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Is there a Native Metaphysical Element in the New Testament?

PROF. HENRY S. NASH.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

THE relation between metaphysics and the New Testament is frequently referred to by those New Testament scholars of our time who stand either on or near the conservative wing. Commonly the reference is made in order to get the opportunity to affirm that the metaphysical process has no footing within Revelation. Since the days when Hegel lorded it over the Bible, the wheel has come full circle. Metaphysic, in the traditional acceptance of the term, has nowadays few who are so low as to do her reverence. It is a very safe thing to deny that metaphysic can claim the ownership of any part of Scripture. Nobody whose favor counts for much will be offended by it; and great numbers of pious Christian folk are sure to be pleased. It would, then, seem to be worth while to take the risk of appearing to go afield from the track of work proper to the Society, if there is a chance that one may thereby somewhat clear his own mind touching a matter that is wrapped in a pretty thick mist.

I beg leave to narrow the field which this paper undertakes to cover, by putting out of question the self-consciousness of Christ, and confining myself to a study of the process of apostolic reasoning about Christ. One excuse is that, the subject being so broad even when most rigidly fenced in, I shall, at best, have difficulty in avoiding the charge of presumption for taking it up within such constricted time-limits. Another and even stronger excuse is that the apostolic consciousness offers us a better chance of coming at the question. The Person of Christ was, for the men of the New Testament, a sovereign fact, central for feeling, and the source of all permanent co-ordination in experience. In their relation to the supreme historic material which the life of the Savior offered to the reasoning faculties within them, they stood, so far as logic is concerned, upon ground

practically the same with that under the feet of the Greeks, who as truly founded philosophy for all time as the New Testament men gave us a book of witness for all time. Their position was radically different from that of the Master himself. He was subjective to himself, but for them He was a Fact in the objective order. He was both an inspiration and a problem to them. As the Greek stood before the objective cosmos, so stood they here. As Greek philosophy began "in wonder," that is, in mental difficulty which at last opened into admiration, so did their ultimate view of life begin; for the supreme event in their Lord's life, His death, set up a problem that had to be constantly thought upon. Therefore, in studying the way in which their mind went to work upon this one Fact that constituted for them the marrow of all fact, we may fairly hope to see in clearest light their likeness and unlikeness to the Greek mind as it played in free speculation around the facts constituting their world.

Of course the question touching the presence of metaphysical elements within apostolic consciousness should be an entirely open question even to the devoutly conservative Bible-reader. The philosophic consciousness is a legitimate type of human consciousness; and, as far as the abstract theory of inspiration goes, inspired metaphysics is no more impossible than an inspiration working through other forms of human faculty. The critical and the dogmatical mind should find it easy to agree that we are dealing altogether with a matter of fact.

Inasmuch as metaphysic has played so vast a part in the making or marring of the church's fortunes; seeing, too, that its roots go so deep into the whole past of Christianity; we have good theoretical ground for demanding of ourselves some knowledge of the history of metaphysic in the church before we venture to seriously discuss the question whether there is any native metaphysic in the New Testament. We have also good personal grounds. If exegesis teaches us anything, it teaches us to beware of the personal equation. Now there are two forms of the personal equation. There is the personal equation, strictly so called, that is due to a man's individual temperament and up-bringing. He finds out what it is through careful study of his own mental methods, especially through the comparative study of his present state of mind with his past states of mind, by the aid of an exact memory, or, if he does not possess that, his note-books. Then, there is the form which may be called generic. A man shares a certain habit of mind universal in his day, and must therefore be on guard against himself, lest he construe the phenomena of the

past altogether according to his habit. To find out this form of the personal equation, he must go to the history of that part of the race to which he belongs. In like fashion, when dealing with the question before us, one must know what his full personal equation is. And, in order to get that knowledge, he must consult the history of metaphysic in the church.

The first period in the history is the apostolic age out of which the New Testament issued. But as the mental processes within this period are the very matter in question, at this stage of the discussion it must be passed by. The second period begins with the sub-apostolic age, and has its climax in the great theological debates of the fourth and fifth centuries. The New Testament material was shaped in the mould of Greek thought. The whole intellectual apparatus of the Empire had been fashioned in the Greek workshop. All the concepts and terms of metaphysic had brought from that quarter both their shape and color. When one speaks of the evangelic material being put into this mould, he appears to assume the point in debate, namely, that there is a marked difference of some kind or other between the matter and the form. But this is not true. The real point in issue is the presence or absence of the metaphysical quality as regards the native processes of the apostolic reason. How far concepts and impressions which show themselves by their complexion to be Greek by origin effected lodgment within the New Testament, is no essential part of the question. We are concerned with the psychology of exegesis. It is the native and inherent motion of the evangelic consciousness that we are after. When, therefore, a man says that the evangelic material was cast in the mould of Greek metaphysic, he assumes nothing relating to the real question. He does recognize the plain fact that the whole core of the New Testament comes from experience of a kind most unlike the experience out of which Greek philosophy was born. But while Greek metaphysic was at that time the only metaphysic known, it is not the only metaphysic possible. Metaphysic as an element in the total process of reason, not metaphysic as a temporarily complete organism of ideas, is the subject in hand. Inasmuch, however, as Greek philosophy was, for the Empire, the only conceivable philosophy, it was a most momentous step in the history of Christianity when the evangelic consciousness entered into an alliance with it.

The third period is the mediæval establishment of religion. Christianity, Occidental Christianity, is taken as a postulate by every one who has problems. The defeat of the Empire by the Papacy shows

how complete the establishment was in practical affairs. Scholasticism manifests its completeness in the region of the mind. The young and vigorous reason of the rising nations must be exercised. It therefore takes its constitutional, and even plunges into the sea for a swim. But it is at no time out of sight of its tutor, the authority of the church. When Occam sums up the nominalistic and sceptical movement by affirming that nothing which is dear to theology can be proved by philosophy, he escapes the deadly undertow, and is hauled safely ashore by the long line of authority. Finally, the establishment of Christianity in the province of the imagination is manifested by Dante. So that, in every way, the Church's grip upon the essentials of experience was for many centuries an apparent finality. Herewith went the complete absence of the critical spirit. And, lacking that, things of most diverse complexion could be made to look alike. Aristotelianism and prophetism were inextricably confused.

The fourth period is the beginning of disestablishment. The real causes were manifold, and we need not note them. But the causes which were real, and at the same time in conscious connection with history, so that, by a broad use of terms, they can be called literary causes, were but two. One of them was the development of the dogma of the Bible. This was a totally new thing in the world. There had been no antithesis of Church and Bible in the times when Judaism was making monotheism a faith for the common people ; nor in the times when Christianity was conquering the Mediterranean world. But now the dogma of pure Scripture *versus* tradition becomes regnant through the Reformation. The other literary cause was the development of the dogma relative to a classic antiquity. Just as the pure essence of Scripture was demanded on the religious side, so here was the pure essence of wisdom and beauty demanded. The Reformation and the Renaissance together gave a mortal wound to the existing forms of tradition, that is to say, to the forces spiritual and mental which bind one age to its immediate predecessors. Thereby a great critical process was necessitated. But metaphysic was still in the saddle. Luther discrowned Aristotle, but Melancthon recrowned him. The evangelic consciousness and the metaphysical process, more or less after the Greek style, were still confused.

The fifth period is the eighteenth century. The disestablishment of Occidental Christianity was now complete. The Christian view of the universe can no longer put its head on the pillow of a postulate. There is a war to the knife between the accepted forms of religion on

one side and reason on the other. Consciousness, under the guise of common sense, would fain make a complete breach with its past. Both metaphysic and the Bible go by the board.

The last period is made by the movement begun in our own century. The ideal is constructive scholarship. The creed is the historical spirit, whose motto is neither to adore the past nor revile it, but to restore to it that full capacity of speech which the mediæval man and the eighteenth century man had, in their different ways, taken from it; so that the past may retain its own individuality. Germany, of course, is the one country to be closely considered within the present stadium of the last epoch. Now Germany began the century with a tremendous metaphysical revival. Positive philosophy, self-centred and self-supporting like the Greek philosophy, was now in the field for the first time in the history of Christianity; and not only in the field, but master of it. The Bible, too, or at least the New Testament, was restored to intellectual favor. Not, however, in its own right, but as the protégé of philosophy.

Trendelenburg says that after Hegelianism had run its course, Germany was like a man who has been on a long debauch, and wakes up with a hideous headache and a disposition to take the vow of total abstinence. The law of reaction brought metaphysic into disrepute. Meanwhile another great cause had been at work. All the forces going under the name of science had conspired to make the visible order of things immensely interesting and suggestive. The mind thinking in time and space found itself quite able to keep house alone. This practical autonomy of science joined with the recoil from the intellectual insolence of Hegelianism to bring metaphysic into disrepute. Moreover, the Protestant religion in Germany seemed to be in a bad way. Its force was broken. The Roman Catholic Church was on the aggressive. One sore need of German Protestantism was undoubtedly a lessening of the space between the professor's chair and the preacher's pulpit, in order that the mind and the heart should move together. Round all these forces, itself a tinge of the sky rather than a positive force, was the tendency called agnosticism, by which we are unconsciously affected more than we can know. And coming up from below was the social question, imperiously calling for a kind of religion that should help to create a new form of social will, and taxing speculation as a luxury. The result of all these things in Germany has been an emphatic separation of metaphysic and metaphysical dogma from religion.

If, then, we take the course of German thought as being largely

typical and representative, we know what is our personal equation, in the largest sense of the phrase. The object of exegesis is not attained until we have, through the study of documents, determined the dominant habit of mind displayed in the documents. In order that we may not color the documents with our own thought, we must be sure what is our own habit of mind. And the very fact that, thanks to our emancipation from a large mass of mediæval dogma, and to the growing passion for social regeneration, we are being brought closer to an elective affinity with the prophetic mood of the Old Testament — which must ever be the best key to the exegetical psychology of the New Testament — should make us over-cautious, if anything, in giving our existing habit of mind free swing.

One thing passes without debate. There is a vast potential difference between a mind which, like the contemporary mind, protests against metaphysic and metaphysical dogma, and the New Testament mind, which possibly had no metaphysic. *We* have freed our minds at large cost of mental suffering, either to ourselves or our spiritual ancestors. A space of time, nearly two thousand years broad, lies between us and the New Testament. During nearly the whole of it, an elaborated metaphysic was living with religion in a marriage relation considered lawful and almost sacramental. A toilsome critical process, negative and positive, has brought the contemporary scholar to his conscious discrimination between metaphysic and religion, and his protest against confusing them.

But the New Testament mind had gone through no such process. The history behind it was a record not, first, of metaphysic and religion entangled, and then of the critical disentangling, but the record of a protest against idolatry, against the confusion between God and the visible world. And although, by the nature of the case, there was a deep difference between the theology of such a movement and the Greek metaphysic, growing up as it did in the soil of a religion that practically identified God and the universe, yet it would be a grave error to identify our case with that of the New Testament man; much the same error, indeed, as that committed by those early students of the history of philosophy who called the Greek philosophers of the Ionic period materialists. The question of materialism was impossible at that time. Thales and those just after him were neither materialists nor idealists, but both together. I would not press this parallel very far, but I think it has something in it. The average New Testament man most assuredly had no metaphysic in the explicit sense; his mind was wholly religious and

in an intensely practical way. We have finally gotten rid, in a measure, of the intermeddling of metaphysic with religion. Are the two cases identical? Is there not enough difference, at any rate, to make us pause and ask what the terms mean when a man says, 'There is no metaphysic in the New Testament; it is a book of religion'? That and similar sayings have a wide spread nowadays. Emotionally, we are altogether in sympathy with them. But are we not in danger of offending against the laws of a sound historical exegesis, which bids us make clear not only the conscious bent of a certain organism of ideas, but also its more or less unconscious relation to all its antecedents and to its total environment?

I pass to the positive side of this paper by saying again that the study of the prophetic mind as we see it in the Old Testament is the necessary key to the exegetical psychology of the New. And in the study of the prophetic mind, it cannot be too emphatically said that its psychology is the psychology of poetry. Upon the dogmatic questions touching the peculiar place of Israel in history and the nature of the Divine purpose to which it was due there is no need of touching. We are concerned with the purely human aspect of prophecy, and that is, mentally and emotionally, a part of the human mood named poetical. There is no better definition or description of the nature of poetry than Milton's "simple, sensuous, impassioned." Each term applies as closely to prophecy as to poetry. (1) It is simple. Amos and Isaiah are illustrations. Prophecy and poetry both deal with totals. They can leave nothing unfinished. No ends hanging loose. If they analyze, it must be in the background. If they deal with the process, upon which alone science exhausts her attention, it must be as a process within a realized total, not as a thing by itself. The totals may be complicated internally, but all is thought together and fused. (2) It is sensuous. As in Dante, thought clothes itself with light. To use metaphysical terms, the idea and the phenomenon are coherent, the idea does not dwell apart. To use Wordsworth's phrase in speaking of poetry, the intellect of prophetism is a "feeling intellect." I do not need to illustrate, examples will spring up in the mind of every one. (3) It is impassioned. All real thought has will in it, but the thought of the poet and prophet is alive with will. Coleridge's saying, that "the antithesis to poetry is not prose but science," is in point. Science, in proportion to its virtue, is a careful observer of details and collector of data, being slow footed when it comes to synthesis. In the Life of Charles Darwin — the ideal of a scientific man — it is said that

perhaps the most notable thing about him was that his eye was always open for "exceptions" to his own hypotheses. And Humboldt said in effect that no student of languages was worthy of the name unless he expected to meet phenomena which criticised and even contradicted his theory. This is the scientist. The great poet, the real prophet, are on the other side. They do not look for exceptions. They are impassioned, on fire with will. Imagination must dominate matter. Hence the common characteristic of the three kinds of poetry after the grand style — epic, lyric, and dramatic — is that, in their different ways, they deal with completed subjects; and this seems to be practically all that is worth while in the famous theory about the "unities." Hence, again, the truth of Aristotle's saying about the drama, that it is more intense, that is, more purposeful, than history. History, as we see it, is largely slag. There is no end of material whose place in a moral plan of the universe the cool understanding is unable to see. The prophet and the poet on the contrary have no slag. Dante has a hell, but it is the negative aspect of triumphant justice. When the prophet wrote history, he wrote it in the light of the eternal and so as a drama. History, for him, was all *τέλος*, all aim. His view of the universe was in no sense descriptive, it was altogether eschatologic. Prophecy was impassioned, morally impassioned, to the last degree.

Possibly, what has been said is enough to justify the provisional conclusion that the antithesis between the prophetic mood and the metaphysical mood is a very imperfect one, and readily gives ground when hard pressed. To the very real differences between the two moods as they were specialized in Greece and Israel I shall soon pass, but it is much to the point just here to see that the complete antithesis is not between prophetism and metaphysic, but between prophetism and science. Science is descriptive. The *is* makes up her field of vision. The scientist seeks either to banish final causes, or to keep them under lock and key. The prophet has no second causes, and he is altogether eschatologic; the ought-to-be fills his eye. And the metaphysician — if we speak not of systems but of intellectual temperament — is, as regards many things, on the prophet's side. For the one aim of metaphysic is unity. To see the lines of suggestion that issue from widely separated departments of experience running toward a common goal, to view the outer and inner worlds in their unity — this or nothing is the reason for the metaphysician's existence. Hence the profound significance of Kant's demonstration that the metaphysical view of the world, in

order to maintain its unitary position, must pass into and base itself upon the moral. He merely laid bare to logic what had been happening all the time in fact. The metaphysical mood, as a mood, is, in some essential things, very closely allied to the prophetic mood.

But when Greek philosophy as a reasoned view of the universe — an organism of ideas logically co-ordinated — is put alongside propheticism, the result is mainly a contrast. (1) The dominant faculty in Greek metaphysic is the intellect. Feeling had a small part, nor did it find official welcome from philosophy until modern times. The will, too, which goes so closely with feeling, was mostly neglected, Aristotle's treatment of it being almost isolated. The prophetic mood, on the contrary, was one where thought and feeling were blended; but, if either had the upper hand, it was feeling. Greek metaphysic is here on the side of science; indeed, Greek philosophy never clearly distinguished between itself and science. Hence, it never dreamed of the necessity of building the rational upon the ethical. Its ideal was reason, pure, self-interpreting intelligence. Its canon was logic. The prophet, on the contrary, to use St. Paul's words (Gal. 4th), built his knowledge of himself upon God's knowledge of him. His canon was inspiration. And if Socrates had questioned the Hebrew prophets as he questioned the Athenian poets, he would probably have condemned them on the same ground, "That they wrote fine things but couldn't tell how." The master word, the only word, of the ancient philosopher was knowledge. The master word of the prophet was faith. Naturally, the philosopher could in some measure let his mind play free, while the prophet was wholly dogmatic.

(2) Greek philosophy was the affair of the individual. It was not possible to philosophize until the toilsome work of building the state had been fairly finished. Then within its shelter the free individual, making use of a leisure that was both economic and political, and feeling the point of problems which his forefathers, immersed in practical affairs, could not feel, began to ask for the what and whence and why. The prophet also was an individual in a very deep sense. But while the statesmen of Israel and Judah no doubt frequently discussed the question whether it was possible for such an individual to take part in public affairs, — Amaziah, for instance, said of Amos, "The land is not able to bear all his words," — the prophets themselves never discussed or even started the question; while for Greek thinkers it was a standing question whether the philosopher must not be an *ιδιώτης*. The prophet was an impassioned patriot. He was not a cosmopolite. The one home of his heart was Palestine. He

was a statesman, and if not a statesman, then a church builder, as Isaiah by his doctrine of the Remnant. If he had any speculation, his main desire was to transmute it speedily into action. The social will was his chief concern. In a broad sense, he was intensely practical. He would have agreed with Burke, who, discussing the American question, expresses abhorrence of the metaphysical kind of politics. Burke and the prophets would have such stuff treated as surplusage. Hence prophetism could not found literary or philosophical clubs, for it had no secret doctrines. Its field was the popular consciousness, its end either a new nation or a church.

(3) The Greek, starting from self-analysis, not from the idea of God as the man of the Bible did, ran upon and was brought to a standstill by many problems of which the man of the Bible never dreamed. For example, the relation between subject and object; the relation between matter and mind; the possibility of unity between thought and being; the question touching the very possibility of knowledge itself; and all these problems, it must be remembered, were just so many barriers against the quick flow of feeling from the individual towards the common people.

(4) The contrast may be summed up by merely stating certain diverging views of Greek philosophy and Hebrew prophecy, it being understood, of course, that nothing like a fundamental antinomy is suggested. The philosopher's final name for God was τὸ ὄν, 'Pure Being': to the prophet, God was a Holy Creator. Out of the prophetic consciousness of God's creative indwelling, came ultimately the dogma of creation, while such a dogma was alien to the Greek. The philosophers talked much about the 'nature' of things; the prophet's one phrase was the WILL of God. The philosopher looked at the universe with contemplative *fear*, and called it *cosmos*; the prophet looked at the political and social condition of the world with horror and appealed to the Day of Jahweh, the Judgment Day. The philosopher's great word was law; the prophet had no room in his mind for anything save the inseparable thoughts of God's will and the Messianic idea. The philosopher's point of view was mainly cosmological, but history was the material of prophetic thinking. To the philosopher, Logos meant the inbred meaning and purpose of things; to the prophet, its corresponding concept meant the creative purpose of God. And, finally, the philosopher moved towards abstraction, while the prophet moved towards the concrete; he dealt not so much in finished conceptions as in great pictures, his favorite picture being that of the Last Things. To return to the parallel between prophecy

and poetry, Isaiah was very remote from Aristotle, but, so far as psychological quality is concerned, he was a near kinsman to Æschylus.

As we pass to the New Testament, it is of the first importance to emphasize the significance of the Old Testament. It is a commonplace with us that the New Testament grew up under its shadow, and that without it the Catholic Church could not have been founded. But sometimes it is not sufficiently realized that every mental act of a New Testament man was colored and shaped by its existence, so that it looms up behind and through the whole process of apostolic reason. Two striking illustrations of the power of the Old Testament may be mentioned before we enter the New Testament. The one is the way in which the concept of 'Law' dawned upon the Jews. It did not come from the study of the universe, as was the case with the Greeks, and as is the case with us, but from the study of the Torah. We have here a fact of the first order in its bearing upon a point, such as the pedigree of John's term *Logos*. The other illustration is the power of the Old Testament over Philo. It is hard to form an opinion of Philo's real speculative power. Probably he had no philosophic genius. He did, however, possess philosophic talent of a high order. Yet he never sincerely philosophized. Philosophy, in the thorough sense, begins in difficulties, in doubt. But Philo never deeply doubted. He had difficulties; he had to reconcile science and religion, after a fashion. But he apparently never once doubted the canonic dignity and normality of the Old Testament in relation to all possible thought. His philosophy, therefore, was essentially like the mediæval scholasticism, in that, no matter how freely and far the mind might drift, it could eventually bring itself up sharply and decisively with a dogma. The Old Testament was monarch over Philo's mind, and however much matter he might force into it by means of his exegetical method, it predetermined the trend of his thought.

When the apostolic reason set about the work of converting the Jews to Christ, it did not have to make a Bible. There was a Bible already in hand. The path which apologetic must pursue was plainly marked out. The only means to make their way of life and set of mind seem reasonable was to make it seem Scriptural. If the apostolic consciousness was even to do so much as maintain its own self-respect, it must prove its right to the Old Testament. All decisive argument was the argument from prophecy in one form or another. Now that argument is, logically, a part of the universal form of argu-

ment, the argument from analogy. But the apostolic mind did not go outside Scripture for its chief analogies. Paul sometimes appealed to Nature, as in Rom. 1, and an occasional sermon, at Lystra, for example (Acts 14), but this seems to be due, for the most part, to his noble desire to be 'all things to all men.' At any rate, it did not materially alter the lines of his own personal thinking. It was no part of the process by which he made Christianity seem reasonable to himself, nor has it left any deep marks upon his system. So, the drawing power of the Old Testament was resistless. Every time the apostolic reason argued, it turned that way.

Moreover, the early church, as Weizsäcker well says (*Das apostolische Zeitalter*, p. 47), was not a school but a community. It may be added that it was a small community, and on fire with the ardor of the missionary. There can be no leisure under such circumstances, no surplusage of thought above daily practical needs, that can be put to speculative purposes. Then, too, the men of the gospel were not bookmen. So there could be no theology in the sense of a department of thought. Paul comes nearest to being a systematic theologian. Yet even his theology, or Christology, is rather pastoral theology than systematic divinity, and his deepest sayings about Christ, e.g. Phil. 2⁶^{ff.}, are like positions into which he is driven by the apologetic or emotional needs of the day, not like parts of a reasoned and articulated system. Now this lack of intellectual system, the fact that theology was so largely homiletical, with the text taken from the Old Testament, would naturally increase the latter's drawing power, or, at any rate, keep open to it an easy entrance into the apostolic mind. And we must, at this point, clearly apprehend a marked difference between our relation to the past and the relation in which the man of the New Testament stood. The feeling of the intellectual continuity of Europe was broken across by the Reformation and the Renaissance. We are just beginning again to realize the unity of history. But no such break lay behind the New Testament consciousness. The past and the present flowed into each other without a ripple. Along with this should go the fact that the New Testament men, as a class, had little artificial memory, that is, the kind of memory common with us, which makes constant use of note-books; while their natural memory, steadily trained and unweakened by the use of external aids, was far stronger than ours. Join all this to the fact that apologetic necessity drove the apostolic mind backwards, and join both things to the drawing power, inherent as well as inherited, of the Old Testament by itself, and we may

realize the force with which the New Testament feeling and reason would set that way.

The first creed was exceedingly simple. Jesus of Nazareth is the long-expected Christ, the desire and glory of Israel! This was the first half of it. And the other was, This same Christ is soon to come again. But this creed, so simple as far as explicit thought was concerned, had a vast deal of implicit thought wrapped up in it. In the first place, the emotional condition of the apostolic reason made large inferences easy. While impassioned feeling does not elaborate systems, it inspires to quick and far-going intuitions. The intense apocalyptic and eschatologic mood in which the apostolic mind found itself, made the world within which that mind moved seem both small and plastic. The space of time their imagination was required to cover was shut in between the Old Testament behind and the Parousia before. Their time-sense was not, as ours is, trained to grasp a long series of centuries, coming, Indian file, one after the other. If we would know how, for the most part, the past appeared to the New Testament men as a vivid yesterday, we should have our boys read all the heroic stories we can collect, with almost no dates inserted, and then photograph the total impression.

The creed was that Jesus is the Christ. This necessitated the inference that the Old Testament belonged to Him. For to the first Christians, the Old Testament was in its essence not law, but prophecy. Its whole heart was the Messianic idea. It therefore belonged to the actual Messiah, as the king's crown belongs to the king. The existence of the Old Testament, and its dominating power over the reason and imagination of the first Christians, is one of two sovereign facts to be considered in the study of the apostolic consciousness; and the other is the presence in history and on the earth of the real Christ. The Old Testament belongs to the Christ. They cannot be torn apart. And the main movement of mind is to follow the conception of the Christ, as it works deeper and deeper into the Old Testament. The first great step is taken when the Christ takes possession of the title *κύριος*. The next is to ascribe pre-existence to Him. This in itself involves little difficulty. Aristotle's canon, that the thing which is first and deepest by nature is the last to appear in the analysis, describes, if we take it in the reverse order, a universal tendency in consciousness. Whatever dominates consciousness proceeds to register its dignity in terms of priority. And where, as is still the case over nineteen-twentieths or more of the field of human experience, the concept of evolution has

no play, this tendency is resistless and uncriticised. The sovereignty of Jesus as the Christ would, with little waste of time and with very little resistance arising from the mental habits of the New Testament men, register itself in terms of pre-existence. The creed made Him Judge of the world. He is thus eternal *a parte post*. He must also be conceived as in some very real sense eternal *a parte ante*.

Add to this the existence and the drawing power of the Old Testament. Its intrinsic qualities kept in good order a highway over which the devout imagination could travel with slight labor to the beginning of all things. If we compare the Old Testament with Hesiod, the nature of the aid that the Old Testament gave to the Christologic development of the apostles at once becomes plain. Hesiod represents the Greek position, and his pages are littered with the wrecks of mythologies which once were more or less consistent. Over the doctrine of beginnings broods an impenetrable mist, and chaos and night are there. But the Old Testament had, and for the great bulk of Christians, still has, a continuous history running steadily back to the day of creation. And the highway is not cumbered with broken mythologies. The unitary idea of God keeps it clear at every point. When this is put in connection with the universal law just described, the inference that the apostolic reason quickly proceeded to ascribe pre-existence to Christ is well-nigh inevitable. In the interpretation therefore of a vexed passage like 1 Pet. 1¹¹, the exegetical probabilities appear to me to be all in favor of the supposition that the pre-existence of Christ is the thought. Indeed, the probabilities are so strong that considerable contextual strength is required to withstand them.

Nor can there be much doubt what kind of pre-existence it was that was ascribed to the Christ. Schenkel's hypothesis, that the New Testament men distinguished real or personal pre-existence from ideal pre-existence or pre-existence in principle, is quite against all probabilities. Plato does not reach that distinction. We should hardly expect Galilean peasants to come to it, unless in some supernatural way. But the supernatural is not here in point. The subject is the habits of the New Testament mind, and the way it was likely to work under given conditions; and the likelihood is that the personal Christ, already affirmed by the earliest and simplest creed to be judge of the world, and consequently master of history, soon took complete possession of the Old Testament. If the prologue to the Fourth Gospel may be taken as a type, the conception of a personal Messias first claimed the Old Testament by right of the Messianic

idea, passed through it to the doctrine of creation, and then, in the form of the Logos idea, went behind the Old Testament, and behind creation, to set this personal Christ in unique and absolute relations with God. This was the track St. Paul's mind was following in 1 Cor. 10⁴ and 8⁶. It was also the track St. Peter's mind was following in 1 Pet. 1¹¹. So, the Pauline wing and the Jewish-Christian wing of the church had a common motion.

Is there now, in this process of the religious reason, any element that can fairly be called metaphysical? Surely not if we take the term "metaphysical" as denoting always and necessarily a system, never a mental mood, nor an element within a larger total of experience. And if by metaphysic we mean metaphysic of the Greek type, as if there could be no other, then the term and all its family must be carefully avoided, when we are describing, psychologically and not dogmatically, the nature of the movement of New Testament consciousness on its intellectual side. Because that movement was primarily one of life; it was the movement of a community, not of a school. The fortunes of the Church, defended against hostile Judaism on the one side and hostile heathenism on the other, were in a position closely parallel to that of the prophets who faced Assyria with the sword of the Spirit in their hands. As universalistic monotheism issued from the one situation, so the belief in the absolute spiritual monarchy of Christ issued from the other, recording and insuring itself in terms of the relation between the Christ and the unseen Godhead. The process is one of life, not of scholastic logic, and not of metaphysical analysis crowned by a synthesis. It is the process of a great popular movement of mind and feeling in their relation to the unseen world, in other words, a religious movement.

But there was mind in it, as well as feeling. There was conscious exercise of reason. The relation to the unseen order of things is no prerogative of the practical religious experience. All metaphysic has struck its root there. For the whole intellectual life is a search after true causality, and the speculative reason cannot pause until the first cause is found. The religious movement, on its intellectual side, demands the same finality of cause. Hence the reason, in order to authenticate the claims of Christianity to be the absolute religion, had to set its Christ in the light of an absolute and monarchical relation to God. I am not, therefore, able to understand by what right Beyschlag (*Neutest. Theol.* i. 76 f.), for example, classifies certain elements in Paul and John as beginnings of the Nicene theology, and so of merely secondary significance; nor with what right, to take

another example, Schenkel says of certain speculative matter in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it "does not proceed from an immediate religious need" (*Christusbild der Apostel*, p. 130). There is a mighty difference, I must repeat, between the position, on the one side, of a man who has inherited a great body of speculative dogma infused with metaphysic after the Greek style, and has then emptied his mind of it at a vast cost ; and the position, on the other side, of a man who has no such inheritance, no metaphysic whatsoever, and therefore in good faith indulges in mental processes which are absolutely necessary to the authentication of his view of the universe, and which consequently and inevitably contain a native metaphysical element.