God.”

(*h*) We find a much nearer approximation  
to the Alexandrine method of  
speech in the Epistle to the Hebrews,  
written evidently by some disciple intimately  
acquainted with the Alexandrine  
gnosis (see the opening verses, and especially   
“*upholding all things by the word of  
His power*”). But even there *we have  
not the* “Logos” *identified personally  
with the Lord Jesus Christ*, or indeed  
*personally spoken so at all*, —however  
near some passages may seem to approach  
to this usage (ch.iv. 12, 13; xi.3).

(*i*) The  
Alexandrine gnosis was immediately connected   
with Ephesus, where the Gospel  
of John was probably written. Apollos  
(Acts xviii. 24) came thither *from Alexandria*;   
and Cerinthus is related by Theodoret  
to have studied and formed his philosophic   
system in Egypt, before coming  
to Ephesus.

(*j*) These notices will serve  
to account for the term “Logos” being  
already found by St. John framed to his  
use; and the anti-Gnostic tendency of his  
writings will furnish an additional reason  
why he should rescue such important  
truths as the pre-existence and attributes  
of the divine “Word” from the perversions  
which false philosophy had begun to  
make of them.

(*k*) In all that has been  
said in this note, no insinuation has been  
conveyed that either the Apostle Paul, or  
the Writer to the Hebrews, or John,  
*adopted in any degree their TEACHING  
from the existing philosophies*. Their  
teaching (which is totally distinct from  
any of those philosophies, as will be  
shewn in this commentary) is that of the  
Holy Spirit;—and the existing philosophics,   
with all their follies and inadequacies,  
must be regarded, *in so far as they* by  
their terms or ideas subserved the work  
which the Spirit had to do by the Apostles  
and teachers of Christianity, as so many  
providential preparations of the minds of  
men to receive the fuller effulgence of  
the Truth as it is in Jesus, which shines  
forth in these Scriptures.

**In the beginning]** Equivalent to  
“*before the world was*,” ch. xvii. 5. The  
expression is indefinite, and must be interpreted  
relatively to the matter spoken of.  
‘Thus in Acts xi. 15, it is “the beginning of  
the Gospel:” and by the same principle of  
interpretation, *here* it is **the beginning  
of all things**, on account of “*all things  
were made by him*” ver. 3.

These  
words, if they do not *assert*, at least  
*imply*, the *eternal pre-existence* of the  
divine Word. For “*was in the beginning* is not said of an *act done* in the  
beginning (as in Gen. i. 1), but of a *state  
existing* in the beginning, and therefore  
without beginning itself.

**was**, not  
equivalent to “*is*” (see “*I am*,” ch. viii.  
58 al.), as Euthymius and others have  
supposed ; but Origen has given the true  
reason for the indefinite past being used,—  
“It would have been more strict, in  
speaking of God the Word, to say **is**; but  
seeing that he is speaking with reference  
to the distinction of the Incarnation, which  
took place at a certain time, the Evangelist  
uses **was** instead of **is**.” The existence  
of an enduring and unlimited state  
of being, implied in “*was*,” is contrasted  
with “*was made*,” or “*became*” (the  
word is the same) in verses 3 and 14.

**and the Word was with God] ‘With** is here used in the sense of “chez,”  
abiding with. Basil remarks that St.  
John says “*with* God, not *in* God, that  
he may set before us the distinctness of  
Person: . . . that he may give no opening  
for the confusion of person.” Both  
the inner substantial union, and the distinct  
personality of the “ Word ” are here  
asserted. The former is distinctly repeated  
in the next words.

**and the Word was God]** This is the true form of  
the sentence; not ‘*God was the Word*.’  
This is absolutely required by the usage of  
the Greek language: see in my Gr. Test.  
But the *sense* to be conveyed here is as  
weighty a consideration as the form of  
the sentence. Had St. John intended to  
say, ‘ *God was the Word*,’ —what meaning  
could his assertion possibly have conveyed?   
None other than a contradiction  
to his last assertion, by which he had  
distinguished God from the Word. And  
not only would this be the case, but the  
assertion would be inconsistent with the   
whole historical idea of the Word, making:  
this term to signify merely an attribute  
of God, just as when it is said, “ *God is  
love*.” Not to mention the unprecedented  
inversion of subject and predicate which  
this would occasion; “*the Word*” *having  
been the subject before*, and again *resumed  
as the subject afterwards*.

The *rendering* of the words being then as above,  
their *meaning* is the next question. **God**  
(see the grammatical reasons in my Gr.  
Test.) must be taken as implying God *in  
substance and essence*,—not ‘the Father,’  
*in Person*. It does not mean “ *divine*,”  
nor is it to be rendered “*a God* ”—but, as  
in “*became flesh*,” “*flesh*” expresses that  
*state* into which the Divine Word entered