradeical or intradeical.⁸⁶ It was during this new phase of the problem that a new conception of the relation of attributes to God, or perhaps only a new way of expressing their relation to God, made its appearance. It is known as the theory of modes (*ahwāl*). Dissatisfied with the orthodox view that attributes are really "existent" in God and with the unorthodox view that attributes, being mere names, are "nonexistent," the exponents of this new theory declared that attributes, now surnamed modes, are "neither existent nor nonexistent."⁸⁷ Of course, they were charged with infringing upon the Law of Excluded Middle, but theologians and philosophers that they were they were not fazed by this difficulty: they found a way of getting around it.

While in Islam the problem of attributes was raging, there was no such a problem in Christianity, that is to say, there was no controversy over the question as to what was the meaning of terms, outside the terms Father, Logos or Son,

⁸⁶ To be fully discussed in my work "The Philosophy of the Kalam," in preparation.

⁸⁷ Baghdādī, *Al-Farq bayn al-Firaq* (Cairo, A.H. 1328), p. 182, l. 5; Shahrastānī, *Nibāyat al-Iqdām* (ed. Guillaume), p. 133, l. 4.

and Holy Spirit, in their relation to God, when predicated of Him. The implied distinction between the Logos, which was both extradeical and intradeical by unification, and the ideas within the Logos, which were only intradeical, was formally made explicit by the last of the Church Fathers, John of Damascus, in the distinction drawn by him between "persons" and "names."⁸⁸ The Logos, as one of the three persons of the Trinity is a real being, but the ideas within the Logos, such as the ideas of goodness, greatness, powerfulness, and the like, are not real beings; they are only "names," so that their distinction from the Logos as well as from one another is only nominal, derived from the various ways in which the Logos appears to the mind of man through its various operations in the world. Since they are only various names of the Logos, by the principle that whatever is predicated of one of the persons of the Trinity is predicated of the triune God as a whole, they are various names of the triune God as a whole. Accordingly, when you say God is Father and Logos the Holy Spirit, the relation between the three predicates and the subject as well as the relation between the three predicates themselves is a real relation and they are all one by the mystery of the Trinity. But when you say that God is good or great or powerful you merely predicate of God different "names." Thus, without using the term "attribute" and without raising a problem of attributes, the Fathers of the Church arrived at a position like that of the Antiattributists in Islam. In fact, it can be shown, that the Antiattributists in Islam were influenced by this view of the Church Fathers.

This distinction between "persons" and "names," or between the Logos as the place of ideas and the ideas within it, in their relation to God, was generally accepted in Christianity. The ideas within the Logos continued to be called "names" and there was no problem of "attributes" corresponding to such a problem in Islam. But then four events happened which resulted in the introduction of the problem

⁸⁸ Cf. *De Fide Orthodoxa*, I, 6-8, 9.

of divine attributes into mediaeval Christian philosophy. Let us study these four events.

The first event was the publication and subsequently the condemnation of the *De Divisione Naturae* by John Scotus Erigena. In that work, published in 867, Erigena deals with what he calls "the primordial causes of things," which he says the Greeks call "ideas" and "prototypes."⁸⁹ Following the Church Fathers, these ideas are placed by him in the Logos, but, departing from the Church Fathers, who considered the ideas within the Logos as identical with the Logos, Erigena distinguished them from the Logos. This may be gathered from his statements that "before the ages, God the Father begot (*genuit*) His Word, in whom and through whom He created (*creavit*) the most perfect primordial causes of all natures"⁹⁰ and also that while "we believe that the Son is wholly coeternal with the Father, with regard to the things which the Father makes (*facit*) in the Son, I say they are coeternal with the Son, but not wholly coeternal."⁹¹ Note the two distinctions drawn between the Logos and the ideas within it: the former is begotten, the latter are created or made; the former is wholly coeternal with God, the latter are not wholly coeternal with the Logos. Being thus not identical with the Logos, they are not identical with God, and therefore they are not mere "names" of God. Accordingly, while God is described by him as "that which creates and is not created," the ideas in their totality are described as "that which is created and creates."⁹² Here then we have, in deviation from the traditional Christian view, a view approaching the orthodox Muslim view on attributes.

Erigena's deviation from the traditional Christian view on the relation of the ideas to God passed unnoticed by his contemporaries. While his *De Praedestinatione* was condemned

⁸⁹ *De Divisione Naturae* II, 2 (PL 122, 529B); II, 36 (615D-616A). Cf. E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1955), pp. 117-119.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* II, 21 (560B).

⁹¹ *Ibid.* (561C).

⁹² *Ibid.* I, 1 (441B).

twice during his lifetime, his *De Divisione Naturae* was not molested during his lifetime, nor was it molested for a long time after that. The Schoolmen during the four centuries following Erigena were engaged in the problem of universals, which is concerned primarily with the problem of the relation of ideas to sensible objects, and paid little attention to the problem of the relation of the ideas to God. It was not until the beginning of the XIIIth century, at the Council of Paris (1209) that his *De Divisione Naturae* was condemned; and one of the reasons for its condemnation was its theory of ideas. The writ of condemnation on this point reads as follows: "The second error is his view that the primordial causes, which are called ideas, that is forms or exemplars, create and are created, whereas, according to the holy Fathers, in so far as the ideas are in God, they are the same as God, and therefore they cannot be created."⁹³

This is event number one.

Then, prior to the condemnation in 1209 of Erigena's work, Gilbert of la Porrée was accused at the Council of Rheims, in 1148, of believing that, when such terms as goodness, wisdom, greatness and the like are predicated of God, they are not designations of perfections which are identical with God, but rather a "form" which is placed in God and by which He is God, analogous to the universal term "humanity," which, when predicated of the subject "man" does not designate that which is identical with the subject but rather a "form" in the subject by which the subject is man.⁹⁴ This prompted the Council to draw up a profession of faith, which, directly in opposition to the alleged view of Gilbert, maintained that "God is wise only by a wisdom which is God himself; eternal by an eternity which is God himself; one only by a unity

⁹³ "secundus est, quod primordiales causae, quae vocantur ideae i. e. forma seu exemplar [*sic*], creant et creantur: cum tamen secundum sanctos idem sint quod Deus: in quantum sunt in Deo: et ideo creari non possunt" (quoted in Johannes Huber, *Johannes Scotus Erigena*, Munich, 1861, p. 436).

⁹⁴ Cf. Geoffrey d'Auxerre, *Libellus contra Capitula Gilbert Pictavensis Episcopi* (PL 185, 597CD; 617A).

which is God himself; [God] only by a divinity which is He himself; in short, He is by His own self wise, great, eternal, one, God."⁹⁵ The difference between Gilbert and the Council is strikingly like the difference between the Muslim Attributists and Antiattributists. The formula used by the Council is exactly the same as that reported in the name of the Antiattributist, or perhaps Modalist, Abū al-Hudhayl, which reads as follows: "God is knowing by a knowledge which is himself, and He is powerful by a power which is himself, and He is living by a life which is himself."⁹⁶

This is event number two.

Then something else happened. Early in the XIIIth century, certainly before 1235, there appeared a Latin translation of Maimonides' work *The Guide of the Perplexed*, which contained an account of the Muslim controversies over the problem of divine attributes and a presentation of his own elaborate theory in opposition to the reality of attributes. This Latin translation was made not from the original Arabic, in which the book was written, but from one of its two Hebrew versions. In that Hebrew version, the Arabic term *ṣifah*, which, as said above, reflects the Greek term *χαρακτηριστικόν* used in connection with the Trinity, was translated by two Hebrew terms, *middah* and *to'ar*. These two terms, in turn, are translated by three Latin terms: *dispositio*, *attributio*, and *nominatio*.⁹⁷ Of these three terms, each of which reflects one of the senses of the two Hebrew terms as well as of their underlying Arabic term, the term *attributio*, used in this translation in the sense of a divine predicate, is of special interest. By the time this translation was made, the Latin term *attributio* or *attributum* in the technical sense of "predicate" was not altogether unknown. According to the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* it was used in that technical sense by Cicero. But it was

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* (618A).

⁹⁶ Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* (ed. Ritter), p. 165, ll. 5-7; *Al-Shahrastānī, al-Milāl wa'l-Niḥāl* (ed. Cureton), p. 34, ll. 17-20.

⁹⁷ Rabi Mossei Aegyptii, *Dux seu Director dubitantium aut perplexorum*, lib. I, cap. XLIX, fol. XVIIIa, l. 28; cap. LI, fol. XVIIIb, l. 41 (Paris, 1520).

never used, as far as I know, as a designation of terms predicated of God, either in a work originally written in Latin or in a work translated from the Arabic into Latin. In the Latin translation of Ghazālī's *Maqāsid al-Falāsifah*, which was made in the XIIth century by John Hispalensis, the Arabic *ṣifah* is translated, not by *attributio* or *attributum*, but by *assignatio*.⁹⁸ The verb *attribuere*⁹⁹ and the noun *attributio*¹⁰⁰ do indeed occur in the Latin translation of Avicenna's *Fons Vitae*, also made in the XIIth century by John Hispalensis, but from the context it may be gathered that in both its forms the term is used not in the sense of "predicate" and still less in the sense of "divine predicate" but rather in the sense of "gift," "addition," "cause."

This is event number three.

The fourth event is a double header.

Between the years 1245-1250 and between the years 1254-1256 Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas respectively published their commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. In these commentaries, both of them for the first time use the term "attributes" instead of the traditional term "names" as a description of the ideas within the Logos predicated of God. Moreover, both of them, as soon as they introduced the term "attributes," raised the question, which, as phrased by Albert, reads: "Whether attributes in God are one or many?"¹⁰¹ and, as phrased by Thomas, reads: "Whether in God are many attributes?"¹⁰² The meaning of the question is whether the attributes are really distinct from God and from each other or not. Once this question was raised with regard to attributes, St. Thomas raised it also with regard to "names," phrasing his question to read: "Whether names predicated of God are synonymous?"¹⁰³ meaning, again, whether the ideas

⁹⁸ *Algazel's Metaphysics*, ed. J. T. Muckle (1933), p. 62, l. 2; cf. Arabic text: *Maqāsid al-Falāsifah*, p. 149, l. 12.

⁹⁹ Avicenna (Ibn Gebirol), *Fons Vitae*, ed. Baumer (1895), p. 92, l. 27.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 182, l. 9.

¹⁰¹ Albertus Magnus, *In I Sent.* III, 4.

¹⁰² Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.* II, 1, 2.

¹⁰³ *Sum. Theol.* I, 13, 4; cf. *Cont. Gent.* I, 35; *De Potentia* 7, 6; *Compend. Theol.* 25.

contained in the Logos and traditionally designated by the term name are really distinct from God and from each other or not. Moreover, once St. Thomas raised the question of the relation of the ideas to God under the guise of the question with regard to attributes and names, he raised the question directly with regard to ideas. Thus in the very same work, the commentary on the *Sentences*, in which he for the first time introduced the term attribute and the problem of attributes, he raised the question "Whether the ideas are many?"¹⁰⁴ and the same question appears also in some of his later works.¹⁰⁵ Here again the question is whether the ideas are really distinct from God and from each other or not. In other words, he raised the question whether the Fathers of the Church were right in their assumption that the ideas within the Logos were only names and intradeical or whether they were wrong in that assumption of theirs.

This is the succession of events in the history of post-Patristic Christian philosophy relating the problem as to whether the ideas within the Logos are intradeical or not: (1) the condemnation of the alleged Gilbert's view on the reality of the distinction between the perfections of God; (2) the condemnation of Erigena's theory of ideas; (3) the introduction into Christian Latin philosophy of the term "attributes" in the sense of divine predicates and withal a knowledge of the Muslim controversies about it; (4) the use of the term "attribute" and the raising of the problem of attributes by Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. The question naturally arises in our mind whether there is any causal connection between the first three events and the fourth event. In answer to this question, it may be said that with regard to the first two events there is an argument from silence showing that there is no connection between these two events and the fourth event. Neither Albert nor Thomas, throughout their discussions of the problem of attributes, makes any reference

¹⁰⁴ *In I Sent.* XXXVI, 2, 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Sum. Theol.* I, 15, 2; *De Veritate* 3, 2; *Cont. Gem.* I, 54; *Quodl.* IV, 1.

or allusion to Erigena or to Gilbert. Besides, while Gilbert was accused of believing in a real distinction between the perfection predicated of God and God, he was not accused of believing in a real distinction between the perfections themselves; quite the contrary, he is said to have believed that all the perfections predicated of God constitute one form in God.¹⁰⁶ There is, however, evidence of a connection between the new problem raised about attributes and the Latin translation of the work of Maimonides. First, there is St. Thomas himself, who in his commentary on the *Sentences*, after introducing the term attribute and raising the problem of attributes, quotes Maimonides and takes issue with him.¹⁰⁷ Second, there is Occam, who says: "The holy men of old did not use that word attributes (*attributa*) but in its stead they used the word names (*nomina*), whence, in contrast to certain moderns who say that divine attributes are distinct and diverse, the ancients and those who were at the time of the ancient masters said that divine names are distinct and diverse, wherefrom it follows that they laid down a distinction only with reference to names and a diversity only with reference to signs, but with reference to the thing signified they assumed identity and unity";¹⁰⁸ and in support of this Occam goes on to quote Augustine and Peter Lombard. The term "attributes" was thus regarded by Occam as a new-fangled term, of recent origin, which had come to replace the old traditional term "names," and he makes it unmistakably clear that there was no problem of the relation of attributes to God as long as "names" was used instead of "attributes," and that the problem arose only with the introduction of the term "at-

¹⁰⁶ *Op. cit.* above, n. 94 (597 C-D).

¹⁰⁷ *In I Sent.* II, 1, 3c.

¹⁰⁸ *Quodlibet* III, 2 (Strasburg, 1491): "Sancti antiqui non utebantur isto vocabulo attributa, sed pro isto utebantur hoc vocabulo nomina. Unde sicut quidam moderni dicunt quod attributa divina sunt distincta et diversa, ita dicebant antiqui et qui erant tempore antiquorum doctorum quod nomina divina sunt distincta et diversa, ita quod non posuerunt distinctionem nisi in nominibus et unitatem in re significata et diversitatem in signis" (quoted with omissions by P. Vignaux in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. 11, col. 757).

tributes." With all this, are we not justified in assuming that the use of the term attribute and the rise of the problem of attributes in medieval Christian philosophy had its origin in the Latin translation of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*?

In their attempt to solve the problem, the Schoolmen were all unanimous in rejecting the reality of attributes predicated of God. So far forth, they were all aligned against the Muslim Attributists. But there were differences of opinion among them as to how to express this opposition to the reality of attributes. Three different ways of expressing it developed in the course of the discussion.

First, Thomas Aquinas, having introduced the term attribute and having raised the problem of attributes, laid down certain fundamental views which were shared by all other Schoolmen.

The starting point in St. Thomas' discussion of the problem raised by him is that ideas and attributes are in God. With regard to ideas, having in mind his own statement elsewhere that "the Word of God is rightly called conceived or begotten Wisdom, as being the wise conception of the divine mind,"¹⁰⁹ he says that the "ideas" are "in the divine Wisdom" or "in the divine mind," and this divine wisdom or "divine mind" is subsequently spoken of by him as the "divine essence" and "God himself."¹¹⁰ Elsewhere he explicitly says that "we cannot suppose the ideas to exist outside of God; they exist in the mind of God only."¹¹¹ With regard to attributes, in answer to the question "Whether in God are many attributes," he starts by saying that "in God there is wisdom, goodness, and the like."¹¹²

Then, as an explanation of the statement which was his starting point, St. Thomas tries to show that, while ideas and attributes are in God, they are not in God as real beings. With regard to the ideas which are in God, he argues against their reality on the ground that there is no "real plurality in God

¹⁰⁹ *Cont. Gent.* IV, 12.

¹¹⁰ *Sum. Theol.* I, 44, 3c.

¹¹¹ *De Veritate* 3, 1c.

¹¹² *In I Sent.* II, 1, 2c.

other than the plurality of persons,"¹¹³ maintaining, therefore, that the relations between the ideas in God "are not real relations, such as those whereby the persons are distinguished, but relations understood (*intellecti*) by God,"¹¹⁴ so that ideas are many only in the sense that "God understands many models proper to many things,"¹¹⁵ or "that many ideas are in His intellect as understood by Him,"¹¹⁶ or that "although these ideas are multiplied in their relations to things, they are not really distinct from the divine essence."¹¹⁷ Combining these statements, we gather that in reality all the ideas in God are one and, of course, identical with God, but God in His wisdom causes them to be multiplied in things. Similarly with regard to attributes, he says that, unlike the persons of the Trinity, each of which signifies "a real thing" (*res*)¹¹⁸ and which are "really (*realiter*) distinct from each other,"¹¹⁹ so that "there are many real things (*res*) subsistent in the divine nature,"¹²⁰ the plurality of attributes which are affirmed of God are "in God wholly one in reality (*re*) but they differ in reason (*ratione*)";¹²¹ or, as he also phrases it, "the names attributed to God signify one thing" but "they signify that thing under many and diverse distinctions of reason (*sub rationibus multis et diversis*),"¹²² so that God "is one in reality (*re*), and yet multiple according to reason (*secundum rationem*), because our intellect apprehends Him in a manifold manner, just as things represent Him in a manifold manner."¹²³

Thus St. Thomas' way of expressing his denial of any distinction between the attributes and the essence of God, as well as between the attributes themselves, is to say that the attributes of God are "multiple only according to reason."

Another expression, however, for the same purpose of de-

¹¹³ *Ibid.* I, 15, 2, obj. 4.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ad. 4.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, c.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, ad. 2.

¹¹⁷ *Sum. Theol.* I, 44, 3c.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* I, 29, 2c; I, 30, 4c.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* I, 30, 2c.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* I, 30, 1c.

¹²¹ *In I Sent.* II, 1, 3c.

¹²² *Sum. Theol.* I, 13, 4c.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, ad. 3.

nying any real distinction between the attributes and God and between the attributes themselves, is used by Duns Scotus. The expression used by him is "formal distinction" (*distinctio formalis*).¹²⁴ Whether this "formal distinction" is something different from St. Thomas' "distinction of reason" is a moot point.¹²⁵ But if it is assumed to be different, the difference has been stated as follows: "The attributes are distinguished from the essence not indeed actually in reality (*realiter*) or by reason only (*ratione tantum*) but formally (*formaliter*) or by a distinction which is midway between real and of reason."¹²⁶ If this is what the expression "formal distinction" means, then it reminds one of the expression "neither existent nor non-existent" used by the Muslim Modalists;¹²⁷ and, like the Modalists' expression it could be objected to on the ground of its being an infringement on the Law of Excluded Middle; but, if such an objection were raised, it could be answered in the same way as the Modalists answered the objection raised against their expression.

Opposed to the description of the anti-realistic conception of attributes by either the expression "distinction of reason" or the expression "formal distinction" is Occam. As we have seen, he prefers the good old term "names" to the new-fangled term "attributes." He therefore maintains that the terms predicated of God are distinguished from God and from each other only "with reference to names" (*in nominibus*) or "with reference to signs" (*in signis*).¹²⁸ As the equivalent of "names" and "signs," he uses also the term "concepts" (*conceptus*),¹²⁹

¹²⁴ *Opera Oxoniensis*, I Sent. II, 7 (Op. VIII, 602-605). See Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 461-462, 765, n. 63.

¹²⁵ Cf. Bernard Jansen, "Beiträge zur geschichtlichen Entwicklung der *Distinctio formalis*," *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, 53 (1929): 318.

¹²⁶ Francis Noel, *Theologiae R. P. Fr. Suarez, Summa, seu Compendium*, I: *De Deo Uno et Trino*, I, i, 10, 2 (I, 24).

¹²⁷ Cf. above at n. 87.

¹²⁸ Cf. above n. 108.

¹²⁹ In I Sent. Dist. II, Qu. II F (Lugdunum, 1495), where with reference to divine attributes, he says: "non sunt nisi conceptus quidam vel signa quae possunt praedicari vere de Deo" (quoted with an omission by P. Vignaux in *D. T. C.*, vol. 11, col. 756).

though in St. Thomas *conceptio*, which he uses as the equivalent of *conceptus*, means the same as *ratio*, and hence *distinctio conceptus* would mean the same as *distinctio rationis*.

These three expressions are all meant to be a denial of the reality of attributes. The difference in phrasing, to my mind, does not mean a difference in the degree of reality which they each deny. St. Thomas in his detailed explanation of what he means by his "distinction of reason" makes it clear that, even with the qualification that the "reason" is not "from the side of the reasoner only" (*tantum ex parte ipsius ratiocinantis*) but also "from the peculiarity of the very thing" (*ex proprietate ipsius rei*),¹³⁰ he does not mean by it any diminution in the degree of his denial of the reality of attributes; he only means by it to emphasize that the attributes, which are in no sense real, are not definable, that is to say, they are not univocal terms, and also that they are not generic or fictitious or equivocal or synonymous terms.¹³¹ And to my mind, again, just as the phrases used by St. Thomas as qualifications of his "distinction of reason" do not mean a diminution in the degree of his denial of the reality of divine attributes, so does not also the expression "formal distinction" used by Duns Scotus. If there is at all any difference in meaning between the different expressions used by them, it is to be found with reference to something in which they openly and outspokenly disagree with each other. Now they happen to be openly and outspokenly in disagreement as to whether attributes are predicated of God univocally or not. St. Thomas takes the negative;¹³² Duns Scotus takes the affirmative.¹³³ But, as we have seen, St. Thomas explains his "distinction of reason" plus its qualification to mean the negation, among others, also of the univocal interpretation of divine attributes. We may therefore conclude that, if Duns Scotus had chosen the expression

¹³⁰ In I Sent. II, 1, 3c.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*; cf. *Sum. Theol.* I, 13, 4-5; *Cont. Gent.* I, 32-35.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Hieronymus de Montefortino, *Ven. Johannis Duns Scoti Summa Theologica* (Rome, 1900), XIII, 5 (Vol. I, pp. 318-322).

"formal distinction" with a view to emphasizing some difference between himself and St. Thomas on the question of divine attributes, the difference which he wanted to emphasize was the difference between them on the univocal interpretation of attributes, a difference which can be shown to be only semantic. Similarly the different formula used by Occam, to my mind, once more, does not mean an increase in the degree of his denial of the reality of attributes; it only means that he felt that the denial of the reality of attributes should be expressed more strongly and more clearly and in a form, such as suggested by him, which would be less likely to be misunderstood by the unwary and to mislead them into endowing attributes with some measure of reality. In the history of religions, many a hotly debated problem was not so much over actual beliefs as over the manner in which to formulate actual beliefs, behind which there was always the fear that a wrong formulation might lead the unwary astray.

Thus at about the middle of the XIVth century there were in medieval Christian philosophy two types of descendants of Platonic ideas, the Logos and Attributes. The Logos was the place of the ideas and, through the Logos of Philo, was the third generation of Platonic ideas; attributes were the terms by which the ideas within the Logos were designated and, through the Muslim attributes, were the fifth generation of Platonic ideas. It is to these two types of Platonic ideas that the original question as to whether the Platonic ideas were extradeical or intradeical was transferred. The answer given to this question differed in each of these two types of descendants. The Logos was both extradeical and intradeical by unification; attributes were only intradeical.

Centuries roll by and the scene is shifted from the Schoolmen, who were professional teachers of philosophy, to Descartes and Spinoza, who were free-lance philosophers, Descartes a free-lance roving philosopher, Spinoza a free-lance non-roving philosopher.

Descartes, heir to medieval Christian philosophy, followed faithfully the traditions of that philosophy. God to him was still immaterial and hence he insists upon the simplicity and indivisibility of God.¹³⁴ Following Christian tradition, he declares that the Logos, as one of the persons of the Trinity is both extradeical and intradeical by unification and that hence the Trinity is a mystery. Thus bearing in mind the traditional view that the distinction between the persons is only with respect to some causal relation between them, he says with regard to the persons of the Trinity that he denies that "there can be discerned between them a real distinction in respect of the divine essence, whatever be admitted to prevail in respect to their relation to one another";¹³⁵ and, with regard to the Trinity itself, he says that it is a doctrine "which can be perceived only by a mind illumined by faith."¹³⁶ Following the vocabulary of the Schoolmen, he refers to such terms predicated of God as "eternal, infinite, omniscient, and the creator of all things which are outside of himself"¹³⁷ as "attributes."¹³⁸ From his classification of attributes into those which are "in things themselves" (*in rebus ipsis*) and those which are "only in our thought" (*in nostra tantum cogitatione*)¹³⁹ it may be inferred that divine attributes belong to the latter and that the distinction between these attributes and God and between these attributes themselves is what he describes, after St. Thomas, as being a "distinction of reason (*distinctio rationis*)," ¹⁴⁰ and, like St. Thomas, he explains that by that "distinction of reason" he does not mean a "reason" which is only of the "reasoner" (*ratiocinantis*) but one which has a "foundation in things" (*fundamentum in rebus*).¹⁴¹ In

¹³⁴ *Meditatio III* (*Oeuvres*, ed. Adam et Tannery, Paris, 1897-1910, VII, 50, ll. 16-19).

¹³⁵ *Sextae Responsiones* 10 (*Oeuvres*, VII, 433, l. 27 to 444, l. 2).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* (443, ll. 23-27).

¹³⁷ *Meditatio III* (*Oeuvres*, VII, 40, ll. 16-18).

¹³⁸ *Correspondance* 299 (*Oeuvres*, III, 297, ll. 15-17).

¹³⁹ *Principia Philosophiae* I, 57.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* I, 62.

¹⁴¹ *Correspondance* 418 (*Oeuvres*, IV, 349, ll. 26-30); cf. above at n. 130.

fact, Descartes himself confesses that in his conception of God and His attributes he follows tradition, for in his letter to Mersenne (July 1641) he writes: "by the idea of God I understand no other thing than that which all other people are accustomed to understand when they speak of Him."¹⁴²

Spinoza, heir to medieval Jewish philosophy supplemented and panoplied by medieval Christian philosophy, parted from the fundamental conception of God as an immaterial being common to both these philosophic traditions. He boldly asserts that God is not pure thought; He is both thought and extension. How he came to this view he explains in geometrical language in Propositions II-VI of *Ethics* I and in plain language in Chapter II of *Short Treatise* I.¹⁴³ But, while his God is extension as well as thought, He is simple and indivisible. How extension can be simple and indivisible is explained by him in a Scholium to Proposition XV of *Ethics* I and in Epistola XII addressed to Ludovicus Meyer.¹⁴⁴ But still, while thought and extension are each simple and indivisible, they are different from each other. How then could he say of God that He is both thought and extension, without making Him composite and divisible? His answer is that thought and extension are related to God after the analogy of goodness and greatness and the like in their relation to God as conceived by philosophers before him, including Descartes. They are attributes of God, which are distinguished from God only in thought or by a distinction of reason. And so he formally defines attribute as "that which the intellect perceives of substance, as if constituting its essence,"¹⁴⁵ or, as he informally describes it, as that which is the same as substance but is called attribute with respect to the intellect (*respectu intellectus*).¹⁴⁶ And the same holds true of the distinction between the at-

¹⁴² *Ibid.* 245 (*Oeuvres*, III, 393, ll. 25-27).

¹⁴³ Cf. chapter on "The Unity of Substance" in my *Philosophy of Spinoza* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), I, 79-111.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. chapter on "Infinity of Extension," *ibid.*, 262-295.

¹⁴⁵ *Ethics* I, Def. 4.

¹⁴⁶ *Epistolae* 9 (*Opera*, ed. Gebhardt, Heidelberg, 1925, IV, 46, l. 4).

tributes themselves: it is a distinction only in thought. Knowing also that, in the history of the problem of attributes, those who denied their reality, spoke of them as names, Spinoza refers to the attributes of extension and thought as two names of God and explains the unity of God, despite His having two attributes, by the example of the third patriarch, who is one, despite his having two names, Jacob and Israel.¹⁴⁷

And yet, with all this background, reaching far and wide into history, students of Spinoza treat the attributes in his philosophy as if they were inventions of his own mind. With their bare wit they try to extract some rootless meaning out of his mnemonic phrases and, if sometimes they happen to summon aid from without, they make him split hairs with Descartes or share honors with Berkeley.

At the beginning of my talk I said that I would trace the history of the two interpretations of Platonic ideas through the successive generations of descendants of these ideas. Let me now, by way of summary, list the generations through which I have tried to trace the continuity of these two interpretations. As there is no better method of showing the continuity of a historical process than that used by the Biblical historiographers in those genealogies which begin with the words "Now these are the generations," I shall adopt this literary device and begin:

Now these are the generations of Platonic ideas.

And Plato lived forty years and begat the ideas.

And the ideas of Plato lived three hundred years and begat the Logos of Philo.

And the Logos of Philo lived seventy years and begat the Logos of John.

And the Logos of John lived six hundred years and begat the attributes of Islam.

And the attributes of Islam lived five hundred and fifty years and begat the attributes of the Schoolmen.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* (ll. 9-11).