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THE HISTORY OF THE THEOLOGICAL
TERM 'SUBSTANCE': PART II.

WE have already noted, in the article published in the January number of the JOURNAL, that the later Schools of Greek Philosophy contributed little to the history of Terms.   It must not be supposed that, on that account, their existence went for nothing. They served to change gradually the conception of Reality and thus they seriously affected the meaning of the term now under discussion.   It will be necessary to sketch in the merest outline the movement of thought in the centuries immediately before the Christian era, before we come to consider the use of the term οὐσία and its associates in Philo and the Neoplatonists.

Plato and Aristotle, and in a much less degree the Stoics, had been the authors of constructive systems of philosophy.   Even if the zeal of followers has stereotyped what the wisdom of the masters had left vague, they appeared before the world in a constructive aspect : there were certain definite views of reality which were ascribed to them.   The period which follows is not in the same sense constructive.   The later philosophers live in large measure on the labours of their greater predecessors ; and are at most eclectic, often entirely sceptical.   It is this tendency which has most importance for our present purpose.   For the form which scepticism took was that of an assault upon the principles of older thinkers : the sceptics denied the validity of the senses and the possibility of knowledge.

It is obvious that there are various ways of affirming sceptical principles.   It is open to the sceptic to argue that men are under positive delusion : that what they seem to know of the world is not only inadequate but false.   This is the dogmatic type of scepticism, and lies under difficulties no less serious than the ordinary common sense of man which it opposes.   But another and less vulnerable type of scepticism is that which offers no

dogmatic account of things, but contents itself with raising doubts, with showing the impossibility of demonstrative proof over a large area of human experience, with undermining the grounds upon which most men rest their beliefs. It is not particularly difficult to argue on these lines, or to cause considerable perplexity by so doing : the real difficulty is to overcome the profound practical convictions of men as to the validity of their experience and the impossibility of ignoring or seriously doubting it. The Greek sceptics admitted the existence of convictions, and granted the necessity of acting on the line of greater probability : they denied that the beliefs of men, however firmly held, were based upon grounds of certainty, but they kindly allowed men to act and think upon any principles that might approve themselves. And thus they were hard to cope with.

Zeller is of opinion[1] that this scepticism led directly to a peculiar conception of reality which prevailed in later times. The attack upon the ordinary beliefs of men, though hard to meet by argument, was unpersuasive : the allowance of popular conviction as a means of practical guidance directed attention to the value of subjective certainty, and so men sought for reality in a transcendental region, beyond the range of the senses and the ordinary run of experience. It is probable that the growth of scepticism, and the general disposition of philosophers to withdraw into themselves, may have had the effect of spreading and strengthening the tendency towards a transcendental view of reality. It has also to be remembered, however, that in one significant phrase already alluded to ($\mathcal{J}. T. S.$ ii 228), Plato had given a lead in the same direction : he had placed his Ideal Good beyond existence ($\epsilon\pi\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu\alpha\ \tau\hat{\eta}s\ o\dot{\nu}\sigma\iota\alpha s$), and it is this point of view which comes prominently forward in the writers whom we have now to consider. It will not be attempted to describe accurately the views and the use of Terms characteristic of each writer ; such treatment would be beyond the scale of the present articles : it is possible only to dwell upon the more important names.

First among these comes Philo of Alexandria. His importance lies not merely in the views actually put forth by him, but also in the fact that he is the first conspicuous example of the contact between Greek thought and Hebrew ideas. As a devout and

[1] *Gesch. d. Griech. Phil.* v p. 69.

convinced Jew the Old Testament, and especially the Pentateuch, was to his mind a certain revelation from God. But he was no less convinced of the essential inspiration of Plato, and laboured to show that Plato and Moses were really in harmony. Besides this, he was strongly under the influence of Stoicism, and Stoic ideas and phraseology appear in his writings side by side with those of Moses and of Plato. It must be admitted that Philo's intentions exceeded his grasp. He aimed, apparently, at presenting in one coherent whole the various elements above described : but he had not the power to bend them to his will. There are, therefore, always inconsistencies in his philosophy, and it is not easy to find any passages, expressive of his views on philosophical subjects, which would suffer no modification if compared with others. At different times different influences were uppermost in his mind, and he therefore expressed himself differently. The present writer is strongly of opinion that in cases where there was a conflict between the Hebrew mode of thinking and the Greek, it was always the former which went to the wall, though he is aware that passages could be found which would seem to bear another interpretation.

The phrase most common in Philo to represent Reality is not οὐσία but τὸ ὄν. The difference is merely a verbal one, and need not detain us. And it is clear that Philo identifies this ultimate Reality with God. All other forms of being are real in a lower sense. Hence it follows that no conceptions based on reality of the empirical sort, and no arguments derived from ordinary experience, are adequate to describe or to demonstrate the Existence of God. Philo carries this principle perilously near the point of a purely negative conception of God and therefore of Reality. Thus he says[1] ὅταν οὖν φιλόθεος ψυχὴ τὸ τί ἐστι τὸ ὂν κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ζητῇ, εἰς ἀειδῆ καὶ ἀόρατον ἔρχεται ζήτησιν, ἐξ ἧς αὐτῇ περιγίνεται μέγιστον ἀγαθόν, καταλαβεῖν ὅτι ἀκατάληπτος ὁ κατὰ τὸ εἶναι θεὸς παντί, καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἰδεῖν ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀόρατος. And again[2] he is even more distinct: God is not like a man, he says, nor even like the heaven or the world ; ποιὰ γὰρ εἴδη ταῦτά γε καὶ εἰς αἴσθησιν ἐρχόμενα, ὁ δ' ἄρα οὐδὲ τῷ νῷ καταληπτὸς ὅτι μὴ κατὰ τὸ εἶναι μόνον· ὕπαρξις γὰρ ἔσθ' ἣν καταλαμβάνομεν αὐτοῦ, τῶν δέ γε χωρὶς ὑπάρξεως οὐδέν. At the same time Philo disclaims Stoic

[1] *De Post. Cain.* c. 5, I 229 M.   [2] *Quod Deus Imm.* c. 13, I 282 M.

Pantheism : he will not hear of identifying the world with God[1]. Such realisation as is possible to man of the knowledge of this Supreme Being is attained by resolute abstraction from the turmoil and obscurity of the senses. Sometimes the realisation comes ἐν τοῖς βαθέσιν ὕπνοις, sometimes through the waking pursuit of philosophy [2]: always by ceasing to listen to the senses or even to inferences based on them. Some men reach the belief in God by reflexion upon the world as the effect of a mighty Cause, just as we infer the builder from the existence of the building : οἱ δὴ οὕτως ἐπιλογιζόμενοι διὰ σκιᾶς τὸν θεὸν καταλαμβάνουσι, διὰ τῶν ἔργων τὸν τεχνίτην κατανοοῦντες. ἔστι δέ τις τελεώτερος καὶ μᾶλλον κεκαθαρμένος νοῦς τὰ μεγάλα μυστήρια μυηθείς, ὅστις οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν γεγονότων τὸ αἴτιον γνωρίζει, ὡς ἂν ἀπὸ σκιᾶς τὸ μένον, ἀλλ' ὑπερκύψας τὸ γενητὸν ἔμφασιν ἐναργῆ τοῦ ἀγενήτου λαμβάνει, ὡς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ αὐτὸν καταλαμβάνειν καὶ τὴν σκιὰν αὐτοῦ, ὅπερ ἦν τόν τε λόγον καὶ τόνδε τὸν κόσμον [3].

The last passage has brought into view a new point, viz. the method used by Philo of reconciling his transcendent Reality with the world of ordinary experience. It is here, not unnaturally, that the confusion of his thought reaches its height. Though, as we have seen, beyond all language and all conception, though incapable of coming into contact with the defiling influence of matter, God is δραστήριον αἴτιον (in Stoic phrase) [4] and also φιλόδωρος [5]. He creates, and creates inevitably. But He uses for the purpose the λόγος, the θεῖαι δυνάμεις, and creates first an ideal world, which forms the archetype or pattern of the world of sense and is sometimes identified with the λόγος [6]. The λόγος is sometimes treated as the home of the Divine Powers [7]: sometimes is described as the εἰκών of God [8]: sometimes appears as standing between the world and God, neither ἀγένητος like God, nor γενητός like us, but μέσος τῶν ἄκρων, ἀμφοτέροις ὁμηρεύων, giving assurance to God that the created world will not wholly fall away into ἀκοσμία, and to man that the good God will not

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[1] *De Migr. Abr.* c. 35, I 466 M.   [2] Ibid. c. 34, I 466 M.

[3] *Leg. All.* III 32, 33, I 107 M.   [4] *De Opif. Mundi* c. 2, I 2 M.

[5] *De Sacrificantibus* c. 13, II 262 M.

[6] Cf. *De Sacr.* loc. cit.: *De Opif. Mundi* c. 4, I 4 M.: *De Conf. Ling.* c. 34, I 431 M.

[7] *De Opif. Mundi* c. 5, I 4 M.

[8] Op. cit. c. 6 ad fin., I 6 M., and cf. c 8. In this whole passage the λόγος is treated as the image of God, is identified with the νοητὸς κόσμος, and again the ἀόρατον καὶ νοητὸν φῶς is represented as the image of the Divine λόγος.

ever neglect His own creation[1]. In this passage, the λόγος almost acquires a personal character, and escapes from the purely metaphysical region. This is, however, an unusual circumstance. The main drift of the writing of Philo leads us to suppose that he conceived of the ultimate Reality as beyond the reach of sense and of the power of description in any terms borrowed from or based on sense-perceptions. This state of things was due not to any moral defect in man directly, but was simply an expression of bare fact— the fact of the distinction and the incompatibility of matter and reason. The cumbrous and confused way of bridging over the gulf, by means of the Logos and the Divine Powers, only emphasises the main position. With all his devotion for the Hebrew Scriptures, Philo is really attempting to solve a philosophical problem, and offers a philosophical definition of the Real.

When we come to neoplatonism, we have to do with a philosophy that is something more than a philosophy: it has also a religious and mystical interest. It would be beyond the scope of a sketch like this to discuss at length the origin and development of the various notions which we find prevailing among the neoplatonists: we must confine ourselves to describing, as carefully as may be, such views of the chief exponents of this philosophy as are relevant to our present purpose. It is scarcely necessary to mention that in so doing we shall be mainly concerned with Plotinus and Proclus.

Plotinus, of course, started with certain presuppositions which came to him from his predecessors, and especially from Plato. He accepted the distinction between the objects of sense and of reason (τὸ αἰσθητόν and τὸ νοητόν): he was clear that the Real was identical with the One: and that multiplicity and transiency involved departure from the truest Reality. Moreover he wrote and thought in the light of the Aristotelian doctrine of the Categories; and of the same philosopher's formula for the nature of the supreme source of motion νόησις νοήσεως. But he was not satisfied with this as an account of the Ultimate: to his mind it

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[1] *Quis Rer. Div. Her.* c. 42, I 502 M. I have taken these references almost exclusively from those books of Philo which have appeared in the edition of Cohn and Wendland : having found, through the painful experience of verifying notes based on earlier editions, how many and how important changes these scholars have made in the text.

still implied an unresolved duality. And thus, following a hint of Plato's (*Rep*. 509 B), he took the step which Philo seems to have been prevented from taking by his Jewish mental associations: he made the Good the primary Being and affirmed its transcendence. It is, and is eternal: but the word 'existence' is not worthy of it: it is beyond and above 'existence,' ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, ὑπερούσιον. Towards identification with this supreme life, all creation groans and travails: it is the goal as well as the source of all existence.

It is plain, of course, that this conception of a transcendent unity to which all things move will involve very considerable results upon the use of such a word as οὐσία. Plotinus speaks of his primary principle as beyond existence; he even uses the phrase οὐκ οὐσία[1]: it is also beyond activity and reason[2]. But in spite of all this negation, it is still the true Reality, and subordinate forms of reality depend upon relation to it. No language that we can use avails, the highest categories with which we are acquainted fall short of the real character of this Unity: but still the world of experience is somehow *there* in front of us, and must be dealt with; its reality must be explained in some sort of relation to the Transcendent. For this purpose the idea of the Good is most significant. It was the Good—τὸ ἀγαθόν—that Plato had said was ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας; and the universal desire for the Good which is displayed in all forms of life, supplies a means of connecting them with it. So Plotinus can use such a phrase as ταὐτὸ ἡ ἔφεσις καὶ ἡ οὐσία[3]: things have reality in so far as they are capable of this desire[4].

When the process by which the world of experience comes into being is looked at from the other side, Plotinus speaks of a series of acts of Generation. This must not be construed as implying acts of will, or acts done in time: the superabundant life of the Primal Unity οἷον ὑπερερρύη, and its excess—τὸ

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[1] *Enn.* V v 6 ἀνάγκη ἀνείδεον αὐτὸ (i. e. τὸ ἓν) εἶναι, ἀνείδεον δὲ ὂν οὐκ οὐσία. Cf. VI ix 3 ἐκεῖνο δὲ οὔ τι, ἀλλὰ πρὸ ἑκάστου, οὐδὲ ὄν.

[2] Ibid. I vii 1 ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας, ἐπέκεινα καὶ ἐνεργείας, καὶ ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ νοήσεως. καὶ γὰρ αὖ τοῦτο δεῖ τἀγαθὸν τίθεσθαι, εἰς ὃ πάντα ἀνήρτηται, αὐτὸ δὲ εἰς μηδέν. Cf. III viii 10.

[3] Ibid. VI viii. 15.

[4] Cf. ibid. VI ix 6. (The supreme) ἐστὶν ὑπεράγαθον καὶ αὐτὸ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις ἀγαθόν, εἴ τι αὐτοῦ δύναται μεταλαμβάνειν.

ὑπερπλῆρες αὐτοῦ—makes another thing [1]. 'As all things when perfect generate, so that which is always perfect always and eternally generates [2].' Plotinus distinguishes this generation from effluence or emanation. Thus he says, with regard to the emergence of the Soul from the Reason or νοῦς, that it is parallel to the process by which the heat of fire both remains in the fire itself, and affects other things. It does not flow out, the inherent heat remains, the other comes into being (ὑφισταμένην) [3]. A little further on in the same chapter [4] Plotinus speaks as if the production of the second Existence were the coming into self-consciousness of the first. Other phrases are used elsewhere, and it is extremely hard to find any one formula that will really describe what is meant. What is clear is that by some process, which still is not in time, the primal Unity generates a second type of Existence, which is an image, but an inferior image of itself, and contains an inherent duality. It may be called either νοῦς or οὐσία. The second Existence generates a third which Plotinus calls ψυχή. It stands to the second, as the second to the first: it is inferior and is an image of it, and it has a downward look towards matter and the sensible world [5]. In fact the soul imposes form upon the formless potentiality which is matter [6]. The Soul derives the forms or ideas, which it thus imposes, from the Reason, and here we find the Ideal Theory of Plato reappearing in modified form. The things we know in the world have reality because they are images of ideal archetypes [7]. The true realities are constituted by thought or Reason; the ideal world exists eternally in an inseparable relation with νοῦς. Because of this necessary relation νοῦς is not the primal entity; it is always in relation, and this involves plurality. It is definitely on this ground that Plotinus denies to Aristotle's idea of self-reflecting reason its claim to describe the highest form of Being [8].

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[1] *Enn.* V ii 1.   [2] Ibid. V i 6.   [3] Ibid. V i 3.

[4] Ibid. V i 7 πῶς οὖν νοῦν γεννᾷ (τὸ ἕν); ἢ ὅτι τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ πρὸς αὐτὸ ἑώρα· ἡ δὲ ὅρασις αὕτη νοῦς.   [5] Ibid. V ii 1, ix 3.

[6] Ibid. V ix 3 ὕλη παρ' αὑτῆς ἡ τῶν στοιχείων ἄμορφος· . . . ψυχὴν δ' αὖ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς τέτρασι (i.e. the four elements) τὴν κόσμου μορφὴν δοῦναι· ταύτῃ δὲ νοῶν χορηγὸν τῶν λόγων γεγονέναι, ὥσπερ καὶ ταῖς τῶν τεχνιτῶν ψυχαῖς παρὰ τῶν τεχνῶν τοὺς εἰς τὸ ἐνεργεῖν λόγους.

[7] Ibid. V ix 3, 5, 7.

[8] Ibid. V i 9 Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ . . . χωριστὸν μὲν τὸ πρῶτον καὶ νοητόν, νοεῖν δὲ αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ λέγων πάλιν αὖ οὐ τὸ πρῶτον ποιεῖ.

The ideas are constituted by being thought : νοῦς is the ἑστία οὐσίας [1]: it has all things in it, not ὡς ἐν τόπῳ [2], but 'as possessing itself and being one thing with them.' In the material world subject and object are separate, χωριστά [3]: ἃ δ' ἐστὶν ἄϋλα, εἰ νενόηται, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς τὸ εἶναι [4]. It is not the case with the reason that its powers are latent, and that its activity either waits upon the object or brings it into existence by an act of thought : the object and itself are alike eternal.

It has been necessary to dwell at some length upon the philosophy of Plotinus on account of the very great influence it exercised upon the thought of some Church-writers. For the history of philosophy there is no section of the Enneads more interesting and important than the discussion of the Categories [5], but it would take us too far from our purpose to enter upon this here. What has been said already will have made plain the general sense in which Plotinus uses the word οὐσία. It means, as before, the Real Being of things, and as in Plato their true reality lies in their universal aspect. There is a certain element of misfortune and mistake about the descent into the world of Sense [6] : the souls have forgotten their father God : and the origin of their evil was daring, and γένεσις, and the first step in difference, and the desire to be their own (ἑαυτῶν εἶναι). They return from their pilgrimage, as it were, in a strange land, by abstracting themselves from the things of this world, and cultivating the desire for a return into unity with the primal existence from which they ultimately derive their being [7].

The writers subsequent to Plotinus, though important and even interesting to the student of history, do not seem to have made such changes in the meaning of the term Substance, as to make a detailed treatment of them necessary. The transcendent character of the Primal Unity was maintained by all who took their departure from the writings of Plotinus, and the individual characteristics displayed by them were mainly of the nature of

[1] *Enn.* VI ii 8. [2] Ibid. V ix 6. [3] Ibid. 5.
[4] Ibid. VI ii 8. [5] Ibid. VI i–iii. [6] Ibid. V i 1.
[7] Plotinus definitely defends the reality of individual experience in some sense (*Enn.* III i 4, 8) as against Stoic Pantheism : and also faces the question how the individual souls are related to one another and the world-soul (ibid. IV ix, esp. § 5). But the explanation he gives does not alter the drift of his thought, as indicated above.

scholastic developments. The comparatively simple theory of
Plotinus of the three primal beings is elaborated by Proclus, for
instance, into a highly complicated system of Triads. But the
principle underlying the whole is the same: true reality is found
not in the region of sensuous experience, but after a gradual
process of abstraction from that which is associated with matter
to an ideal world, and through that to a unity which cannot be
described in any human terms.

It is clear that a word with such associations as we have
described would be likely to suffer some change if it should be
brought into contact with Christian Theology. The difficulty of
deriving any positive action from a Transcendent Being, only to
be described in negative terms, was felt by the philosophers, and
was greater than anything that was involved in the mystery
which shrouded the God of Judaism: the secondary position
given by philosophers of the idealist sort to the experience
of this life would hardly satisfy those to whom the process of
history was a mode of self-manifestation on the part of God.

It is interesting to note the way in which the Church became
cognisant of the philosophic problem. The first persons who
feel it of importance to bring Church doctrine into contact with
philosophy are, of course, the Apologists. And they are mainly
concerned to show the absurdities of heathenism. They put
their own points clearly and directly ; they speak of God by the
high-sounding titles which philosophy requires ; but they do not
attempt to bring their theology within the limits of the language
of philosophers. Thus the idea of Substance or οὐσία is marked
by little change in the writings of Justin Athenagoras and Theo-
philus. It is a word of rare occurrence, though many of the
more transcendent epithets of the Divine Being are claimed for
the Christian God [1].

The fact is that the Christian conception of religion was radi-
cally different from that out of which the philosophical notion of
οὐσία emerged ; and when this came into contact with Christi-

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[1] Cf. Athen. *Leg. ad Graec.* cc. 10, 16. In the latter passage things are said to be
divided into οὐσία and σῶμα by οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ περιπάτου, and the principle of motion
is said to require a primary cause. This shows in how popular and unphilosophical
a sense οὐσία was used.

anity a considerable disturbance was likely. The Apologists attempted to make Christianity palatable in various ways : by showing the parallelism between their conception of God and that of the philosophers, and by the less promising venture of ridicule. The Alexandrines attempted to formulate it in terms of philosophy. We find, therefore, comparatively little that bears on the history of the word until we reach the Alexandrines.

The *rapprochement* of the philosophers with the Christian theologians would have been easier if the latter could have been in the position of mere learners ; but this was impossible. They came to the pursuit of philosophy under a prejudice, which had considerable results. We have seen how Philo had reached a transcendent idea of God on the basis of philosophical speculation applied to Jewish ideas, and how little weight the Jewish conceptions had in the result. There was all the chance of a similar history when the thought of Alexandria came in contact with the highly developed Judaism of St. Paul and St. John. Both parties, the philosophers and the theologians, looked upon God as the ultimate Reality, or at least the source of all reality. But there was a tendency among the philosophers to regard God as ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας ; and this made the doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit a difficult one to state.

Clement of Alexandria, for instance, was a well-trained theologian and a devout Christian. But he was also a philosopher with a very strong metaphysical gift ; the abstractions of metaphysics had more than an attraction for him; he clearly believed in them as a solution of the problem of being. Hence we find him describing the transcendence of God in the following language : ' How can that be described, which is neither genus, nor differentia, nor species, nor individual, nor number ; and neither accident, nor that to which the accident belongs ? Nor would one rightly call him a whole ; for the word *whole* is applied to magnitude, and he is father of wholes ; nor must one speak of parts of him : for the one is indivisible. And for this reason also he is infinite, not conceived as beyond the power of tracing out, but as being independent of spatial dimensions, having no limit. And thus he is without form and without name ; and if

at times we use a name for him, it is not in its true sense ; if we call him One, or the Good, or reason, or absolute reality, or father, or God, or Lord, we speak not as bringing forward his name ; but owing to our incapacity we use fair names, that the mind may be able to rest on them and not wander over other things [1].' In another interesting passage [2] he indicates the philosophical method by which this idea is attained ; and this method is abstraction. We abstract from a thing physical qualities, then spatial dimensions, till we reach a point, a monad, so to say, having position ; if we then get rid of the position, the monad is conceived (μονὰς ὡς εἰπεῖν θέσιν ἔχουσα· ἧς ἐὸν περιέλωμεν τὴν θέσιν μονὰς νοεῖται [3]). It is plain that here we have a purely philosophical conception of God, or rather of the ultimate principle of reality, and that to bring such a being into contact with the world is a matter of no small difficulty. Clement is partly helped by a doctrine of the Son as a mediator, not altogether unlike the Logos of Philo, and partly by the use he makes of the Pauline contrast between Faith and Knowledge. Those who are on the lower plane of Faith do not reach the metaphysical altitudes of the true Gnostic ; the literal sense of Scripture is for them, and the lower stages of spiritual insight. The Gnostic sees through these lower forms into the region of true reality, and thus the difference is explained as in part a difference of capacity in the observer.

The theology of Clement is the first result, and not a very coherent result, of the frank admission of philosophical ideas, especially that of reality, into the region of the Christian Faith.

In Origen we find a much wider acquaintance with all forms of learning than in Clement, and some very clear indications of the hold which Greek philosophical ideas had obtained on his mind. Thus there are signs of the Greek philosophical view of matter. It is eternal, and the material creation also [4], and it is an impediment to the pure vision of the soul. This last point almost lays Origen open to a charge of Docetism. He thinks that it was by an 'intelligible,' not a sensuous, touch that Jesus healed the leper [5]

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[1] *Strom.* V xii 82, 83.   [2] Ibid. xi 72.

[3] Dr. Bigg (*Bampton Lectures*, p. 63, n. 2) tells us that Clement uses the terms οὐσία and ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ἑνός of God, but not ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας. Considering the description quoted above, this is almost an unnecessary reserve.

[4] *De Princ.* I ii 10.   [5] *c. Cels.* I xlviii.

(νοητῶς μᾶλλον ἢ αἰσθητῶς ἥψατο τοῦ λεπροῦ), and he even seems[1] to deny that our Lord's Body was physically human at all, in any strict sense. In all this we have the survival of the opposition between αἴσθησις and νόησις, and of the ascription of superior reality to νοητά. But it must be remembered that we have also many passages bearing in the opposite direction; and these Docetic phrases are rather indications of the prevailing tendency of Origen's mind in regard to reality than precise dogmatic statements.

As regards the knowledge of God, Origen shows himself alive to the difficulties arising in connexion with philosophy. Like so many of his predecessors, he thinks of the Father as inaccessible in Himself, but revealed through the Son. 'Much is the argument concerning reality (τῆς οὐσίας) and hard to be understood ; and especially whether the true reality that is fixed is also incorporeal; in order that it may be discovered whether God is beyond reality in dignity and power, Who gives a share in reality to those to whom He gives it according to His own Word and to the Word himself; or whether He Himself is reality —only He is called naturally invisible in the phrase about the Saviour, which says " who is the image of the invisible God," and is implied to be incorporeal by means of the word " invisible." The question should be raised also whether we should call the only-begotten and first-born of all creation reality of realities, and idea of ideas, and origin, but (say that) his Father and God is beyond all these[2].' Here is raised the question whether current philosophy will apply precisely to the theological conceptions, or will require modification. The drift of thought is towards the complete transcendence of the primal source of being, but will this phraseology suit the Christian view of God ? On two points Origen is clear : (1) that in the Incarnate we have a true, if mediate, knowledge of God[3] ; (2) that the movement towards the Incarnation was governed, if we may so say, by moral motions ; it was not a metaphysical process of mechanical emanation[4]. God is changeless and beyond adequate conception, but He is not incapable of Justice and Goodness ; and he speaks of the Incarnation as a condescension, and says of it

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[1] *c. Cels.* VII xii–xvii.
[2] Ibid. VI lxiv.
[3] Cf. ibid. VII xliii.
[4] *De Princ.* II vi.

(c. xiv in the passage cited below) that 'for it there is no need of change on His part, as Celsus supposes that we say, nor variation from good to bad, or from noble to base, or from happiness to unhappiness, or from best to worst. For remaining without variation in nature He condescends to human fortunes by forethought and providence [1].'

It scarcely needs to be stated how great a change is implied here. The argument of Celsus cited above is the old argument of Plato against all manifestations of God [2]. The gods, he argued, cannot appear in any lower shape because they cannot change. And this conception of them went with the belief that true reality never changes; hence we have the long history by which a succession of thinkers strove to reconcile the changing and the changeless. Origen's statement makes a new departure. Justin had seen that the Generation of the Son was to be reconciled in some way with the changelessness of the Essence of the Father [3], and had connected it with the Father's will. Origen by his phrase πρόνοια καὶ οἰκονομία rises to the conception of a Sovereign will, ruling over changeful phenomena, but Himself τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἄτρεπτος. Origen uses the same line of argument in answer to the strictures of Celsus upon the humiliation and sufferings of Jesus; and this goes a long way to correct the suspicion of Docetism in regard to the Incarnation [4]. But the fact that some degree of inconsistency still remains shows how strong a hold philosophical ideas retained upon his thought.

The phraseology of Origen cannot fail to have caused perplexity in the minds of many who were accustomed to philosophic thinking. That the primal Essence should remain changeless, and yet pass through the series of changes represented by the Incarnation, must have seemed a contradiction. We cannot, therefore, wonder that a variety of modes of expression should

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[1] c. Cels. IV xiv μένων τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἄτρεπτος συγκαταβαίνει τῇ προνοίᾳ καὶ τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις πράγμασιν. The whole passage cc. xiv–xvii is of the greatest importance in this connexion.   [2] Rep. ii.

[3] Εἰπὼν τὴν δύναμιν ταύτην γεγεννῆσθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρός, δυνάμει καὶ βουλῇ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' οὐ κατὰ ἀποτομὴν ὡς ἀπομεριζομένης τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας (Dial. c. Tryph. ch. 128).

[4] A perilous phrase occurs in the passage from which we have derived the above quotation (c. Cels. IV xv), the λόγος . . . οἱονεὶ σὰρξ γίνεται, σωματικῶς λαλούμενος. But the context preserves it. We have quoted mainly from c. Cels. because in this work Origen is in definite conflict with a Pagan thinker, and because the work is preserved in Greek, which is not the case with the larger part of the De Principiis.

have been tried which would fall in more nearly with the demands of philosophical language. Those heresies which represent the Trinity of Persons as a series of temporary manifestations of a single transcendent Being, are cases in point. They would seem to retain the triplicity, and yet diminish its philosophical effect by insisting on its temporary character.

But the real crisis came in connexion with the Arian controversy, for in this a word formed from οὐσία served as the watchword of the contending parties. This word, of course, was ὁμοούσιον. There was much against the word. It was not scriptural[1]. It had philosophical associations of a doubtful sort. Those who thought matter was the ultimate reality would have interpreted it ' of the same material.' There are cases in Plotinus where it means ' of the same species,' almost equivalent to ὁμοειδής[2]. Then besides its philosophical associations it seems to have been used in Gnostic circles. It occurs in Irenaeus four times, and in each case in connexion with some description of the Valentinian system of aeons. Also the word *consubstantialis* appears in Tertullian[3], again apparently in connexion with heretical phraseology. It is even said by Athanasius[4] and Hilary[5] to have been condemned at the Council of Antioch as having been misinterpreted by Paul of Samosata: but this condemnation does not appear in the Acts of the Council.

In what sense, then, was this term applied in the controversy? St. Athanasius is its main exponent; and it is clear that in his mind the special philosophical associations of it have largely dropped out. He uses the word as a bulwark for a certain fact in which he believes, namely, that in whatever sense the Father is God, in the same sense the Son is God: ὅλος θεός ἐστιν ὁ Υἱός, he says[6]. So he will not endure the weaker word ὁμοιούσιον. 'You know yourselves, and nobody can question,' he writes[7], ' that the term *like* is used not ἐπὶ τῶν οὐσιῶν, but of forms and qualities: in the case of οὐσίαι not likeness but sameness would be affirmed. At any rate man is said to be "like" man not in nature but in fashion and figure: in nature they are of one kind

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[1] Ath. *de Syn.* c. 36.

[2] Cf. *Enn.* IV iv 28 and vii 10, where the soul is said to have ξυγγένειαν καὶ τὸ ὁμοούσιον in regard to God.

[3] *Adv. Herm.* xliv ad fin.   [4] *De Syn.* c. 43.   [5] Hil. *De Synodis* c. 81.

[6] Ath. *c. Ar.* iii 6.   [7] *De Syn.* c. 53.

(ὁμοφυεῖς).   And again man is not said to be " unlike " dog, but
of a different nature (ἑτεροφυής).'   There is no talk here of the
ultimate meaning of οὐσία, but merely an assertion of the logical
value of a particular phrase.   The meaning of οὐσία is determined
by its reference.   'When we hear *I am that I am* (ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ ὤν)
. . . we understand nothing else but that simple and blessed
and incomprehensible essence of Him that is : for though we are
unable to comprehend what He is, yet when we hear the phrases
Father and God and All-Sovereign, we understand that nothing
is implied but this very essence of the Existent one [1].'   The
οὐσία of God is the real being of God, however that may be
further defined, and the names used for God imply reference
to it : He is not distinguished, so to say, from His οὐσία.   So the
word ὁμοούσιον implies a real duality within this real nature,
and is distinct from a product of the action of the Divine Nature,
which, as we speak, might have been otherwise.   There need be
no confusion between the Father and the Son : nor is there any
parallel between the Generation of the Son and the act of
Creation [2].

By degrees the necessity of theological expression produced
a definite distinction between two words that had originally
much the same meaning, οὐσία and ὑπόστασις.   The latter, which
seems to have had Stoic associations, was applied like οὐσία to
the real being of a thing, but always had an inclination, as it
were, towards the idea of individual subsistence—a signification
which was shared by the verb ὑφίστασθαι [3].   The two words
were used as synonymous shortly before the Arian controversy,
e.g. in the Acts of the Council of Antioch which condemned
Paul of Samosata [4].   Origen uses ὑπόστασις in both senses in
one chapter [5]; and Athanasius in the *Tome to the Africans*
identifies the two words [6], while in the *Tome to the Antiochenes*
he describes the council held by himself at Alexandria in A.D. 362

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[1] *De Syn.* cc. 34, 35.

[2] Cf. *c. Ar.* i 29 (and contrast Orig. *De Princ.* I ii 10), and a long and important
passage in ch. iv of the Third Oration against the Arians.

[3] Cf. Plot. *Enn.* II v 5, ix 6 ; VI i 7, ii 4 ; and Orig. *c. Cels.* VI 65 ὁ δ' ἡμέτερος
Παῦλος ἐξ αὐτοῦ λέγει καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, παριστὰς τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς τῶν
πάντων ὑποστάσεως ἐν τῷ 'Εξ αὐτοῦ, &c.   The word is found in Arist. *Meteor.* IV v 6
in the sense of a sediment at the bottom of a liquid : also in the spurious
De Mundo iv 21.

[4] Routh, *Rell. Sacr.* iii p. 290.   [5] *In Ioan.* ii 6 (Brooke 71. 7, 16).   [6] c. 4.

in which both phrases, μία οὐσία μία ὑπόστασις, and μία οὐσία τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις, were accepted as legitimate and orthodox [1]. It is to be noticed that τρεῖς οὐσίαι was never regarded as legitimate. Hence we are not surprised to find that ὑπόστασις and not οὐσία finally determines itself into the sense of person. The distinction is carefully and deliberately drawn by Basil [2].

The formula thus attained, μία οὐσία, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις, is that which has ruled Greek Theology. The author who writes under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, in the interests of a neo-platonic philosophy, reverts to a negative and transcendent view of God such as we find in Plotinus and still more in Proclus, and treats all definitions or precise statements about God as mere approximations [3]. But the formula as above stated is the normal and accepted one. If we ask, then, in what terms we can describe the history briefly sketched above, the answer would seem to be that the changes in the meaning of the word οὐσία move from metaphysics towards psychology. We have the history of a struggle to substitute psychological or personal associations for those which were metaphysical and almost mechanical. We traced the development in the meaning of the word from Plato to Philo, and saw how the universal and abstract aspect of things took the place of the concrete and individual. We noted Origen's new departure in the use of the idea of πρόνοια and οἰκονομία: we then find Athanasius indifferent to the precise meaning of οὐσία, but steadily insisting on the relation between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which is traceable within the one οὐσία. The philosophers themselves were alive to the fact that the Church claimed to modify the current views of reality: Porphyry, for instance, complains that they are dissatisfied with the penetration of Plato [4]. It may be questioned whether the metaphysical associations ever completely disappeared from Greek theological thought. Doubtless the word ὑπόστασις was the right one for the purpose required [5]: but it was a metaphysical word and

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[1] *Tom. ad Ant.* cc. 5, 6.   [2] *Ep.* 220, 3.   [3] Cf. *De Div. Nom.* c. 2.

[4] Porph. *Vit. Plot.* c. xvi ὡς δὴ τοῦ Πλάτωνος εἰς τὸ βάθος τῆς νοητῆς οὐσίας οὐ πελάσαντος.

[5] It is interesting, to those who connect πρόσωπον with *persona* in the theological use, that the word ὑφίστασθαι sometimes means 'to play the part of,' 'to represent.' Thus in Heracl. Pont. *Homer. Alleg.* c. lxv, Proteus τὴν προμήτορα τῶν ὅλων ὑφίσταται γένεσιν : several other instances occur in the same work.

implied a metaphysical rather than an ethical view of personality [1].

It is not, perhaps, fanciful to see in the formula adopted by the Greeks, as opposed to the Latins, to express the Procession of the Holy Ghost, a sign of the metaphysical character of the associations still lying round these words. The Greeks maintain that the Holy Spirit proceeds *from* the Father *through* the Son, expressing by the two prepositions two distinct and precise relations : while the Latin phrase, *from* the Father *and* the Son, seems rather to express the co-operation of two personalities, conceived almost as independent.

However this may be, there is no question as to the general drift of speculation as exemplified in the history of the word *Substantia*. It would seem that οὐσία was originally translated into *essentia*. Seneca [2] gives this Latin equivalent for the Greek term and quotes Cicero as his authority ; and so also Quintilian [3]. *Substantia* appears in Quintilian [4] as opposed to *coniectura* ; and in another place in a quasi-psychological sense as 'stability' [5]. Later on we find the words used almost as synonyms, as by Apuleius [6]. In Tertullian the word *essentia* is rare, but *substantia* is comparatively common in the sense of *nature* [7], and he distinguishes *persona* from it [8]. The most important writer, however, in this connexion is Augustine ; for it fell to him to provide the terminology in which the Trinitarian doctrine was to be formulated in the West. Augustine had acquired in the course of his life elements of learning from every available source : and the most important of these was neo-Platonism. This came to him not in the original Greek, probably, but in Latin Versions. It may be due to this that he seems to have derived from it ideas

[1] Note especially the conception of human personality which arises in the course of the *De Duabus Voluntatibus* of John of Damascus.

[2] *Ep.* lviii 2.   [3] *Inst. Or.* III vi 23. Quint. does not quote Cicero.

[4] Op. cit. III ii 5.

[5] *Inst. Or.* VI, Proem. § 7 'substantiam altae et placidae mentis' : cf. Hebr. iii 14 τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως.

[6] Apul. *Dogm. Plat.* I vi 'οὐσίας, quas essentias dicimus, duas esse ait [Plato] per quas cuncta gignantur, mundusque ipse : quarum una cogitatione sola concipitur, altera sensibus subici potest. . . . Et primae quidem *substantiae* uel *essentiae* deum primum' &c.

[7] *Adv. Prax.* c. 27, where, speaking of the Lord, he says, 'Sic et Apostolus de utraque eius substantia docet,' and quotes Rom. i 5 : cf. op. cit. cc. 8, 12, 26.

[8] *Adv. Marc.* V xi ; *Adv. Prax.* 12.

and principles and not words. In his great work *On the Trinity* we find him alive to the discussions arising upon the words *substantia* and *essentia*[1]: but his characteristic contribution to the doctrine lies not here at all, but in the elaborate working out of analogies between the Holy Trinity and the operations of the soul of man. Tertullian had already noticed this analogy[2], but it did not take a large place in his writings. Augustine spends the larger portion of Bks. VIII—XV of the *De Trin.* in discussing it. It would take us beyond the limits of our subject to set this out in full. We allude to it here because it seems to us to represent the triumph of neo-platonic psychology over neo-platonic metaphysics. The drift of the metaphysics is, as we have seen, in the transcendent direction: the primal Unity disappears behind reality into a region of which nothing can be said. But in the case of Plotinus there is a strong anti-pantheistic element which leads him to defend with great vigour the reality of individual soul. It is not very clear how he would define the relation of the individual to the Soul of the World; in one place he compares it to the relation of particular sciences to science as a whole[3]. But there is no doubt that he does somehow maintain the right of the individual to call himself real. Thus he says[4]: ' In the same way, if also in the case of the All the All is to be one, acting and suffering, and (if it is not true) that one thing depends on another according to causes always having reference to some further cause, then it is not true that all things depend on causes, but all things will be one : thus we shall not be ourselves, nor any work of ours: we do not even think ourselves, but our deliberations will be the thought of another : nor do we act, just as our feet do not kick, but we by means of our limbs. But (this cannot be), for it must be that each individual *is*, and that our actions and thoughts are real, and that the good and base actions alike depend on each one, and that we must not ascribe to the All at any rate the production of the base actions.' Thus Plotinus makes a stand for the individual. And his position is made easier because of his analysis of thought into its constituent elements. Aristotle distinguished νόησις and τὸ νοητόν, and

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[1] Cf. *De Trin.* VI iv, v, §§ 7–10, and a large section of Book VII.
[2] *Adv. Prax.* c. 5.   [3] *Enn.* IV ix 5.
[4] Ibid. III i 4, and cf. ibid. i 8.

regarded νόησις νοήσεως as the final term in the scale of being. Plotinus thinks this inadequate. The ideal Unity, argues Plotinus, must be beyond νόησις, because in this there is always duality; οὐδ᾽ ἡ νόησις νοεῖ ἀλλὰ τὸ ἔχον τὴν νόησιν. δύο οὖν πάλιν ἐν τῷ νοοῦντι γίνεται. τοῦτο δὲ (i. e. τὸ ἀγαθόν) οὐδαμῇ δύο[1]. Thus instead of νόησις and τὸ νοητός, we have νοῦς, νόησις and τὸ νοητόν. It is this triple conception of psychical acts which St. Augustine takes as his starting-point in his endeavours to make the Trinitarian doctrine partly intelligible. He passes by with comparative indifference the complicated questions which the Greeks raised over the word Substance, and strikes out a line of his own on the basis of a doctrine of the Soul[2].

Thus the history of the word Substance in connexion with one of the main theological problems of which we spoke at the beginning is Greek. It has been sometimes said that in this matter Greek philosophy triumphed over, and imposed its own limits upon, Christian theology. We cannot accept this account of the facts. The Greek doctrine, as we have pointed out, retained to the end traces of its metaphysical origin and associations, but so far as Athanasius went it represented a clear and definite change from the philosophical conception of reality, which was strained to the cracking point by having to bear the weight of the new doctrine of God.

In a succeeding article it is proposed to sketch the history of the word 'Substance' in regard to the other great theological dogma with which it has been connected—that of the Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist. It will be found that the history affords a marked contrast to that just described.

T. B. STRONG.

[1] *Enn.* V vi 6; cf. VI ix 6.

[2] The Hymns to the Trinity of Victorinus Afer (Migne, *Patr. Lat.* vol. viii) are of great interest. The language is almost entirely metaphysical, but they form an important stage in the development from neo-platonism to Augustine.

[Since the above article was in type I have read Mr. Bethune-Baker's learned and interesting essay 'The meaning of Homoousios in the "Constantinopolitan" Creed' (*Texts and Studies* vii 1). With much of it I am in cordial agreement: but I cannot think that the author has given sufficient weight to the influence of Greek philosophy in his account of the word. I hope to return to this point later on in the pages of the JOURNAL. T. B. S.]