Sometimes terms are used interchangeably in philosophy and theology but have different meanings. The gradation can be very subtle. This is particularly true when we deal with the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Today, we will look at three of these terms.
THE DEMIURGE

The original usage of the term demiurge was in the *Timaeaus*, a Socratic dialogue. It was a Platonic concept. Greek philosophy produced a God who could not move. If God was perfect, he could not move since movement implies bettering one’s position. If God desired to move, and did move, he of necessity must have been in an inferior position and therefore moved to a superior position. This presented a logical problem then. Since movement was impossible for God, how could God have created the world? If it didn’t exist before, then why would he create it? Platonic philosophy solved that conundrum with the Demiurge. This was a lower “god” who was not all-knowing and all-powerful. The Demiurge became synonymous with the “Creator”.

It is precisely here Christians must be careful as the Demiurge sounds very much like the Logos. Monotheists regard God as the Creator of the Universe. God created the Universe ex nihilo by speaking it into existence. In Christian parlance, the Word of the Father, or Logos was the agent of creation. The Word in orthodox Christianity was a Person of the Holy Trinity. The Demiurge of philosophy was somewhat less savory. The Gnostics, an early Christian heresy, taught the material world was inferior to the spiritual world, if not downright evil. Therefore, they conceived of the
Demiurge as being a malevolent being, who created the material world enslaving our souls.

The Second Century heretic Marcion rejected the Old Testament and also regarded the Demiurge as being evil. In Marcion’s theology, the “God of the Old Testament” was an evil slave master, who held mankind accountable for its sins without any kind of mercy. The Demiurge, as this God’s agent, also was evil.

The Arians, a powerful Christian heresy of the 4th Century, regarded the Word as being less than God. The Word was not preexistent in their theology. Their slogan was “there was a time when He was not.” Orthodox Christians looked at this Arian dogma as being uncomfortably very close to that of the Demiurge,

THE LOGOS

A Greek philosophical concept borrowed by early Christians. It literally means “word, or reason”. Christian theologians interpreted the Christ as the Logos portrayed in the famous hymn in Chapter One of the Gospel of John. Origen imagined the Logos as the mediator between the Creator and the Created. In short, the Logos was the bridge between the Platonic Forms (ultimate reality) and the world we experience, which is only a shadow of the forms. It is the Logos, or the Second Person of the Trinity that provides Creation and Redemption.
WISDOM

We are all aware of the great cathedral in Constantinople called Hagia Sophia, or the Church of the Holy Wisdom. In later Jewish thought, Wisdom was personified. In the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom is shown to be with God when He creates the Universe. Christians naturally equated Wisdom to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. In some quarters, Sophia or Wisdom, became the feminine aspect of God. This has been rejected by scholars as heretical. Scholars who do believe the Evangelist John borrowed Greek philosophical ideas point to Wisdom as proof the idea of the Logos had existed in Jewish thought. Under this line of thinking, John the Theologian did not need to use Greek philosophy to explain the Logos. This could be done by the use of Jewish religious tradition.

This pamphlet has not been approved by the Eparchy of Passaic or the Metropolia of Pittsburgh. It is not the official position of the pastor of St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church or the Bishop of Passaic. Any errors are those of the author.

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