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## THE INCARNATION :

### A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS II. 5-11.

(Continued from p. 177.)

IN the former part of this article we have considered the relation of the passage to the preceding context, the description of the Subject, "*Christ Jesus*," as pre-existing and continually subsisting (*ὑπάρχων*) in the form of God (*ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ*), and have maintained the primitive interpretation of the latter words as denoting *the fulness of the Godhead* against all attempts to assign to them any lower meaning.

We now proceed to examine the next clause, the difficulties of which have given occasion to endless discussion and the widest diversities of opinion.

v. οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ.

In the interpretation of this clause we have to determine the following questions :

(a) What is the meaning of the words ἴσα Θεῷ and their relation to μορφῇ Θεοῦ?

(b) Do they denote Christ's condition before His Incarnation, or that to which He was to attain only as His reward?

(c) What is the meaning of οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο?

(a) In the Revised Version the words ἴσα Θεῷ are translated *on an equality with God*, instead of *equal with God*, as in the Authorised Version.

The change is of great importance to the right interpretation of the whole passage.

The rendering "equal with God," denoting the same essential equality of nature which is already expressed by "being in the form of God," is evidently derived from the Latin Version, "esse se aequalem Deo," which passed at an early period into the theological writings of the Western Church.

It was apparently due at first to the fact that the Latin language had no adequate mode of representing the exact form and meaning of the Greek εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ.

The neuter plural ἴσα, whether used adverbially or as an adjective, cannot refer to the *one* unchanging nature or essence of Deity, but denotes the various conditions or states in which it was possible for that nature to exist and manifest itself as divine.

Unfortunately this force of the neuter plural has not been very generally observed, or not quite accurately expressed.

Bishop Lightfoot says: "Between the two expressions ἴσος εἶναι and ἴσα εἶναι no other distinction can be drawn, except that the former refers rather to the *person*, the latter to the *attributes*."

The word "*attributes*" seems unfortunately to mar what might otherwise have been a well-drawn distinction; for "*attributes*" are *essential*, and the sum of the "*attributes*" makes up the whole essence; they are therefore inseparable from the very existence of the *person*.<sup>1</sup>

The true distinction appears to be that, whereas εἶναι ἴσος would denote equality of nature, εἶναι ἴσα points to the states and circumstances, which are separable from the essence, and therefore variable, or, in a logical sense (if we may so speak with reverence), "*accidental*."

The distinction is the same as that in Latin between the Vulgate, "esse se aequalem Deo," and Tertullian's<sup>2</sup> "pariari

<sup>1</sup> Compare Bruce, *Humiliation*, p. 128: "The divine attributes are the divine essence, and therefore inseparable from it."

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Marcion*, v. 20.

Deo," "to be on a par with God," and between "*equal with God*" (A.V.), and "*on an equality with God*" (R.V.).

This use of *ἴσα* may be illustrated by such passages as Job xi. 12: βροτὸς δὲ γεννητὸς γυναικὸς ἴσα ὄνῳ ἐρημίτη; and Thucyd., i. 25: χρημάτων δυνάμει ὄντες . . . ὅμοια τοῖς Ἑλλήνων πλουσιωτάτοις, both quoted by Bishop Lightfoot; and by Job xxx. 19: ἤγησαι δέ με ἴσα πῆλῳ; and by Thucyd. iii. 14: ἐν οὗ τῷ ἱερῷ ἴσα καὶ ἰκέται ἐσμέν.

In opposition to this ancient interpretation Meyer asserts<sup>1</sup> "that τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ cannot be something essentially different from ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ, but must in substance denote the same thing, namely, the divine *habitus* of Christ, which is expressed as to its *form of appearance* by ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων, and as to its *internal nature* by τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ."

Again, in the footnote to this passage he adds, that Paul "distinguishes very precisely and suitably between the two ideas representing the same state, by saying that Christ, in His divine pre-human *form of life*, did not venture to use this His God-equal *being* for making booty. Both, therefore, express the very same divine *habitus*; but the εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ is the general element which presents itself in the divine μορφῇ as its *substratum* and lies at its basis, so that the two designations *exhaust* the idea of divinity."

We have here two important errors, which introduce a hopeless confusion into Meyer's interpretation.

(1) The word *habitus*, which he uses to express the whole "idea of divinity," and emphasizes in both sentences by italics, is the technical Latin for σχῆμα, and is so used both in the Vulgate of v. 7, and in S. Augustine's interpretation of it, "De eo quod scriptum est: *Et habitu inventus ut homo.*"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 81, E. Tr.

<sup>2</sup> *De diversis Quæstionibus*, lxxiii.

Meyer himself has given an excellent interpretation of the word in *v.* 7: “*Σχήμα, habitus*, which receives its more precise reference from the context, denotes here the entire outwardly perceptible mode and form, the whole shape of the phenomenon apparent to the senses (1 Cor. vii. 31).

. . . Men saw in Christ a human form, bearing, language, action, mode of life, wants and their satisfaction, etc., in general the *state and relations* of a human being, so that in the entire mode of His appearance He made Himself known and was recognised (*εὔρεθ.*) *as a man.*”

(2) Meyer applies *ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων* to the “*form of appearance*,” and *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ* to the “*internal nature*” of Christ in His pre-existence. This interpretation is wrong as to both expressions, and actually inverts their meanings.

*Μορφή*, as we have shown above (pp. 171 ff.), is the “*essential form*,” or “*specific character*,” which pre-supposes the “*nature*,” and is inseparable from it. *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ* describes the “*state and relations*” of a Divine Being, His modes of manifestation: it is thus not co-ordinate, but subordinate, to *μορφῇ Θεοῦ*, just as its correlative in *v.* 7 is shown by Meyer himself (p. 90) to be subordinate to *μορφῇ δούλου*: “The *more precise positive definition* of the *mode* in which He emptied Himself is supplied by *μορφὴν δούλου λαβών*, and the latter then receives through *ἐν ὁμ. ἀνθρ. γερόμενος καὶ σχήματι εὐρ. ὡς ἀνθρ.* its *specification of mode correlative to εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ*.<sup>1</sup> This specification is not co-ordinate (De Wette, Baumgarten—Crusius, Weiss, Schenkel), but subordinate to *μορφὴν δούλου λαβών*.

(b) The conclusion to which we have just been led by considering the meaning of the words *μορφή, σχήμα, ἴσα Θεῷ*, is strongly confirmed by the general structure of *vv.* 6, 7, and the balance of the two sets of contrasted clauses.

<sup>1</sup> These last italics only are mine.—E. H. G.

As ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων finds its antithesis in μορφῇν δούλου λαβών, so οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ is in direct antithesis to ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν.

This latter antithetical relation is placed beyond dispute (1) by the direct opposition indicated by οὐκ . . . ἀλλά, and (2) by the necessary logical connexion of the two clauses.

For since the phrase ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν conveys of itself an incomplete idea, we are at once driven to ask, Of what did Christ empty Himself? And the only possible answer is, He emptied Himself of that which He did not regard as an ἀρπαγμὸν.<sup>1</sup>

From this again it follows, that τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ denotes something which Christ already possessed as "*being in the form of God.*" It is the condition of glory and majesty which was the adequate manifestation of His divine nature,<sup>2</sup> and which He resigned for a time by *taking the form of a servant.*

When De Wette, who acknowledges that "κενοῦν is referred to τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ," goes on to say, "and that, in so far as Jesus might have had it in His power, not in that He actually possessed it," Tholuck<sup>3</sup> asks very pertinently, "Who ever employed the word "*empty*" in regard to the renunciation of something *not yet acquired*? Can you say that any one empties himself of that which he does not as yet possess? How much better, with the ancient school of interpreters, to refer κενοῦν to an equality of condition with God actually present, of which Christ resigned the use."

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce (p. 23) says rightly: "Beyond all doubt, therefore, whatever τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ may mean, it points to something which both the connection of thought and the grammatical structure of the sentence require us to regard the Son of God as willing to give up."

<sup>2</sup> This explains the force of the Article τὸ εἶναι ἴ. Θ., to which Meyer draws attention as pointing back to ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπ.

<sup>3</sup> *Disputatio Theologica*, Halle, 1848, p. 14.

De Wette's view, however, is still maintained in the third edition of Thomasius, *Christi Person und Werk*, i. p. 417: "Now if οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγάσαστο means, as cannot be doubted, *non rapiendum sibi duxit*, τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ will mean something which He did *not* possess before, and so something different from μορφή Θεοῦ, which belonged to Him as God."

Thomasius names Tholuck as holding this view, although in the passage quoted above from the *Disputatio Theologica* he argues expressly and, as it seems, conclusively against it.

The statements of Thomasius that the meaning "*non rapiendum sibi duxit* cannot be doubted," and that "all other meanings, *non prædam sibi duxit*, or, 'He would not hold it fast pertinaciously,' cannot be justified lexically," are mere arbitrary assertions, which cannot themselves be justified in relation to the context.

We thus get rid of the chief cause of error and confusion in the interpretation of the whole passage, namely, the notion that Christ emptied Himself of *the "form of God."* This view, though adopted by Meyer, Alford, and other interpreters,<sup>1</sup> is so directly opposed to the meaning of the words, ὑπάρχων, μορφή, ἴσα Θεῷ, and also to the antithetical arrangement and logical connexion of the several clauses, that I cannot refrain from expressing my firm conviction that it must in the end be regarded as utterly untenable by every competent Greek scholar, who will examine the arguments opposed to it carefully, and without dogmatic prejudice.

(c) Assuming, as we now may, that "*the being on an equality with God*" was something which Christ possessed prior to His Incarnation, and then for a time resigned, we

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *Humiliation*, p. 26: "All that can be confidently affirmed is, that the Apostle does conceive the Incarnation under the aspect of an exchange of a divine form for a human form of being: so that, as expositors, we are not entitled to interpret the words, *being in the form of God* as meaning 'continuing to subsist in divine form.'"

have next to consider and choose between two meanings of the word *ἀρπαγμόν*.

Does it here denote an *action*, a "robbery" (A.V.), or the *object* of an action, "a prize" (R.V.)? In other words, has it an active or a passive signification?

The course of the following inquiry will perhaps be made clearer, if we first show in a free paraphrase the two interpretations to which we are led by the different senses ascribed to *ἀρπαγμόν*.

1. With the active sense "robbery" or "usurpation" we get the following meaning:

"Who *because* He was subsisting in the essential form of God, did not regard it as any usurpation that He was on an equality of glory and majesty with God, *but yet* emptied Himself of that co-equal glory, by taking the form of a created servant of God."

2. The passive sense gives a different meaning to the passage:

"Who *though* He was subsisting in the essential form of God, *yet* did not regard His being on an equality of glory and majesty with God as a prize and treasure to be held fast, *but* emptied Himself thereof, etc."

In favour of the active sense it is urged (1) that this is the meaning of *ἀρπαγμός* in the only known instance of its use by a classical writer, Plutarch, *de Puerorum Educatione*, p. 12A: τὸν ἐκ Κρήτης καλούμενον ἀρπαγμόν; (2) that the passive sense would be more properly expressed by the very usual form *ἄρπαγμα*.

Both these arguments are true, but neither of them decisive.

(1) We cannot attach much importance to the passages quoted by Bishop Lightfoot from Christian writers of the

4th and 5th centuries to show that *ἀρπαγμός* is equivalent to *ἄρπαγμα*, because this later usage is probably derived from the very passage before us. But we may fairly say that the single passage from Plutarch, in which the active sense is found, is not sufficient to prove that the word could not have been used in the passive sense in St. Paul's time.

To the arguments urged against the passive sense (2) Bishop Lightfoot replies that "as a matter of fact substantives in *-μός* are frequently used to describe a concrete thing, e.g., *θεσμός*, *χρησμός*, *φραγμός*, etc."

Of these examples *θεσμός* and *χρησμός* are hardly relevant, as these words have no alternative forms in *-μα*. But *φραγμός* is a very good instance.

In Herodotus vii. 36, it is applied to the "fence" or "bulwark" on either side of Xerxes' bridge, constructed to prevent the baggage-animals from seeing the water: *φραγμὸν παρείρυσαν ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν*.

In Herodotus viii. 52 we read that the Persians, having attached lighted tow to their arrows, *ἐτόξευον ἐς τὸ φράγμα*, the *φράγμα* being the barricade of planks and timbers with which the Athenians had tried to fortify the Acropolis.

It is evident that *φραγμός* in the former passage has the same passive sense as *φράγμα* in the latter.

Another good example is found in the usage of *σταλαγμός*, which, with its cognate *στάλαγμα*, exactly corresponds to *ἀρπαγμός*, *ἄρπαγμα*.

Thus we read in Æschyl., *Eum.*, 802:

*ἀφείσαι δαιμόνων σταλάγματα;*

and in Sophocles, *Antig.*, 1239:

*καὶ φυσιῶν ὄξειαν ἐκβάλλει πνοήν  
λευκῇ παρειᾷ φοινίου σταλάματος.*

With these passages compare Æsch., *Theb.*, 60:

πεδία δ' ἀργηστής ἀφρός  
χραίνει σταλαγμοῖς ἵππικῶν ἐκ πνευμόνων ;

and *Eum.*, 247 :

τετραυματισμένον γὰρ ὡς κύων νεβρόν,  
πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σταλαγμὸν ἐκμαστεύομεν.

*Soph.*, *Fragm.*, 340 :

Λάμπει δ' ἀγνιεύς βωμὸς ἀτμίζων πυρὶ  
σμύρνης σταλαγμοῦς, βαρβάρους εὐοσμίας.

*Eurip.*, *Ion.*, 351 : ἦν δὲ σταλαγμὸς ἐν στίβῳ τις αἵματος.  
It is evident that in these latter passages σταλαγμός has exactly the same meaning as στάλαγμα in the former.

While these examples suffice to show that ἀρπαγμός may have a passive sense, its combination with ἠγήσατο renders this probable in the present passage. For Bishop Lightfoot has shown that "with such verbs as ἠγείσθαι, ποιείσθαι, νομίζειν, etc., ἄρπαγμα is employed like ἔρμαιον, εὔρημα, to denote 'a highly prized possession, an unexpected gain.'"

The two quotations most pertinent, as containing both ἄρπαγμα and ἠγείσθαι, are Heliodorus, vii. 20 : οὐχ ἄρπαγμα οὐδὲ ἔρμαιον ἠγείται τὸ πρῶγμα ; and Titus Bostr., c. *Manich.*, i. 2, ἄρπαγμα ψευδῶς τὸ ἀναγκαῖον τῆς φύσεως ἠγείται. These passages are both from writers of the 4th century, the only example given from an author nearly contemporary with St. Paul being Plutarch., *de Alexandri Fort.*, 330D : οὐδὲ ὥσπερ ἄρπαγμα καὶ λάφυρον εὐτυχίας ἀνεπίστον σπαράξαι καὶ ἀνασύρασθαι διανοηθεῖς.

We proceed to consider the objections which have been urged by recent commentators against the active sense of ἀρπαγμόν, "usurpation," or "robbery."

(1) Hofmann in the *Schriftbeweis* (vol. i. p. 149) argued that "a state" (τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ) "cannot properly be regarded as an act."

The objection, which Meyer met by referring to 1 Timothy vi. 5, *πορισμὸν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν*, was expressly withdrawn by Hofmann in his Commentary on the Epistle, p. 61: "As to the phrase *ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγγείσθαι τι*, it must before all be admitted that *ἀρπαγμὸν*, in consequence of its termination, does not mean an object of robbery, either past or future, but the robbing as the action of the robber."

We may therefore set aside this objection as invalid.

(2) A second objection has reference to the meaning assigned in this interpretation to *ἀλλά*, as being virtually equivalent to *ἀλλ' ὅμως*.

Against this Bishop Ellicott argues very strongly as an undue expansion of the meaning of *ἀλλά*, and as not retaining "its usual, proper, and logical force after the negative clause."

Bishop Lightfoot also calls this rendering of *ἀλλα* "unnatural in itself."

I am not myself disposed to advocate the rendering in the present passage; but with all the deference due to such eminent scholars I venture to think that the expressions used in enforcing their objections are not altogether free from exaggeration.

That *ἀλλά* is in fact sometimes used by St. Paul in this meaning after a negative clause, cannot well be denied in face of such passages as Romans v. 13: *Sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless (ἀλλά) death reigned, etc.* (R.V.); and 1 Corinthians iv. 4: *I know nothing against myself; yet (ἀλλά) am I not hereby justified* (R.V.).

On the other hand it must be fully admitted that this sense of *ἀλλά* after a negative (*οὐκ . . . ἀλλά*) is very rare in comparison with its more ordinary meaning, "but," expressing a direct contrast to what has gone before.

(3) A third and much more valid objection is based on

the relation of οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο to the preceding and following context.

Thus Dr. Martin Routh, commenting on the quotation of Philippians ii. 6, in the *Epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons*, writes thus (*Rel. Sacr.*, I. p. 364): "However the words, οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, are to be interpreted, this at least is certain, that the Lyonnais drew from them a proof of Christ's humility (τῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης). Nor they alone, but also many other ancient writers did the same; nay more, I will undertake to say that up to the time of the Nicene Council no ecclesiastical writer can be adduced who has clearly and plainly indicated that these words mean, in accordance with the rendering in our English Version, 'thought it not a thing alien to Himself.'"

By "alienum a se" Dr. Routh appears to mean "a thing obtained, or to be obtained, only by usurpation or robbery; he thus rejects the meaning, "He regarded it as His own by right."

The same view is strongly urged by the ablest of our English commentators, such as Bishop Ellicott, Bishop Lightfoot, and Dean Gwynn in the *Speaker's Commentary*.

They argue with undeniable force (a) that the rendering "thought it not robbery" is *an assertion of rightful dignity*, and that, in a "prominent and emphatic sentence" (Gwynn), where we are led to expect "an instance of self-abnegation or humility," exemplifying the principle in v. 4, *not looking each to his own things, but each also to the things of others*.

"We expect this appeal to our great Example (v. 5) to be followed immediately by a reference, not to the right which He *claimed*, but to the dignity which He renounced. . . . The mention of our Lord's condescension is thus postponed too late in the sentence" (Lightfoot). (b) A further objection is thus stated by Dean Gwynn: "The

following verse (7), describing the act by which He 'emptied Himself,' brings it into the sharpest contrast by the introductory 'but' (ἀλλά, *i.e.*, 'but on the contrary,' as in *vv.* 3, 4) with that which is conveyed by the verb (ἡγήσατο) of this sentence. But 'to think it robbery to be equal with God' stands in no such contrast with 'to empty Himself.' To say 'He did not count it a wrongful act to assert Divine Attributes (?), but on the contrary laid them aside,' is unmeaning."

Admitting the force of these arguments, we believe the right meaning of the clause to be that the Son of God did not regard His being on equal conditions of glory and majesty with God as a prize and treasure to be held fast, but emptied Himself thereof.

Before passing on, we may do well to observe the perfect accuracy with which St. Paul applies the verbs *ὑπάρχειν*, *εἶναι*, and *γίγνεσθαι*, the first to the eternal *subsistence* of "the form of God," the second to states and conditions *existing at a particular time*, but presently to be laid aside, and the last (*γενόμενον*) to the *entrance upon a new existence* "in the likeness of men."

vi. Passing to the next clause, ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, we observe that—

(1) The position of ἑαυτὸν before ἐκένωσεν lays an emphasis upon the thought that the self-emptying was Christ's own voluntary act,<sup>1</sup> an act corresponding to the precept in *v.* 4, μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες.

(2) The verb *κενώω* is sometimes followed by a Genitive denoting "the contents" which are removed, as in Plato, *Republ.*, viii. 560D: τούτων . . . κενώσαντες τὴν . . . ψυχὴν.

<sup>1</sup> Chrysost. *in loc.*: Ποῦ οἱ λέγοντες ὅτι ἀνάγκην ὑπέστη, ὅτι ὑπετάγη; Ἐαυτὸν, φησὶν, ἐκένωσεν, ἑαυτὸν ἐταπεινώσεν.

*Sympos.*, 197c: οὗτος . . . ἡμᾶς ἀλλοτριότητος κενοῖ.

And Plutarch, *Aprophth. Lacon.*, 229D: τὰν ψυχὰν κενῶσαι κακῶν.

When, as in *Phil.* ii. 7, there is no Genitive expressed, the idea of *the contents* must be gathered from the context; and in this case the antithetical relation between τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ and ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν, enforced as it is by the *direct* contradiction οὐκ . . . ἀλλά, leaves no room for doubt.

Accordingly the only admissible interpretation is that which was given by the Synod of Antioch (A.D. 269) in the *Epistle to Paul of Samosata* before his deposition: <sup>1</sup> οὐ χάριν ὁ αὐτὸς Θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς . . . ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν πάσῃ πεπίστευται Θεὸς μὲν κενώσας ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, ἄνθρωπος δὲ καὶ ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ τὸ κατὰ σάρκα.

“On which account the same God and man Jesus Christ in all the Church under heaven has been believed in as God having *emptied Himself from being on an equality with God*, and as man of the seed of David according to the flesh.”

When Meyer asserts (p. 88) that Christ “emptied *Himself*, and that, as the context places beyond doubt, of the *divine μορφή*, which He possessed, but now exchanged for a *μορφή δούλου*,” he simply repeats, with ill-founded confidence, that identification, or, rather we may say, confusion of *μορφή Θεοῦ* with τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, which has been shown above (p. 243) to be the chief cause of so much erroneous interpretation of the passage.

vii. In the next clause (*μορφήν δούλου λαβών*) the action of the participle *λαβών* coincides in time with that of the verb *ἐκένωσεν*. The state of glory and majesty implied in *the being on an equality with God* was laid aside in the act of *taking the form of a servant*.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Routh, *Rel. Sacr.*, tom. iii. p. 298.

On the meaning of “*servant*” in this passage, Bishop Lightfoot writes: “For ἄνθρωπος the stronger word δούλος is substituted: He, who is Master (κύριος) of all, became the slave of all. Comp. Matt. xx. 27, 28; Mark x. 44, 45.”

But this reference of δούλος is decisively rejected by Bishop Bull, *Primitive Tradition on the Deity of Christ*, vi. 21, a passage briefly referred to by Bishop Ellicott: “It is to be observed that *the form of a servant* by no means signifies here a servile condition of man, in as far as it is opposed to the state and condition of a man who is free and his own master, as the heretics contend, and some Catholics have imprudently admitted.

For *the form of a servant* is here manifestly contrasted with *the form of God*. And in comparison with God every creature has the form of a servant, and is bound to obedience towards God. Hence the Apostle . . . presently adds γενόμενος ὑπήκοος, *became obedient*, namely, to God the Father.”<sup>1</sup>

The full significance of the title, *form of a servant*, is explained at great length by Dean Jackson in his admirable *Commentaries upon the Apostles' Creed*, bk. viii. capp. 7ff., where he argues that when Christ “did in the fulness of time take our nature upon Him, He did wholly submit His reasonable will, all His affections and desires, unto the will of His Heavenly Father: and in this renouncing of the arbitrament of His will, and in the entire submission of it unto the will of His Father, did that *form of a servant*, whereof our Apostle speaks, formally consist.”

The true meaning of μορφή in the expression *form of God* is confirmed by its recurrence in the corresponding phrase, *form of a servant*.

It is universally admitted that the two phrases are directly antithetical, and that “*form*” must therefore have the same sense in both.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Def. Fid. Nic.*, P. i., L. ii., c. 2, § 2.

The argument to be drawn from this acknowledged fact is well expressed by Chrysostom in his Commentary on the Epistle: "What then should we say in answer to Arius, who said that the Son is of other substance (than the Father)? Tell me, what is the meaning of this—'He took the form of a servant'? He became man, says Arius. Therefore also *subsisting in the form of God*, He was God. For the word used in both places is *μορφή*. If the one (*μορφὴ δούλου*) is true, the other is true: *the form of a servant*, man by nature; therefore *the form of God*, God by nature."

We thus see that the full and proper meaning of *μορφή* is not less essential to the doctrine of Christ's true humanity than to that of His perfect deity, as presented in this passage.

It is sometimes asserted that in taking *the form of a servant* it was necessary to be divested of *the form of God*; in other words, that the two natures in their fulness and perfection could not exist together in one Person.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Dr. Gore<sup>2</sup> writes, "The question has been asked, Does St. Paul imply that Jesus Christ abandoned the *μορφὴ Θεοῦ*?" And his answer is, "I think all we can certainly say is that He is conceived to have emptied Himself of the divine mode of existence (*μορφὴ*) so far as was involved in His really entering upon the human mode of existence. St. Paul does not use his terms with the exactness of a professional logician or scholastic."<sup>3</sup>

I have always found it dangerous to assume that St. Paul was inexact in his use of language, especially in passages which have an important doctrinal significance; and I have been led by frequent experience to the conclusion that the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Dissertations on subjects connected with the Incarnation*, pp. 88f.

<sup>3</sup> In like manner Canon Gore's Reviewer in *The Guardian*, 1st January, 1896, says that "St. Paul must have been using the word 'form' in a loose popular sense, as we use the word 'nature.'"

fault lay in my own want of a clear perception of the Apostle's meaning, and not in any vagueness of expression on his part.

Such, I believe, is the cause of Canon Gore's difficulty in the present instance.

He has not grasped the true meaning of *μορφὴ Θεοῦ*, and the distinction between it and *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ*. This is very evident in the following passage, in which the italics are mine, and are meant to call attention to the uncertainty of Canon Gore's interpretation, and his confusion of the two phrases. "The word 'form,' transferred from physical shape to spiritual type, describes—as St. Paul uses it, alone or in composition, with uniform accuracy—the *permanent characteristics* of a thing. Jesus Christ then, in His pre-existent state, was living in the permanent characteristics of *the life* of God.

In such a life it was His right to remain. It belonged to Him.

But He regarded not His *prerogatives* as a man regards a prize he must clutch at. For love of us He abjured *the prerogatives of equality with God*.

By an act of deliberate self-abnegation, He so emptied Himself as to assume *the permanent characteristics* of the human or servile life."

Now though St. Paul, we have been told above, "does not use his terms with the exactness of a professional logician or scholastic," yet *μορφὴ* must be an exception, for here we are told that he uses it "with uniform accuracy." First then it describes "*the permanent characteristics of a thing*," that is, in this case, "the permanent characteristics" of God; then, with a slight but not unimportant modification, "the permanent characteristics of the *life* of God"; then, with a further change, it means "prerogatives," and so at last "the prerogatives of *equality with God*." When we add to this series of transformations Dr. Gore's previous

definition of *μορφῇ Θεοῦ* as "the divine mode of existence," we certainly find a great want of "exactness," which cannot, however, be laid to the charge of the Apostle.

viii. In the following clause the meaning of *taking the form of a servant* is more closely defined by the words *ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος*, *being made in the likeness of men*.

The relation of this clause to the preceding is well stated by Bishop Bull, *Primitive Tradition*, vi. 21: "Christ took the form of a servant at the time when He was made man. This is clear from those words of the Apostle, *ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος*, in which there is a continuous *ἐξήγησις*, whereby the latter clause is subjoined to the former immediately (*ἀμέσως*), without the interposition of any copulative conjunction. If you ask how Christ emptied Himself, the Apostle answers, *by taking the form of a servant*. If you ask again, how Christ took the form of a servant, the answer follows immediately, *being made in the likeness of men*, that is, being made man, like unto us men, sin only excepted."

The expression *likeness of men* does not of itself necessarily imply, still less does it exclude or diminish, the reality of the nature which Christ assumed. That, as we have seen, is declared in the words *form of a servant*. "Paul justly says: *ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων*, because, in fact, Christ, although certainly perfect man (Rom. v. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 21; 1 Tim. ii. 5), was, by reason of the divine nature present in Him, not *simply and merely* man, not a *purus putus homo*, but the *Incarnate Son of God*."<sup>1</sup>

The plural *ἀνθρώπων* is used because Christ's humanity represented that which is by nature common to all men.

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, after Theophylact and Chrysostom: compare Fritzsche, *Rom.* viii. 3.

Thus Hooker, *E.P.*, v. cap. 52, § 3, writes: "It pleased not the Word or Wisdom of God to take to itself some one person among men, for then should that one have been advanced which was assumed and no more, but Wisdom, to the end she might save many, built her house of that Nature which is common unto all; she made not this or that man her habitation, but dwelt in us."

ix. The next participial clause, *καὶ σχήματι εὔρεθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος*, belonging to the following verb *ἐταπείνωσεν*, declares what Christ appeared to be in the eyes of men, and so prepares the way for the statement of that further humiliation to which He submitted at their hands. As *μορφή* and *ὁμοίωμα* describe what He was in Himself as Man, so *σχῆμα* denotes the entire outwardly perceptible mode and shape of His existence. This meaning is well brought out by Meyer: "Men saw in Christ a human form, bearing, language, action, mode of life, wants and their satisfaction, etc., in general the *state and relations* of a human being, so that in the entire mode of His appearance He made Himself known and was recognised (*εὔρεθεις*) as a man."

The clause gives no real support to the docetic view of Christ's humanity, which Marcion<sup>1</sup> of old, and Baur in modern times (*Paul*, ii. p. 52, E. Tr.) tried to find in it, but rather implies the contrary. In the whole mode and fashion of His life, in every sensible proof whereby a man is recognised and known *as man*, Christ was so recognised and known and *found as man*.

Moreover the docetic view of the passage is utterly excluded by its spirit, as is very ably shown by Dr. Bruce, *Humiliation of Christ*, p. 31: "The form of a servant ascribed to the Incarnate One implies likeness to men in their present condition in all possible respects; for how could one be in earnest with the servant's work whose humanity was

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *c. Marcion*, v. cap. 20.

in any sense doctic? Then, from the mind in which the Incarnation took its origin the complete likeness of Christ's humanity to ours may be inferred with great confidence. He who was not minded to retain His equality with God, was not likely to assume a humanity that was a make-believe or a sham. It would be His desire to be in all things 'like unto His brethren.'"

x. The words *He humbled Himself* mark a distinct and further step in that self-humiliation which began when He emptied Himself of His Godlike majesty and glory. Both acts were voluntary (as is expressly shown by the use of the word *éavτόν* in each case), both sprang from the same mind and spirit of loving self-sacrifice, and both were accompanied by the same self-consciousness of deity,<sup>1</sup> which is implied in the fact that, as is shown above, He was still *subsisting in the form of God*. It is this continuous self-consciousness of the Son of God that gives the true measure of His transcendent humility in every act of submission to His Father's will, in suffering patiently endured, in man's ingratitude meekly borne, and finally in obedience *unto death even the death of the cross*.

xi. *vv.* 9-11. The extreme and final depth of Christ's self-humiliation in submitting to His shameful death finds its immediate and necessary reward in an exaltation proportionately great. Thus the Apostle's exhortation to the Philippians to *have the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus* is finally enforced by the promise of a glorious reward for themselves, which, though not expressed, is necessarily implied in this supreme fulfilment of the divine law that *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. It is important to observe that this exaltation applies to Christ

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, p. 97 (E. Trs.): "The self-consciousness of Christ necessarily remained the self-consciousness of the Son of God developing Himself humanly."

primarily and properly in His human nature only. This distinction was carefully maintained by Athanasius and other Fathers against the Arians, who, denying the eternal generation of the Son, argued from the "*wherefore*" in this passage, that, being exalted as the reward of His work on earth, Christ was "therefore called both Son and God, without being very Son."<sup>1</sup> To this Athanasius replies that, "As Christ died and was exalted as man, so, as man, is He said to receive what, as God, He ever had, that even such a grant of grace might reach unto us."<sup>2</sup>

"For as He was ever worshipped as being the Word, and *subsisting in the form of God*, so being the same, and having become man, and been called Jesus, He none the less has the whole creation under foot and bending their knees to Him in His Name, and confessing that the Word's becoming flesh, and undergoing death in flesh, has not happened against the glory of His Godhead, but '*to the glory of the Father.*' For it is the Father's glory that man, made and then lost, should be found again; and when dead, that he should be made alive, and should become God's temple."<sup>3</sup>

We may now look back for a moment on the results of our interpretation, so far as they affect the inferences that may, or may not, rightly be drawn from the passage in regard to the Person and Natures of Christ in His state of humiliation.

1. We have seen that the word *ὑπάρχων*, *subsisting*, as used by St. Paul, denotes both the pre-existence and the continued existence of Christ *in the form of God*; pp. 163-169.

2. In illustration and confirmation of Bishop Lightfoot's interpretation of the word *μορφή* as "essential form," it has been shown that this sense was well known to contem-

<sup>1</sup> Athan., *c. Arian.*, i. § 37.

<sup>2</sup> § 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*

poraries of St. Paul, that it was adopted generally by the early Greek Fathers, and advisedly restored to our English Bible by the Translators of the Authorised Version in A.D. 1611; pp. 169-173.

3. We have examined the opposite theory of those who contend that the *form* is separable from the *nature* and *essence*, that they can exist without it, and that in the Incarnation the Son of God did in fact empty Himself of the *form*, while retaining the essential nature, of deity. This error has been traced to its source in the false definitions of Zanchi; and it has been shown that the Son could not possibly empty Himself of the *form* of God without thereby ceasing to be God in any true sense, pp. 173-176.

4. Next we have seen that ἴσα Θεῶ denotes the manifold circumstances of glory and majesty, or the particular modes of manifestation, which were an adequate expression of the divine nature of the Son, but not inseparable from it, pp. 242-245.

5. It has been seen that the meaning of the clause οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῶ, and its direct antithesis to ἀλλ' ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, clearly prove that what the Son of God laid aside at the Incarnation was that equality of conditions, such as glory, majesty, and honour, which He possessed in His pre-existent state, and to which He prayed to be restored, in John xvii. 5: *And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was*, p. 246.

6. We have seen how the Apostle sets forth on the other hand the fulness of Christ's humanity in a climax advancing from its most general to its most special features,—from that *form of a servant* which includes all God's creatures as

*ministers of His who do His pleasure,—to that likeness of men which unites Him with us in our true nature as made in the image of God,—and finally to that outward guise and fashion, in which He was seen as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, humbling Himself yet further in obedience to His Father's will unto death, even the death of the cross, pp. 254–259.*

St. Paul has thus shown us in brief outline the essential features of the Incarnation, the perfect Godhead and perfect Manhood united in one Divine Person, and “never to be divided,” seeing that the Human nature, denoted in the name Jesus, is now highly exalted in inseparable union with the Divine.

But as to the manner in which those two natures are united in one Person,—as to the degree in which the Deity was limited or the Humanity exalted by their union, *during Christ's life on earth*, the Apostle has said nothing whatever in this passage.

In fact, the precise manner of this union has been justly described by one of the best English divines of a former age as “a mystery the most to be admired by all, and least possible to be expressed by any living man, of all the mysteries whose belief we profess in the Apostle's Creed, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity alone excepted.”<sup>1</sup>

If then the conclusions warranted by the language of St. Paul leave much still unexplained and incomprehensible to man's understanding in the mystery of Christ's Holy Incarnation, they may yet be justly said to reveal as much as is needed for the confirmation of our faith.

The continuance in Christ of *the form of God* assures us that at least the moral attributes of the Godhead are faithfully represented in the one perfect image of the Father,

<sup>1</sup> Jackson, *On the Creed*, vii. c. 30.

His Incarnate Word. And thus His every act of tender compassion, of patient endurance, and of loving self-sacrifice shines out in its perfect beauty as a revelation of God's own nature, and of His gracious disposition towards us.

If on the other hand *the form of God* is laid aside in *taking the form of a servant*, and the influence of the Divine nature thus suppressed, as in kenotic theories, the life of Christ on earth may still serve for our example, by showing what *man* may possibly attain when endued with the fullness of grace and power by the Holy Spirit; but by ceasing to be a direct revelation of the character of God it loses the power "to clothe eternal love with breathing life."<sup>1</sup>

E. H. GIFFORD.

### THE DISSOLUTION OF RELIGION.

MARK XII. 38-40. MATTHEW XXIII. LUKE XX. 45-47 (XI. 37-52).

BEFORE Jesus left the Temple for the last time He spoke at less or greater length upon the characteristic features of Jewish religion as they were incessantly obtruded on His notice. Its various types and representatives, scribes and Pharisees, lawyers and Herodians, had assailed Him one after another with tempting questions; the whole moral phenomenon had been, as it were, paraded before Him; and it was natural that when He had cleared the field of His insidious enemies He should speak out the impression they made upon Him. In Mark and Luke all we find is a few lines warning the disciples, "in the hearing of all the people," to beware of the scribes, with their ambitious vanity, hypocrisy, and greed; in Matthew there is a long discourse, addressed to "the multitudes and the disciples," in which the religion of the scribes and Pharisees is elaborately characterized, and a sevenfold woe pronounced upon

<sup>1</sup> Hutton, *Theological Essays*, p. 289.