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ARTICLE III.

STUDIES IN CHRISTOLOGY.¹

BY PROFESSOR FRANK HUGH FOSTER, D. D.

THE conception which Jesus at first presents of the kingdom of God, says Schultz, is an eschatological one. It is a kingdom in which the idea of ethical perfection is to be realized at some distant future time. It naturally follows that the first conception of the deity of Christ is also eschatological, that is, that it is bestowed upon him who proclaims the approach of the kingdom of God by a divine and miraculous act. But this is not the distinctive quality of the deity of Christ, which consists rather in its ethical element. The kingdom of God is itself an ethical magnitude, a society brought into existence and maintained by the prevalence among its members of the principle of love. Such love springs up in consequence of the revelation of the love of God to men through Jesus Christ, and he, as the perfect revelation of God to men, is properly honored by them as God; and this is the proper foundation of their belief in the deity of Christ. "Even when upon earth, he is of the divine species. He reveals the true will of God by opening up his own personality. He does not proclaim the kingdom of God and the conditions of entering into it as one of the scribes, nor with theoretical instruction, but as 'one having authority,' and he sets his own authority, 'But I say unto you,' over against those of old time and their law. He is conscious that he is led by the Spirit of God not simply in single discourses and single acts done in the discharge of his

¹ Continued from page 265 of April number.

calling, but in his entire calling as such. He is conscious of identity with the kingdom of God. He has the power to forgive sins. He is greater than Solomon, or Jonah, or the sanctuary of the ancient covenant. The angels are his servants because they serve the purpose of God. . . . Therefore the worth of the life proceeding from him has the same relation to that of common men in the world as the eternal and divine to the temporal and carnal. In this consciousness of his calling Jesus, with whatever humility he expressed himself about himself as an historical personality, was completely certain of the divine dignity of his person in its divinely prescribed task. He knows that he will be revealed as the goal of the divine government of the world, as the judge and lord of the world, as the Son of God and the heir of the world." Such is the line of argument by which Schultz would establish the deity of Christ and by which he necessarily defines at the same time what he understands by that deity. He soon goes on to say: "But neither in this fulfillment of his vocation nor in the witness which Jesus gives to the deity of the Christ is there any occasion given for conceiving the personality of Christ, on its phenomenal side, as exalted above the measure of the individual life of a man upon the earth. The motives which fill Christ, the purposes which his life serves, are supernatural, are the divine motives, the purposes of God for men without distinction in their earthly and natural conditions. But the human life which these motives and purposes fill, can quite as well be a human life in its nature as the life of the prophets could continue a human life even in the moments in which they, led by the Spirit of God, became revelations of God." Jesus came into being like other men. He did not maintain "in his genuine statements that a divine substance or even a preëxistent divine personality was united in him with his human personality." In plain English, Christ was simply a man filled with the divine love.

Of course, any one can make such statements, and it is in itself of little importance whether he does or does not. All that Schultz has given us to this point is simply Ritschlianism, and falls under the same criticism with that. If there is any importance in such views at all, it lies in the arguments by which they are supported. Turning, then, to the arguments by which Schultz sustains his positions, we select his treatment of the teaching of the Apostle Paul as a good and sufficient example of them all. Paul's doctrine of Christ begins, according to Schultz, in the interest which attaches to the risen and glorified Christ, upon whom he believes God to have "conferred" deity. It is not merely power which has thus been conferred, though Paul thinks much upon that and rejoices in it. "He exults in the glory of him who is 'God over all.' He prays to him as his Lord, and comforts himself that in his own weakness the power of Christ is made perfect. . . . Yet the true significance of the risen Lord to Paul is this, that from him there stream forth into his church the pure and perfect motives of the divine life." Hence, "the spiritual man, the Lord from heaven, is not a preëxistent ideal man, but the glorified one whom faith recognizes as a member of the spiritual heavenly world, and whose revelations the church receives from heaven." Paul, however, does not understand the deity of Christ in any way which will remove or weaken the distinction of the person of Christ from the person of God.

But there is more in Paul's view of the deity of Christ, according to Schultz, than simply this. "The work of Christ in which Paul believes, demands a deity of Christ which does not merely proceed from this work, but goes before it and makes it possible. The 'flesh' would have excited sin in Christ as well as in other men . . . if there had not been more in him than in the creatures of this world, if the 'flesh of sin' had been, not a mere imitation, that is, a form of being imparted to him for his work, but the appropriate

expression of his essence, if the motives of the divine life had not been those which determined his personal life." "Paul, therefore, believes in a deity of the earthly Christ. . . . But this belief is not the result of theological speculation, but the simple expression of the experience of that which the church receives from Christ. There is not the slightest suggestion in Paul that he conceived of two natures united with one another in this personality of Christ, or two substances, or a personality and a nature. The simple point with him is a double mode of conceiving this single personality of Christ. . . . The eye of knowledge sees an earthly personality like that of every other man. The eye of faith sees the divine motives and forces, the surrender of the whole life to the highest divine purpose, and recognizes that the earthly existence for this personality is one in itself inappropriate (though necessary for its aims), a transitory, phenomenal form, that the glorious and dominant position as the goal and condition of the world is the only condition which corresponds to its worth. . . . There is, therefore, not a divine and a human nature in Christ, but a human personality with divine contents, with divine motives and aims. . . . The real contents of the faith of Paul in the deity of Christ is doubtless *exhausted* in these features."

Schultz is, however, far from teaching that Paul has nothing more to say upon the subject of Christology. But this additional matter, over and above the "real contents of his faith," is "only an auxiliary conception, a lemma (*Hilfsbegriff*, *Hilfssatz*), introduced from the metaphysical assumptions and theological culture of the apostle to give the necessary theological consistency to his belief in the divine contents of this personality." The "lemma" thus introduced is, in brief, the preëxistence of Christ. Schultz acknowledges in the clearest terms that Paul believes in Christ's preëxistence. He quotes as evidence of this the

texts: Gal. iv. 4; Rom. viii. 3; 1 Cor. viii. 6; x. 4, 9; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Col. i. 10-16; Phil. ii. 6; etc. True, Schultz sees in nearly all these passages evidences that the preëxistence of Christ is for the Apostle nothing but the expression of the fact that in Christ is the perfect revelation of the eternal divine thought, and thus the "goal of the world," etc.; but however derived, the conception that Christ really preëxisted is undeniably the conception of Paul.

We may well pause in our review of Schultz with this strange result. Paul sees a divinity in even the earthly form of Christ, which makes him more than a man. He himself says that this divine Christ is a preëxistent being come in the likeness of sinful flesh. But Schultz, using Ritschl's suggestion, calls this a "lemma," and says that what he meant was that there was no divinity there except divine motives. Again, how utterly incompetent to explain confessed facts the Ritschlian theory exhibits itself! It not only fails to build a bridge over which other thinkers may pass to the affirmation which it devoutly desires to make, that Christ is God, but when that bridge is furnished ready built by the Apostle, it is prevented by its theories from passing over, or suffering others, even the Apostle himself, to pass over! The preëxistence of Christ would have no worth for us, is therefore no theological truth, and therefore is to be excluded from the scope of theological truths!

Thus far our criticism touches Schultz no more than it does Ritschl. We have simply seen more clearly into Ritschl's meaning by the fuller presentation of the theory we have gained from his pupil. Nor should we gain much by a more extended quotation from Schultz's work. The essential features of his scheme are all before us, and the main fallacy also. This is the entire independence of scriptural support which his work betrays. The teachings of Paul upon the preëxistence of Christ are frankly acknowledged, and then quietly waved aside. They are all "theory," taken

from his "assumptions and theological culture," helpful to him, as he thought, in rhyming his system together, but of no true or permanent value. The authority of Paul as a religious teacher is, in other words, completely denied. Nor is it easy to see how, upon the basis of the main Ritschlian assumptions, a scriptural writer could have any authority, in the sense in which Protestant theology uses that word. What was Paul, after all? A man who had entered the kingdom by adopting the law of love as the law of his life. What did he know more than others? Simply what followed from this fact. He could see what Christ was in his historical personality, could recognize the character of his purpose in life, could learn from him that God was love, and could rightly estimate the unspeakable worth of his personality. But could he know anything about the preëxistent nature of Christ? or about the being of God in Trinity? No! For he could, at best, learn these things only from Christ, and Christ did not know them. He only knew religious truth, and these things are not religious truths. Christ had only a human consciousness, and differed from other men only as having in a perfect degree the divine motives. Indeed, Paul had no other and better contact with Christ than we have. And hence, anything which he may get from Christ which we do not get from him, is ultimately to be rejected as his own unauthorized addition.

The writer contents himself, for the present, with simply exhibiting this utter and irreconcilable difference between the orthodox church and Ritschlians. Whichever of the two sides of the controversy is right, the church or the Ritschlians, it is evident that the Ritschlian theory cannot be obtained from the Scriptures by the processes of an objective exegesis. As an objection to the scriptural doctrine of the two natures, as that has been drawn out in the early pages of this "study," it therefore merits no farther attention.

But it is at this point that Ritschlianism has attempted to establish itself in the most recent important defense of its views of the nature of Christ. This is that made by Beyschlag in his "Neutestamentliche Theologie," 1891, now just coming out in parts in the second edition. What is this new form of the attack, which is now to be made with the weapons of exegesis and upon the ground of Biblical Theology? We have complained of the philosophical failures of Ritschlianism. Can what seemed to be the plain result of our study of the New Testament stand before the questionings of this learned biblical scholar? The nature of our theme from this point on will require greater attention to detail, and may well be omitted by those who are impatient of this kind of study. Here, however, is the real contest between the new school of thought and the old. Here the battle will be decided, however it may seem to go at any other point. We gird up our loins, then, for strenuous discussion.

Beyschlag's position may be briefly summarized as the rejection of the two natures in Christ. According to him, the consciousness of Jesus was a purely human consciousness, and he was, strictly speaking, simply a man. The only distinction between him and other men lay in his perfect moral harmony with God, that is, in his sinlessness.

The task is easy, as Beyschlag thinks, to establish these views when developing the theology of the synoptists. He discusses the name "Son of God" which is applied to Jesus, and rightly makes the central thought of this to lie in his "inward conformity and likeness to God," in his "unique personal relation to God," which was the proper ground of his claim of Messiahship. The thought that he might be "a divine person proceeding from a heavenly preëxistence into an earthly life" is never suggested in the synoptists and is, indeed, excluded by the very term "Son of God." Psalm cx. 1 is explained by him as showing that "not physical descent

makes the Messiah a Messiah, but his unique spiritual relation to God." His view of this unique spiritual relation he does not further define or adjust to the text and context of the psalm. For the perfectly human character of the consciousness of Jesus he cites the method in which Jesus includes himself in humanity in Matt. iv. 4: "Man shall not live by bread alone," his designation of God as his Lord in the same passage (iv. 7), and his acknowledgment of his duty to worship him (ver. 10). The prayers which Jesus continually offered seem to Beyschlag especially impossible if Christ was God. "What is there more human in distinction from the divine than prayer? A god cannot pray: but Jesus prays regularly, even in Gethsemane, even upon the cross." Of the day and the hour of the end of the world he is ignorant (Mark xiii. 32), but the Father knows, who is Lord of heaven and earth (Matt. xi. 25). He will not apply even the term "good" to himself, but reserves it for the Father. God is the unconditionally good, but the Son of man must pass through trial to moral perfection (comp. Heb. v. 8). Yet Jesus is sinless, and this constitutes his unique majesty, for which the name of deity (*Gottheit*) is not too high a name. The earliest church was, however, content to designate this peculiarity of Jesus by the statement that he was anointed with the Holy Ghost. Thereby he was constituted the personal agent to introduce the kingdom of heaven, and made the mediator between men and God. He possesses perfect knowledge of God and in this relation he is a mystery to men (Matt. xi. 27). If *everything* is said to be given to him, it is to be noted that it is also *given*. "Such is the testimony of Jesus to himself according to the synoptists. It contains no trace of that speculative theology with which the church afterwards, applying Greek conceptions elaborated in the schools to the biblical forms of expression, attempted to explain the union of the divine and human effected in him. Indeed, it contains not even a trace of that idea of

his preëxistence which Paul and John brought forward and which became the occasion of the development of that later theology."

These arguments, though more successful than what Beyschlag has later to offer, will convince no one who has once familiarized himself with the web of New Testament thought upon this subject. When Jesus replies to the Tempter (Matt. iv. 4, etc.), he is not intending specially to designate himself as a man, since he is quoting from the Old Testament texts of universal application; yet he was doubtless a man. When he acknowledges God as his Father and prays to him, it is certainly significant of human dependence, but not a proof that he felt himself a *mere* man. If prayer be communion of spirits, certainly there is communion, which may be designated as prayer, between the divine hypostases. As Messiah, he was necessarily "sent" and "commissioned," and he therefore "received" all things; but does it follow that he was not of such a nature as would be required in the recipient of divine attributes and offices? None, certainly, can receive almighty power but one who is by nature qualified, that is, who is already almighty. He receives the official right to exercise what he has of nature. Such considerations as these may be said to be among the common-places of Christian thought. They have received no adequate consideration in Beyschlag's treatise.

But Beyschlag involves himself in difficulties peculiar to himself as he proceeds, and these are principally connected with the Gospel of John. It is a decided merit of his work, as already remarked, that he maintains the perfect harmony between the picture of Jesus given in the fourth Gospel and that given in the synoptics; but he does this by lowering the fourth Gospel to the interpretation which he has already put upon the synoptics instead of raising the interpretation of the synoptics to agree with the unsophisticated and objective interpretation of the fourth. There is little to ob-

ject to in his treatment of the simpler elements of the case, of Jesus as the messenger of God, as the Son of man, and Son of God. Most of what he says of the human character of the consciousness of Jesus would be readily admitted by every candid exegete, for Jesus was a man. The real difficulties begin when he touches the representations of this Gospel as to the preëxistence of Jesus.¹

Beyschlag begins this portion of his discussion with a general critical and psychological explanation of the passages implying preëxistence, such as vi. 62; viii. 58; xvii. 4, 5, 24. He suggests as the explanatory key the following idea: "In the circles to which Jesus historically belongs the thought of preëxistence was nothing new or specially appropriated to the Logos. Every holy and divine thing which appeared upon earth, or was expected here, was referred to a heavenly archetype in which it preëxisted before its earthly appearance." Thus the tabernacle (Heb. viii. 5), the city

¹ It is not specially necessary to notice his critical position that "whatever in the fourth Gospel should not agree with those elements of the view of Jesus common to both the synoptists and John must be referred to the individuality of the writer of the Gospel, whose doctrine of the Logos may have modified his recollection of the words of Jesus," since this plays but little actual part in his discussion. It is, however, well to notice in passing that he belongs to the school of historical critics who give such weight, in the decision of historical questions as to authorship, date, etc., to the *ideas* of an historical document that, if those ideas cross the track of the critics' previous conclusions as to what ought to be taught at a given point, they immediately conclude that the existence of such ideas proves interpolation, modification, later origin, or what not, independently of any manuscript or other evidence. Legitimate and indispensable as this method may be in certain cases, in the present case it is neither more nor less than a direct begging of the question at issue. The ideas of the fourth evangelist are not to be separated from his account of the discourses of Jesus. John is not a reporter in one class of passages and an independent philosopher in another. Such historical methods, or rather, such abuse of a method which is a very delicate instrument of investigation, and at best requires the most careful and conservative handling, and which can scarcely ever be relied upon without some confirmatory evidence, is the death of objective and reliable historical results.

of Jerusalem (Gal. iv. 26; Rev. xxi. 10), the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xxv. 34), are all represented as preëxisting. Upon this idea Jesus himself as well as his disciples seized to express the great thought that he was the appearance in time of an eternal reality. His consciousness rose to this lofty elevation in moments of enthusiasm; it did not form the original and constant basis of his conception of himself. Otherwise his whole testimony as to himself must have assumed a different form, and the utter silence of the synoptists and of the original apostles upon this topic would have been broken.

This argument considered as a piece of reasoning possesses some interest. It is, in brief, that Jesus, in order to express one idea, gave utterance to another—confounding the eternal purpose of God with the preëxistence of a personality. This is to ascribe to Jesus a mental infirmity of which he gives no trace elsewhere, and which no refinements about the mental habits of the times can relieve of inherent absurdity. But his main proofs are insufficient, questions of inherent improbability aside. The use made of the argument from silence is inconclusive. The fourth Gospel differs from the others in many respects, and it might well differ in the character of its teachings as to the person of Christ. Some¹ have suggested that its discourses belong to the later portion of the life of Christ, and represent a more matured, or a more confidential, style of instruction than the earlier and less private teaching of the synoptics. If there be any truth in this view, it is easy to see why emphasis should be laid in the fourth Gospel upon the preëxistence of Christ, though this was scarcely hinted at in the synoptists. But even the intimation that the preëxistence is unmentioned in the synoptists is scarcely tenable in view of Mark x. 45 and Matt. xx. 28, which at least suggest preëxistence. Still less successful, if that is possible, is the argu-

¹ As Wendt, *Lehre Jesu*, Vol. ii. p. 7.

ment from the historical situation. The evidence that there was such a tendency as Beyschlag presupposes to ascribe some sort of preëxistence to everything holy and divine which might appear upon the earthly stage, is by no means sufficient. Hebrews viii. 5 does not teach or imply the preëxistence of the tabernacle in heaven. It simply says: "See that thou make all things after the pattern (*τύπος*) that was shewed thee in the mount." The "Jerusalem that is above" in Gal. iv. 26 is no archetype of the earthly Jerusalem, but, by a figure of speech, common enough to all languages and all ages, the word Jerusalem is transferred to designate heaven, or the Messianic kingdom, or the church, the true mother of the soul. This is enough to satisfy the demands of the passage, and any farther reference to rabbinic modes of representing a heavenly archetype, even if they were indubitable, is excluded from this passage by the audience and the aim of the writer. He was speaking to common minds and made use of the figures of speech intelligible to every understanding. It is a token of diseased learning when unnecessary and obscure information is lugged in to explain the perfectly simple and common-place. In the same way Rev. xxi. 10 is a highly poetic discussion of a vision, and neither teaches nor implies that any Jerusalem existed in the heavens as the eternal counterpart of the earthly Jerusalem. Still less pertinent is Matt. xxv. 34, in which "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" simply means that the blessed estate into which they were now to be received had been in God's eternal purposes from the first. Does Beyschlag intend to imply that the word kingdom implies a capital city, a palace, a throne room, arsenals and armies, docks and navies? It is a spiritual condition, nothing material; an abstract, not a concrete thing. We must therefore pronounce this proof of a settled mode of thought in New Testament circles, whereby preëxistence

was regularly asserted of things upon earth which possessed a specially lofty nature, unsuccessful.

We have paused the longer upon this last argument of Beyschlag's because it is one of which the Ritschlians make a good deal. In fact it seems to furnish a way for them to do what they must do without fail, unless they are to see their whole theory of the person of Christ fall to pieces, viz., explain away the biblical doctrine of the preëxistence of Christ. Retain this fact, and the impossibility of Christ's being a mere man with "divine contents" is so evident that no credence will be given farther to the Ritschlian theory. Beyschlag is vigorously supported in his account of the historical situation in this respect by Harnack. In the first of these Christological Studies¹ some notice was taken of Harnack's treatment of the matter in the first edition of his "Dogmengeschichte." In the second edition of this work, in a *Beigabe* at the close of the first volume, Harnack makes a new and elaborate effort to sustain the position in which he unites with Beyschlag. It is safe to say that he has presented the case with all the force of which it is capable, and has brought to the proof every available piece of evidence. In spite of all his efforts, it seems to the writer that he has failed, and his failure is sufficient ground for believing that the attempt can never succeed. The same passages from the Scriptures are quoted which Beyschlag has vainly attempted to employ; and Harnack brings forward nothing more from that quarter. The extravagant expressions which he cites about Moses and the patriarchs from late Jewish writers prove nothing; nor does Psalm cxxxix. 15, 16: "My frame was not hidden from thee when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth," etc., add anything except weakness to a cause which is obliged to bolster itself up by so inappropriate a citation. The passage is a mere expression of the all-em-

¹ Bibliotheca Sacra, 1892, p. 244 ff.

bracing knowledge of God. Nor do the passages quoted from Hermas, and the so-called Second Epistle of Clement, prove anything. You have here figurative, dark expressions as to the church being older than the world, which, according to Harnack himself, may have only the meaning of the high "validity" of the idea, that is, its importance in the mind of God,¹—as to its being created before the sun and the moon, etc. But in the New Testament you have plain declarations that Christ preëxisted as an active creative being, with no admixture of the invalid thinking and allegorical character of these writings. The difference of the plane upon which the Scriptures move, the elevation of their thinking and the difference of their motive, ought to make more impression upon the historians of the school of Ritschl than they do. But if there is anything which Beyschlag and Harnack can quote for their theory it is the Platonic conception of "ideas." Yet even here we have to do, not with preëxistent entities, if Lotze is to be followed, but with eternally valid concepts. Says Lotze: "Nothing more did Plato intend to teach than . . . the validity of truths, . . . the eternal, unchangeable significance of the ideas, which are always what they are. . . . But the Greek language had no expression for this thought of validity which should not also imply real existence."² Harnack, according to Lotze, has misunderstood Plato, and has elevated figures of speech into modes of thought and metaphysical propositions, has raised vague and transient speculations to the dignity of representatives of a permanent philosophical tendency, and has perverted the simple expressions of unphilosophical and plain Scriptures by the supposition that they contain references to writers and tendencies which are not needed as the explanation of their simple and obvious teaching of the preëxistence of Christ. Renewed and care-

¹ See the above-cited Study, p. 245, note.

² *Logik*, 1874, p. 501.

ful study of this discussion only leaves us surprised at its existence and almost ready to exclaim with Dr. James Denney, "It is simply trifling with a word to set aside all this [the New Testament witness to the preëxistence of Christ] as insignificant and unauthoritative because the Jews, forsooth, believed that the tables of the law existed two thousand years before the creation of the world."—But enough for this!

To return to Beyschlag, justice to him requires that we remark that he notices the "traditional objection" that the style of argument which he has followed leads to an *ideal* preëxistence, while the preëxistence taught in the New Testament is a *real* one. He replies that this is an objection of little importance; that it not only supposes a literalness in the reproduction of Jesus' words by the fourth evangelist which we have no right to assume, but also introduces a modern distinction between the ideal and the real which was foreign to ancient thought; that biblical antiquity gives just so much, and no more, reality to its heavenly archetypes of earthly things as Plato gives to his "ideas"; and that they may be conceived as having more existence than the earthly counterparts and yet remain from first to last ideal. After the discussion which we have given of Harnack's arguments, no additional reply is needed to these arguments of Beyschlag.

But Beyschlag does not rest his argument here. It professes to be chiefly exegetical, and we must therefore follow him in his discussion of the individual expressions of the New Testament as to the preëxistence of Christ, if we will pursue to its end the attack upon the doctrine of the two natures which we are considering. We turn, therefore, to what he has to say about the expressions "sent from God," "came from God," "saw," "heard," "learned" with God, etc. The discussion is marred by some trivialities, as when he says that John iii. 13 and vi. 62, if they teach Christ's

preëxistence at all, teach that the "Son of man" preëxisted, viz., the historical Christ rather than the Logos. In general it may be said that he admits in single instances too much for his plea, and that the multitude of utterances with which the fourth Gospel is filled, overwhelm his argumentation and convert it into a refutation of itself. Thus when he says of the passage, "Before Abraham was, I am," that it signifies, "Abraham is only a temporal phenomenon, I am the manifestation of the eternal in time," this is true, but not favorable to his position. His answer to the argument from xvii. 5 is that God loved Jesus from all eternity, that this love is the "glory which he had with the Father before the world was,"—an exegesis which does not explain the text, but only explains it away. If he had the glory, he enjoyed the love; and if he enjoyed the love, he existed.

To note, so far as the limits which must be set to every practicable discussion will permit, Beyschlag's individual arguments,—he says that the word "sent" has no relation to preëxistence because John the Baptist uses it of himself (i. 33, comp. i. 6), and certainly he did not preëxist.

If the phrase "into the world" which is appended to "sent" is quoted against him, Beyschlag cites: "As thou didst send me into the world, even so send I them into the world" (xvii. 18), which he declares puts the two sendings entirely upon a level and renders it necessary to interpret the sending of Jesus by that of his disciples. The phrase "to be of God" rests, to be sure, upon the basis of the figure of origin, but it means nothing more than to be in harmony with God, as viii. 47 and xvii. 14 show. The phrase "from heaven" does not designate the place of his eternal abode, but it denotes "the kingdom of eternal blessings, God's personal sphere of life, from which Jesus is derived (*aus der er stamme*)"—which, by the way, serves better to refute Beyschlag than to support him, and he denies expressly that the remarkable passage by which Jesus puts

upon a level his departure from the world and his entrance into it (xvi. 28) "demands or even permits any other" interpretation than that he has just given. "So certainly," he says, "as leaving the world and going to the Father is only a figurative expression for the glorification of Jesus attained through death, . . . so certainly is the preceding . . . spoken not of a real departure from heaven and exchange of the Father's house for an earthly abode." We do not understand what idea of death and immortality and heaven may underlie this curious assertion; but we venture to say that all who hold the ordinary Christian view of these things will be inclined to reply, "Exactly so! And it is precisely because the former phrase is indisputably literal, that the latter must be taken literally also."

Still harder does Beyschlag struggle against the evident intent and implications of the passages which describe the derivation of Jesus' knowledge of divine things from his preëxistent state. He confesses that when one reads in vi. 46, "Not that any man hath seen the Father save he which is from God, he hath seen the Father"; one is much inclined to add in thought, "when he was with the Father." Similar implications are contained in iii. 31, 32. But upon the basis of iii. 34 Beyschlag declares that the Baptist's thought was that Jesus was anointed with the Spirit without measure, and gained his knowledge of divine things thus, not from a preëxistent condition. He cites iii. 11: "We speak that which we do know," and explains the "we" as including the Baptist with Jesus, against the best commentators and against the context, and then argues that as John did not get his knowledge from preëxistent relations, neither did Jesus. Fortunately in this section Beyschlag sums up the strength of his argument in what he calls a "cogent" (*zwingend*) proof from three particular passages. Of these the first is viii. 38: "I speak the things which I have seen with my Father, and ye also do the things which ye have

heard with your Father." The argument is contained in a nutshell. "Evidently he here sets his own vision of the truth with God and their hearing from the devil over against each other as *formally homogeneous*." I venture to say that this interpretation never occurred to any one before. The second is xv. 15: "All things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you," in respect to which he argues that, since what he gave to his disciples was truth pertaining to salvation and not to all the mysteries of the universe, what he received from the Father cannot have been the same mysteries, which a preëxistent Logos would have certainly received. Therefore he was not preëxistent. Thus while one word—"heard"—can be emptied of all its meaning, another—"all"—must be pressed with the utmost exactness! The last of these remarkable proofs is derived from iii. 13: "No man hath ascended into heaven but he which descended out of heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." This states a "threefold relation to heaven," and hence is figurative, and states nothing about that relation at all! We need only say, once admit the idea of the preëxistence of Christ, and the usual explanation becomes immeasurably superior to Beyschlag's. Deny it, and, of course, some way must be found of undermining the influence of such passages as these; but the "cogent" proof does not appear to have been found yet!

The method which Beyschlag employs comes, if possible, more clearly into view when we follow his dealings with the christology of Paul. He starts out with Paul's doctrine of Adam, whom he conceives to be discussed principally as a means of bringing out certain positions as to Christ, whom Paul represents as the second Adam. He is the spiritual and heavenly man, the archetypal, ideal man. "The apostle here gives us," says Beyschlag, "a more perfect and more satisfactory christology than that which the later church set up in its doctrine of the two natures by the application of

Greek scholastic conceptions. For, in the first place, as is well known, the doctrine of the two natures never succeeds in forming a single, living personality of the two natures, but they remain foreign to one another, antagonistic in their qualities and mutually destructive, always upon the point of separating into two persons. The apostle, on the contrary, when he sets forth Christ as the archetypal man, that is, as the perfect image of God among men, does not bring the human and divine into association with one another, but conceives them *in* one another, God living *in* Christ and Christ *in* God. [Have no such words ever been heard from defenders of the Chalcedon christology?] Indeed, the concept of the ideal man cannot be formed without the perfect indwelling of God in the same; for, since God has formed the heart of man as such for his dwelling-place, and man fulfills his destiny only in communion with God, the ideal man is he who stands in perfect communion with God, in whom 'the fullness of the Godhead dwells,'—the ideal man, and therefore the God-man." And, hence, when Beyschlag considers Paul's utterances in respect to the exalted Christ, he finds here also, in the ideal man, the second Adam, the completion of all that was meant to be and to be revealed in man. So much he sets down as established in respect to the christology of Paul.

But the question immediately arises, How can certain other expressions of the apostle be made to rhyme with this conception? And, particularly, how can the expressions he employs as to the preëxistence of Christ? We must concede to Beyschlag, and desire here to do it expressly and emphatically, that he presents all the important passages upon this head with great clearness and candor. After quoting especially Col. i. 13 ff.; Phil. ii. 4 ff., he notes that these "highly remarkable and enigmatical declarations of preëxistence," "quite surprising" as they are, do not belong merely to the epistles of the imprisonment, but are found in both the epistles to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 47; 2 Cor.

viii. 9). Furthermore, "the apostle never properly proves, or formally teaches the preëxistence of Christ, but presupposes it, even in the oldest epistles, as something quite familiar to his readers and disputed by no one. It must, therefore, have been an idea which was not in the slightest degree strange to the pre-Pauline Christian of the type of the original apostles, for example, as we find him exemplified in the reader of the Epistle to the Romans." This last does not seem to help Beyschlag's case especially, but he gives it a turn favorable to him when he adds, as he does immediately, "which, however, on the other side, seemed to him to add so little in principle to the simple christology of the synoptics that it was quite natural that there should fail to be a single trace of it in those Gospels, or in the discourses of the book of Acts, the Epistle of James, and the First of Peter." The question is therefore next discussed how the apostle comes to this idea. It is not from the general idea of the preëxistence of holy things in heavenly archetypes [note the disagreement with Harnack and Schultz], nor from any knowledge of the expressions used by our Lord in the discourses of the fourth Gospel. It comes rather from the Old Testament. "The tendency to distinguish God as he is in himself, in his unapproachable secret essence, from his revelation in the world, is found with constantly increasing strength in the whole Old Testament, and leads to various forms of the idea of an intermediate being between God and the world." But it does not derive, in Beyschlag's eyes, any evidence of its truth from this fact! After some account of these "various forms," Beyschlag goes on to say: "We shall meet this application of the *Logos-theologoumenon* to the person of Christ in all the doctrinal systems of the later apostolic period which we are still to consider; but it is most probable that Paul was the first to make it. It could easily occur to a speculatively disposed Christian. Whoever was, on the one hand, familiar with the idea of a hypostatic self-revelation of God, and

on the other, held it as a matter of common faith that in Jesus the revelation of God had appeared, would find it quite unavoidable to recognize in Jesus that preëxistent principle of revelation, and consequently to conceive Jesus as existing in eternity, and to make him the medium of the creation of the world. . . . This is the permanent value of this speculative christology of the apostolic period, that it refers the temporal appearance of Jesus Christ to an eternal ground, recognizes Jesus as the self-revelation of God in the absolute sense, and emphasizes the idea of God in creation and redemption. But we may not deceive ourselves! We have to do here with a piece of apostolic theology, . . . which, with all its profundity and religious truth, is—like all theology—under human and temporal limitations, and so remains imperfect. This imperfection consists in the fact that . . . the distinction is overlooked between an idea and a person as such, and that, in consequence, the idea is itself conceived as a person, and so an eternally existing person is supposed before the natal beginning of the real historical person." We have here, again, the frankness of Schultz, with the rejection of apostolic authority which belongs to all the members of the Ritschlian school.

It will not be necessary to follow Beyschlag further in his discussion of Paul, since we now have all his important ideas. His Scripture proof, which is minutely carried out, would be found to suffer under all the errors of method and to display all the perverseness of result which we have already sufficiently noted in the discussion of the Gospels. Nor is anything substantial added by the treatment of the Epistle to the Hebrews and later portions of the New Testament. The method of the Ritschlian hermeneutics is now clear. First, the Chalcedon christology, with its doctrine of the two natures, is "impossible." Then, what is said of the human nature, consciousness, and limitations of the Saviour is sharply sundered from what pertains to his preëxistent divinity, and made the determinative element of the christology,

which is thus made a christology of pure humanity. Then, what remains is partly explained away as not meaning what it seems to mean to the unsophisticated reader, and partly exposed as an unfortunate attempt to make a theoretical explanation of the person of Christ. This is the application of the Napoleonic tactics to exegesis, to divide the enemy and beat him in detail. At bottom it rests upon the idea that the christology of the church is unthinkable, and hence it is a fundamental *petitio principii*; and it evades the force of what it is compelled to confess is Paul's true meaning, by ascribing to him an incapacity to distinguish between the real and the ideal which the splendid intellectual qualities of his great epistles render inconceivable. One is almost inclined to wonder if this is seriously meant. The apostle is reduced to a mental rank below that of Athanasius and Leo, who certainly distinctly held the doctrine which Paul is said not to have held, and yet was so unfortunate as to be constantly uttering!

The sum total of this excursion into Beyschlag's lucubrations will be to convince the reader that when one accepts the authority of Paul and other New Testament teachers in the sense in which evangelical theology accepts it, and when one seeks objectively and with simplicity to arrive at the precise meaning of these writers for the purpose of receiving it and then of endeavoring to understand it, the preëxistence of Christ, the two natures, and the peculiar character of the consciousness of Jesus, neither altogether human nor altogether superhuman, are the necessary facts with which he will come out, and which he must seek to embrace in any satisfactory and permanent christology.

We judge, therefore, that the modern attack upon the result of biblical study as set forth above, both in the exegetical and dogmatical aspect of that attack, is a failure; and we return, next, to the consideration of our theme at the point where this *excursus* began.