

IT ALL STARTED WITH THE WORD

by Lester J. Start

Undated

Text: John 1:1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.⁴

We all have to start somewhere; in all that we experience, in all the events we find ourselves in, we seek understanding by seeking origins, by trying to find out how it all started. Man's mind naturally seems to reach back to origins in an attempt to explain the universe, and on the

basis of these origins he looks forward into the future with a better knowledge of what is to come. This is the impulse behind the writing of the Creation story in the first chapter of Genesis which we have just read; it expresses the gropings of the pre-scientific mind toward an explanation of the origin of the universe, an explanation which is incompatible with modern science in details but which hits upon the basic truth of Creation as the work of a Creator, God. Thus, when we call this account the groping of the primitive mind, we in no way detract from its significance, for its insight is correct, just as the insight of the simple, unsophisticated man into the meaning of life is often more sound than that of the highly educated who may have lost himself in a sea of imponderability. There is reason behind the caricature of the absent-minded professor, for often he does not know life.

We find another account of the origin of the universe from a different point of view in the first Chapter of John. It is the first verse of this chapter which has suggested our subject for this morning. The verse is familiar to all of you, so familiar, perhaps, that you are likely to read right by it without thinking what it has to say. It reads: in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This verse is an explanation of the origin of the world from a philosophical point of view; it all started with the Word. As we read further it becomes clear what the writer means by the Word, for the Word is the Light of the world which lighteth every man, the Light of Truth of the Son of God who existed from eternity to eternity. The 'lord is the pre-existent Son of God who is with God and is God.

But why does the writer use the term Word? What does it mean? The term was used by the Greek philosophers in a special sense to refer to the creating principle of the universe. I am not going into a discussion of the technicalities of the term and its meaning and tell you how hard it is to translate the Greek word logos, but try to find the message of the text as we have it, for I am convinced the writer meant to say In the beginning was the Word; it all started with the word.

We all must start somewhere. The philosopher begins with first causes; the scientist begins with experimentation and observation in its laboratory. But in ordinary experience we start with the word. The inventor gets an idea for an invention when somebody says, 'Why don't they...?' It started with the word.

The composer, the writer in action; marriage, divorce, quarrelling. God starts with word as poet.

Word thus means an idea or plan .started in action.

This is because the word is the most intelligible means of communication. We can communicate without them, as animals do, but for intelligent communication we use words. For words hold ideas.

Then it follows that there is intelligence at the heart of the [plan first] universe for it all began with idea. Intelligence speaks to intelligence. This is the way we learn in life, the way the world learns in history in spite of the irrationalists. The importance of the Word in the development of history - Luther - Tyndale.

This has moral relevance.

Where does the Word lead?

Origin association identity

(With God) (Was God)

This is the epitome of the Christian experience.

The word brings identity with the cosmos and God.

What has the Word to say to me? What do my words say to others?

We are held accountable for every idle word. [free speech? Saying what we please]

It is our function to identify ourselves with the purpose of the universe. The religious interest is not the interest in God or in using God, but in being used by God. Don't be a coupon clipper. Plenty stick their oars in everywhere but never pull on them.

To make what is relative absolute is idolatry.