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THE KENOTIC THEORY OF CHRISTOLOGY
RECONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE
AND THE CHALCEDONIAN DEFINITION.

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INTRODUCTION

JESUS CHRIST is the centre of Christianity. In the very first decade of Christian history the disciples were first called 'Christians' at Antioch, and the characterisation has remained apt and true throughout the whole of that history. For the Christian, Jesus Christ was and is, Master and Lord. Long before the Christians of Bithynia sang hymns to Christ as to God, Jesus Christ was proclaimed in the primitive Kerugma as the living, divine Lord, King, Judge and Saviour of men. To Him the first Christians held an attitude of trust and prayer, and paid to Him the worship which as strict monotheists they could pay only to God. In His name alone was salvation to be attained. Joseph called the holy child Jesus, but by the close of the New Testament, to the simple name of Jesus some four score names and titles have been added in the endeavour to express His meaning for God and man, the revelation He had brought and the redemption He had wrought.¹

The earliest Christian creed was 'Jesus is Lord', Kurios, the Septuagint equivalent for the divine name. This was virtually to ascribe to Christ all that can be ascribed to God Himself. Yet, in spite of this, and in spite of all the grandiloquent titles which He bears, the New Testament falls short of the plain assertion that Christ is God.² It could not be otherwise. It was impossible for the Jew formally to equate Christ with God. For him the Shema

1 V. Taylor, The Names of Jesus.

2 If we except Rom. 9⁵.

was the very bedrock of religion: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God." Our Lord Himself had re-affirmed the truth of these words. In Apostolic Christianity all the resources of language are employed to express the loftiest adoring estimate of Jesus Christ, but He is not said to be God, for that presumably would be to introduce a second God; and yet He is the pre-existent One, God's agent in creation; and He is the Holy One, God's agent in re-creation, the Redeemer of the world; and He is divine.

This paradox of the divinity of Christ and the unity of God was bequeathed to the Gentile Greek-speaking Church, and it brought about a new and revolutionary conception of the Godhead. The great dynamic for thought was the assurance of salvation in Christ. Redemption was conceived as a divine work which demanded in the Saviour the very fulness of divinity, and this demand burst the bands of simple monotheism to produce a trinitarian conception of Deity. At all costs Christ must be included in the Godhead. The same pressure of soteriology guaranteed the complete manhood of the Saviour, a truth which had suffered under the inroads of Gnosticism. It was felt that unless the Divine Christ had assumed the whole and complete human personality in its entirety our salvation was incomplete and insecure. Thus the Church was impelled by the data of the New Testament, her own experience of Christ and the force of logic, to establish Christ as the Second Person of a Divine Trinity, who was made man for our salvation. Hence the Church's adoring confession

of Jesus Christ as true God and true man. More than ever is Christ the living centre of Christianity. Indeed it is hardly an exaggeration to say that, on the intellectual side at least, Christianity is Christology.

"Blessed be Jesus Christ true God and true man." This for Christian faith is the crown and culmination of the first six centuries of the Church, the classical period of Christian theology. But immediately it posed a further problem, and one which yet awaits an adequate solution. It is the subject of this thesis: How, asks the kenotic theologian, can we make such a confession? If perfect God were joined to complete man would there not be two? As Apollinarius said long ago, in this sense a man-God is as unthinkable as a centaur. It is a fundamental axiom of logic that two perfect entities cannot become one without change in one or both of them. Again, the Gospel portrait presents us with an historical figure, a human personality, a single consciousness. In what way can such a person be said to be truly divine? Would not the intrusion of the divine element inevitably destroy or distort the human? In accordance with the Definition of Chalcedon we confess to both the divine and human in Christ, for that is revealed from faith to faith; but how, intellectually, may we conceive of the One Christ who is both true God and true man, of the Theanthropic Person?

Most attempts, whether ancient or modern, to answer such a

question may be ranged under one or the other of two rival Christologies; and any Christology which fails to satisfy is invariably dubbed one or the other. Both originated in the classic period of Christian theology. Was there a man called Jesus, in whom dwelt the Spirit of God to the maximum degree possible, leading a divine life? Or did God the Son, without ceasing to be God in all His fulness, live on earth a human life, by virtue of an hypostatic union? The one is Antiochene, associated with the name of Nestorius; the other is Alexandrian, associated with St. Cyril.

Both of these theories which evolved out of the great Christological discussion of the fourth and fifth centuries emphasised fundamental principles which must henceforward find a place in any Christological theory claiming to be orthodox. Certain Antiochene thinkers, including Nestorius himself, regarded Jesus Christ as both divine and human, but they never succeeded in making any adequate statement of the union of both in one undivided personality and only succeeded in convincing their opponents that they really believed in two Sons of God. But even more than their seemingly dual conception of Christ, the distinguishing mark of the School of Antioch was the clear perception of the full, complete and concrete humanity of our Lord, their emphasis upon the Gospel presentation of His human consciousness and moral growth, and their realisation that

Redemption to be effective must be achieved in and through human nature itself. In any Christology the completeness of Christ's humanity is as indispensable as His divinity, and it was this emphasis which the School of Antioch contributed to Christology, and is a *sine qua non* of any modern presentation of Christ's person.

But equally essential to an adequate statement of the Person of Christ is the unity of personality for which Cyril of Alexandria fought so tenaciously. The Antiochenes were unable to explain how the human and divine cohere in a single life, in the one personality of the Lord Christ. They were content to speak of a mere "conjunction" or "contact" or "godly accord". For Cyril Christ constitutes a single Person and that Person divine. Redemption is a divine work for "if the Word did not suffer for us humanly He did not accomplish our redemption divinely; if He who suffered for us was mere man and but the organ of deity we are not in fact redeemed".¹ The divine person of the Logos added to Himself human nature. Redemption was achieved through a human medium but it was effected by a divine Person by means of a hypostatic union. But the unity achieved by Cyril is physical rather than ethical, and full justice is not done to the manhood of Christ. Christ becomes the subject of human experience while remaining the subject of divine experience. Christ is not two different persons but He acted "in two different ways".² So that neither Antioch nor Alexandria achieved a satisfactory

1 Bonwetsch, Grundriss, 90, cited by H.R. Mackintosh, Doctrine of the Person of Christ, p.207.

2 Frag. hom. 15, Pusey v.p.474.

solution to the Christological problem. While the former was held up in its attempt to provide the unity of the person, the latter was in difficulties over the completeness of the manhood.

Taken together both these Christologies contain the saving facts about the Person of Christ which are set forth in the Definition of Chalcedon. This credal statement embodies the Church's belief in the true divinity, humanity and unity of personality of Jesus Christ, guarding against the danger of Nestorianism on the one hand and of exaggerated Cyrillianism in the form of Eutychianism on the other. In other words it preserves the peculiar emphases of Antioch and Alexandria; but it does not make any attempt to shew how the divinity and humanity are combined in one Christ. As a safeguard of true doctrine it is admirable, but it offers no explanation of the intellectual problem, and fails to avoid the danger so clearly seen by Cyril. Prestige remarks that Theodore and Nestorius were content to leave the union of the two natures a complete mystery, but Cyril, although he too can speak of *ἡ ἀνεκφραστός ἔνωσις* (the ineffable unity) saw that misconceptions and heresies were bound to recur until theology had supplied a positive doctrine of the one Lord Christ.¹ This Chalcedon failed to provide. Yet traditionally, the Definition of Chalcedon has been treated as though it were a positive doctrine in so far as it has generally been identified with a particular and to-day-unacceptable form of explication. It is interpreted in the language of Leo and

1 G.L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics*, p.157.

in fifth century metaphysical categories. It has been too often forgotten that it is the Church's Definition which is *de fide*, and not the Tome of Leo, and that the Church distinguishes between a credal statement and any explication of it couched in the thought-forms of a particular age when those thought-forms have ceased to be serviceable. The witness of Chalcedon is to the One Divine-human person howsoever we seek to understand it; but unfortunately in subsequent theology the Definition of Chalcedon has become almost identified with Leo's teaching. Christ is set forth as acting alternately in one or other of two disparate natures, thence follow the two wills divine and human, and finally two distinct intellects. Such teaching has indeed, as Mascall says, "proved a real stumbling-block to most modern English Christologists"¹, while the same teaching popularised by Knox and Sheed² is quite unintelligible to the modern man. Leo³ writes:

"He who, as man, is tempted by the devil's subtlety, is the same to whom, as God, angels pay dutious service. To hunger, to thirst, to be weary, and to sleep, is evidently human. But to satisfy five thousand men with five loaves, and to give to the Samaritan woman that living water, to draw which can secure him that drinks of it from ever thirsting again; to walk on the surface of the sea with feet that sink not, and by rebuking the storm to bring down the 'uplifted waves' is unquestionably divine. As then -

1 E.L. Mascall, *Christ, the Christian and the Church*, p.23.

2 R. Knox, *In Soft Garments*; F.J. Sheed, *Theology and Sanity*.

3 W. Bright, *St. Leo on the Incarnation*, p.116.

to pass by many points - it does not belong to the same nature to weep with feelings of pity over a dead friend, and, after the mass of stone had been removed from the grave where he had lain four days, by a voice of command to raise him up to life again; or to hang on the wood, and to make all the elements tremble after daylight had been turned into night; or to be transfixed with nails, and to open the gates of paradise to the faith of the robber; so it does not belong to the same nature to say 'I and the Father are one' and to say 'The Father is greater than I!' But this teaching is even more frankly popularised by Dr. Sheed who asks us to believe that if our Lord wanted to lift a load He could have lifted it either by the effortless fiat of the divine will or by the hard effort of the human muscles!

The modern objections to this sort of exposition of Christ's divine-human personality are the abnormal anthropology, its incompatibility with the New Testament record and its perilous approach to Docetism. But it is not only in modern times that such a reading of Chalcedon has proved unacceptable. Prestige¹ writes:

"If Christ were truly one being, was it tolerable that under the cover of the two Natures He should be represented as the possessor, in practice, of a divided personality, acting now humanly, now divinely? If not, must not all His actions be attributed to a single divine-human operation? So Monergism arose, asserting that in the Redeemer was only one principle of

1 Op. cit., p.145.

action, operating jointly in the two natures. But Chalcedonian theory could not accept this. The human and divine energies were indeed concurrent, but two complete natures imply two distinct principles of activity, the one divine, the other human. Then the compromise was expressed in different terms. Even Theodore and Nestorius had attributed to Christ both a single energy and a single will, meaning, no doubt, a single practical result from the co-operation of divine and human faculties. Might it not be said, asked the Monothelites, that Christ possessed but one will? Again Chalcedonian logic stood in the way, and necessarily so. A human nature without a human faculty of will would be an utter unreality, and so after furious controversies and persecutions two wills were also established". The result was that the whole Monophysite body remained unreconciled, and they are still unreconciled for their churches remain to this day.

This simple juxtaposition of two natures, two wills, two intellects, cannot possibly be harmonised with the impression of the Incarnate Life given by the New Testament. Throughout the entire Gospel record the impression is one of perfect unity, simplicity and coherence. Whether human or divine, or both, the consciousness of Christ is a single consciousness; immediately we try to think of Jesus as doing this as God and suffering that as man we introduce an artificial, bifurcating influence that destroys the simplicity and integrity of the portrait and even renders it unspiritual and unethical. Both mind and heart resent a reading of the Scriptures

by a key, and one moreover which does not elucidate but confounds a frank and simple record which even the plowman at his beam can understand. There is something forced and unnatural which sets a halo around the head of Jesus as He moves among the awestruck villagers of Galilee. A modern history-loving generation instinctively rejects such a picture of the historical Jesus. Unlike Tertullian, the modern man is not likely to believe because it is absurd or impossible. The mystery will always be there, but it is better to shed light upon it than merely to mystify. For as Prestige¹ remarks again: "Jesus Christ disappears in the smoke-screen of the two-nature philosophy. Formalism triumphs, and the living figure of the evangelical Redeemer is desiccated to a logical mummy". A passage from Mackintosh² is also pertinent: "A Christ", he writes, "whom men cannot place luminously in relation to life or thought is a Christ with no reality for them.... It is all but impossible for a thoughtful man to adore Jesus Christ, finding in Him blessedness and eternal life, and not be conscious of a powerful desire to reach coherent views of His Person". In the twentieth century there can be no peaceful co-existence of the divine nature alongside a human nature in the personality of Christ, along the lines of the Tome of Leo.

In the post-Reformation Church, however, a third type of Christology has arisen which claims to set forth a Christ which,

1 Op. cit. p.146.

2 H.R. Mackintosh, Doctrine of the Person of Christ, p.300.

while true to the Church's adoring estimate of the Lord Jesus Christ, is more congruous with the facts of the New Testament, and renders the Incarnation in a manner more intelligible to modern thought. This type of Christology, which has taken various forms, has come to be called 'Kenotic', and it has sometimes found expression in forms that have aroused the sharpest controversy. In this respect 'Kenosis' is not unlike the famous test-words 'homoousion' and 'theotokos'; it has, however, the advantage of being scriptural. But in spite of its more exuberant manifestations the principle has gained a respectful place in modern theological thought.

The word 'kenosis' is used to designate a theory of the "self-emptying" of the Son of God of His pre-incarnate mode of being in order that He might live on earth a truly human life; a doctrine of the Incarnation which asserts some kind of modification of the divine nature or divine mode of being as a necessary condition of the personal entry of the Son of God into human life and history. For, it is held, in a sense something in the nature of a kenosis is and must be involved in the Incarnation on any showing. It was certainly a coming at cost, and something in the nature of a scaling down was inevitable when the Infinite descended into the finite. The difficulty is to say, as we shall see, what precisely was the cost involved.

The word derives from Scripture. Writing to the Philippians St. Paul exhorts his readers to follow the pattern of humility set by our Lord Himself "Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a

prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself (*ἐκένωσε*), taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, the death of the cross". It has been suggested that St. Paul is quoting an early Christian hymn, which may remind us of Charles Wesley's use of the passage:

"He left His Father's throne above-
 So free, so infinite His grace-
 Emptied Himself of all but love,
 And bled for Adam's helpless race".

This and similar evangelistic songs of the Church are rather disparaged by Loofs¹ as concessions made by hymnology and popular preaching to the ideas of the masses. Such an explanation of the theology of the hymns of Luther and the Wesleys is ludicrous. May the kenotic idea not be popular because of its intense religious power? The apostle is exhorting the Philippians to do nothing through vain glory, to count others better than themselves, not to look to their own things but to the things of others; and as he meditates on the sublime 'otherness' of his divine master's life and example his style is lifted in a great rhythmical sweep of thought in describing the example of Christ who shared the majesty of God in His pre-incarnate life but renounced the divine glory to accept all the limitations of the human lot culminating in obedience to death,

1 Article on Kenosis: E.R.E.

even death upon a cross. After marshalling the opinions of several commentators on this passage Dr. Vincent Taylor concludes that while the passage is devotional, not doctrinal, it has Christological implications: "Who can doubt", he asks, "that in this matchless hymn is the creative material of a living Christology?"¹

The scriptural basis of a Kenotic Christology does not, however, depend on a single passage in St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians. The apostle returns to the same theme, the renunciation of the glory of Christ's pre-incarnate life, in 2 Cor. 8⁹ where he says "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich". These hints afforded by St. Paul are re-inforced by the teaching of the Gospels. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus Christ is the Unique and Eternal Son of the Father, and yet it is equally plain that Christ is living a human life. Experience of the most human emotions and limitations are set forth together with the divinest claims in the one historic life. The Spirit will come when Christ's limited earthly life is consummated in glorification. This glory is the resumption of that glory which He had with the Father before the world was.² The Spirit's advent is conceived as a supplement or sequel to the Incarnation. In His flesh Christ is restricted to the here and now, but the Spirit will be available for all men. The Spirit will take of Christ's and declare it to the disciples, with

1 V. Taylor, Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching, p.79.

2 John 17⁵.

this difference, that while Christ's operation was local the Spirit will be universal. The Spirit is Christ in a new mode of being, universal and indwelling in all men's hearts that are open to His access.

The Unique, Eternal Sonship of Christ is also expressed in the Synoptic Gospels¹, and is consistent with a truly human development: He grew physically, mentally, spiritually; He was hungry; He was tempted. He has miraculous powers which He uses as a man: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him".²

The Father is revealed perfectly by the Son, and only by the Son. He speaks with divine authority: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away".³ He is sinless, and His words are infallible; while He reveals again and again a supernatural knowledge, insight and foresight.

Yet while in all this He exhibits a consciousness on a far higher scale than any prophet, it is analogous to the prophetic consciousness. Our Lord is not omniscient for human experiences are attributed to Him which are incompatible with omniscience. He expresses surprise, and asks for information. "He lived in the constant exercise of prayer to God, which is the characteristic

1 Mt. 11²⁷, Mk. 14⁶¹⁻².

2 Acts 10³⁸.

3 Mt. 24³⁵.

utterance of human faith and trust; that human faith and trust of which the Epistle to the Hebrews sees in Jesus the supreme example".¹

Thus the Synoptic record presents us, along with the rest of the New Testament witness, two sets of facts, which indeed are but one set: those which exhibit Jesus Christ as a true man living under truly human conditions, and others which reveal unmistakably that He was at the same time more than man, that He is none other than the Son of God. The inference is that God is living and speaking as man within humanity. God has allowed the measures of manhood to prevail over Him, to use a phrase of St. Cyril, but He remains intrinsically God. God is revealed to us to the highest degree of which humanity is capable in the true human personality of Jesus Christ. Christ's life and death are the supreme manifestation of God's nature as love. At infinite cost God came to share our finite lot. Such a conviction, however we try to express it, is the principle of Kenosis which is firmly based on the historic New Testament witness, and answers to that universal instinct that divinity into humanity 'won't go', unless perchance the Divine should choose to reduce Himself, "empty" Himself, that He might enter in at our lowly door.

Nevertheless Kenotic Christology has its difficulties. Granted that the kenotic rhythm of thought has compelling religious power, and rises to superb expression again and again in the cadences

1 C. Gore, Dissertations. p.82.cp.Heb.2¹³,12².

of the New Testament, it must yet be recognised that many serious problems arise when we come to examine specific kenotic theories. Is God mutable and subject to change? What did God the Son renounce in becoming incarnate? Was Jesus in His incarnate life conscious of His divine origin and nature? Did He abandon only certain attributes? Were these divine attributes really abandoned, or only retracted? What shall we say about Christ's cosmic function and His participation in the Trinitarian life during the period of His incarnation? What part does the principle of Kenosis play in the theology of the Fathers? Is it in harmony with the Definition of Chalcedon? Such are some of the thorny problems which arise upon an examination of the Kenotic hypothesis of Christology, and which will demand some consideration in the following pages.

Since Scripture must be the chief arbiter in Christology the investigation begins with a detailed examination of the modern and patristic exegesis of Philippians 2⁵⁻¹¹ in order to ascertain whether the principle of Kenosis is exegetically defensible. The treatment of Kenosis by the Fathers as:

- (a) concealment (*κρύψις*),
- (b) addition (*πρόσληψις*) and
- (c) reduction of compass or contraction (*μείωσις*)

must then be considered. But even more important than the general verdict of the Fathers upon Kenosis is its standing in relation to the ecumenical decision of the Church embodied in the Definition of

Chalcedon. This must be regarded as the acid test of all Christology. After the age of the Fathers the principle of Kenosis next comes into prominence in post-Reformation theology. During the Giessen-Tübingen Controversy the patristic Krupsis re-appears and, as an alternative, Kenosis is employed in the sense of possession and occasional non-use of the divine powers. At this point a radical distinction takes place. In patristic thought there is never any question of the compatibility of Kenosis with the continuing and unimpaired life of the Logos in the Eternal Trinity. The Logos during His incarnation continues to be what He always was. After Giessen Kenosis is used much more radically. While the Kenosis continues to be set forth by some theologians as an act on the part of the Divine Logos relative to the Incarnation only, in other hands it has serious repercussions on the life of the Logos within the Blessed Trinity. The Incarnation is set forth in such manner as involves an actual diminution of power and activity on the part of the Logos, and in this form the principle of Kenosis is employed in varying degrees by a diversity of kenotic theories. Of these three main types will be distinguished and assessed: those which involve

(a) a laying down of the physical or relative attributes

(as represented by Thomasius and Fairbairn);

(b) a parting with all the divine attributes both physical and ethical (as represented by Gess);

(c) an abandonment of the divine mode of existence in order

to assume the human (as represented by Ebrard, Martensen, Gore, Forsyth, Mackintosh and V. Taylor).

Some attempt will be made to counter the various criticisms to which these theories have been exposed, and the principle of Kenosis will be defended as a feasible concept in theology. But it is the Kenotic rhythm of thought which will be defended rather than any specific theory although among the kenotic theories examined the theory of P.T. Forsyth will be strongly commended and preferred.

2. EXEGETICAL:

(A) Modern Exegesis of Phil. 2⁵⁻¹¹

Philippians 2⁵⁻¹¹

⁵ τούτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,
⁶ ὃς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ
εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, ⁷ ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν
δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος·
καὶ σχήματι εὔρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ⁸ ἐταπείνωσεν
ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου
δὲ σταυροῦ. ⁹ διὸ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν
καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα,
¹⁰ ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων
καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων, ¹¹ καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα
ἐξομολογήσῃται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν
Θεοῦ πατρός.

The passage is one of unusual exegetical complexity; indeed, Professor Bruce remarks that "the diversity of opinion is enough to fill the student with despair and to afflict him with intellectual paralysis".¹ But it is essential to establish a sure biblical foundation and the task cannot be evaded. Yet it must be borne in mind that the utmost we can expect is an interpretation which admits of a kenotic application and not a proof of any particular theory. It will be helpful if we set out clearly at the beginning the chief problems for discussion and bear them in mind as we summarise the views of the leading commentators.

(1) Who is the subject of the Kenosis? The pre-incarnate Christ, the Logos ἄσαρκος or the incarnate Christ, the Logos ἐνσαρκος ? Or the historical Jesus?

(2) What is the meaning of the rare word ἄρπαιγμός which occurs only here in the New Testament? Loofs classifies the meanings of the word as follows:

1. Raptio - act of robbery or usurpation.

2a = ἄρπαιγμα Senu malo: res rapta.

: res rapienda.

2b = ἔρμαλον In neutral sense: res habita.

(a lucky find) : res habenda.

The implications for the exegesis of the passage of these five possible meanings of ἄρπαιγμός are as follows:

1 A.B. Bruce, Humiliation of Christ, p.8.

1. Equality with God was the inherent right, or natural possession of our Lord.

2a α has a similar meaning, but stresses not the act of usurpation but rather the product of such an act.

2a β implies that equality with God lay before Him as a prize, which He preferred not to seize, but pursued instead a life of lowly service.

2b α suggests some such rendering as: "Christ did not treat His equality with God as treasure trove to be greedily clutched or ostentatiously displayed, but resigned it for us men and for our salvation".

2b β again emphasises Christ's refusal to secure the treasure of equality with God in preference to a life of lowly service.

2a α and 2b α treat equality with God as the possession of the Discarnate Christ; 2a β and 2b β would be consonant with an interpretation of the passage in terms of the historical Jesus. No. 1 must also be taken in connexion with the former view.

The apparatus poses three questions:

1. Was the equality with God a pre-incarnate possession which He did not wish to hold on to, but willingly renounced?
2. Or was the equality with God which He possessed (either before or after the Incarnation) something which He did not regard as robbery or usurpation, but as an inalienable right, and of which He continued to remain in possession?

3. Or was equality with God a future possession which He did not propose to seize by force but would attain by a life of lowly service?

(3) What does the Kenosis involve? Does it mean a literal self-emptying, some surrender of divinity, or a surrender of the divine mode of being in order to make a human incarnation possible? Or merely an assumption of the form of a servant while remaining as He was before?

(4) What is the name above every name, and what is implied by lordship? Did Christ achieve something greater than He formerly possessed? Or is the lordship something which He already possesses *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* but which is now plain for all to behold? Or is it the human Jesus who is exalted to share the divine life?

As the views of J.B. Lightfoot¹ in his Commentary on the Philippians still remain the classical exposition of the passage in modern exegesis, these will be given in detail while the remaining summaries will be confined in the main to significant points. For Lightfoot the subject is the pre-existent Christ who becomes incarnate at *ἀλλὰ*. A clear distinction is made between *μορφῇ* and *σχήμα*. The former still retains something of its philosophical connotation, Lightfoot arguing that philosophic terms and ideas gradually permeate society till they reach its lower strata. 'Words stamped in the mint of the philosopher pass into

1 Ep.Phil. 1885 pp.110-15, 127-37.

general currency, losing their sharpness of outline meanwhile, but in the main retaining their impress and value'. *μορφή* therefore means the specific and intrinsic character of a thing as opposed to the notion of instability and changeableness associated with *σχῆμα*, and he illustrates the distinction of usage in various parts of the New Testament. In the present context he takes *μορφή* to apply to the attributes of the Godhead, it suggests the same idea expressed elsewhere by Paul in *εἰκὼν* and by the Johannine *ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ*. He concludes that *μορφή Θεοῦ* implies the true divine nature of our Lord, *μορφή δούλου* the true human nature, and *σχῆματι ὡς ἄνθρωπος* the externals of the human nature. *ὑπάρχων* indicates the continuance of an antecedent state. It is not necessarily 'eternal', he remarks, but coupled with the previous phrase it must imply eternal existence and is therefore equal to the sense of John 1¹: *ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος* If *ἀρπαγμὸς* is taken in the active sense of 'robbery', 'usurpation' (*raptio*) then the expression asserts that the equality with God was our Lord's natural right and His present possession, and this is clearly out of context, both with what precedes and with what follows, as Lightfoot points out. We expect the words "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" to be followed, not by the assertion of a right but by a renunciation, while the particles *οὐχ* and *ἀλλὰ* imply a contrast to follow. The rendering appears in the A.V. owing to the influence of the Latin Fathers who mostly translate 'rapinam' in

the active sense without reference to the original, but it is, as we shall see, unsupported by a single Greek Father. The passive concrete meaning 'a prize' fits the context admirably: Christ 'did not regard His being on an equality with God as something to be clung to at all costs but willingly renounced it'. Both renderings are lexically possible though the former is the more usual. If St. Paul had intended the passive meaning it is natural to expect that he would have used the LXX ἄρπαγμα which is the usual passive form for the thing seized. Lightfoot regards Paul's use of ἄρπαγμὸν as equal to ἄρπαγμα and takes it to mean 'a treasure to be clutched and retained at all hazards'. In the clause ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε the emphatic position of the pronoun indicates the voluntary condescension involved, and Lightfoot translates 'emptied, stripped Himself' of the insignia of divine majesty. He renders μορφήν δούλου λαβῶν 'by taking the form of a slave', the action of λαβῶν being coincident in time with ἐκένωσε. The μορφή is here exactly as in v.6, the form of being which truly corresponds to the being of a servant or slave. The participle γενόμενος like λαβῶν, marks the entrance into a new state of being, and both are contrasted with ὑπάρχων. The participle εὑρεθεῖς is likewise indicative of change, introducing a new stage in the development of the thought. The whole phrase implies external semblance. This does not mean that Christ's humanity was but a

semblance, rather it means that Christ was not metamorphosed into a man but assumed true and complete humanity.

Upon Christ's great act of humility in becoming man by voluntary self-renunciation, and the consequent path of humiliation and obedience unto death, vv.9-11 set the Divine Seal. Exaltation follows in fulfilment of the divine law which He Himself enunciated, *ὁ ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται* (Lk.14¹¹,18¹⁴); and He is given the name which is above every name. In Lightfoot's opinion "*ὄνομα*" does not here denote a definite appellation but is meant as title or dignity. The use of 'the name' in the Old Testament to suggest the Divine Majesty as the object of adoration and praise in such phrases as 'to praise the name, to bless the name of God, etc.' will suggest the true meaning; but if, he adds, St. Paul were referring to any one term, *Kurios* would best explain the reference for it occurs in the context in v.11. He rejects the name 'Jesus' for the bestowal of the name is represented as following upon the humiliation and death of the Son of Man and because Jesus was the personal name of many others besides. Jesus is exalted that Jesus may be adored and confessed as Lord with thanksgiving. Lightfoot draws attention to 'the name of Jesus', not the name Jesus. Foerster and Quell¹ agree with Lightfoot: "The name, which the repetition of the article indicates to be a very special one, can only be the name of *κύριος*. It has been given to Jesus as the divine answer (*διὸ*) to his mortal sufferings in obedience. At

1 Bible Key Words: Lord, p.98.

the name which Jesus, who took upon Himself the form of a slave, has received, i.e. in the presence of Him who was in history and has been raised on high, the whole world bows". The phrase 'In the name of Jesus' is equivalent to 'to the name of Jesus' as is indicated by the confession in the parallel clause.

M.R. Vincent¹ is in close agreement with Lightfoot. 'Christ Jesus' includes both the pre-incarnate and incarnate life of Christ and is the subject of the two kinds of statement which follow and are predicated of both His pre-incarnate and incarnate state. He is in substantial agreement with Lightfoot as regards *μορφῇ Θεοῦ* but considers 'form' an inadequate rendering, though no better word is available. It means that expression of being which is identified with the essential nature and character of God. Such an expression of God cannot be conceived by us, though it may be conceived and apprehended by pure spiritual intelligences. With Lightfoot he equates *μορφῇ Θεοῦ* with *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ* and accepts his interpretation of *ἀρπαγμὸν*. The word *ἐκένωσε* is not intended in any metaphysical sense but "as a strong and graphic expression of the completeness of His self-renunciation". The *μορφῇ δούλου* is exactly as in v.6, the form of being which truly corresponds to the being of a servant or slave.

ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων expresses the fact that His mode of manifestation resembled what men are - this leaves room for the other side of His nature, the divine, in the likeness of which

1 I.C.C. 1897, pp.57-63.

He did not appear. *σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος*. He is now visible to human eyes. What Christ is in Himself has been described; here is set forth what He appeared in the eyes of men. The name which is above every name is 'Jesus Christ', combining the human name, which points to the conquest won in the flesh, and the Messianic name 'the Anointed of God', and Vincent notes that the two factors of the name are successively taken up in vv.10-11.

The illuminating commentary of Karl Barth¹ is devotional rather than critical and for a complete picture of his Christology must be supplemented by his dogmatic writings. He begins from the point at which Paul's thought starts out: *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ* : Christ is equal with God. This equality with God He did not regard as "spoil". *ἄρπαγμὸν ἡγεῖσθαι* means to cling tooth and nail to something. He does not need to do this because He is sure of being equal with God. That is why He can empty Himself of the form of God. Thus for Barth *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ* is a different thing from the *μορφῇ θεοῦ*. Being in the form of God means to be God in outward appearance, immediately and directly knowable as such. It was of this form of God He emptied Himself, taking on the form of a servant and becoming like men. In doing so He remains God's equal - it is an act of sovereign divine freedom. He puts off the form of God, i.e. "the whole knowability of His being". He is now incognito, no longer the picture of His proper, original, divine being, but solely the picture of a human being.

1 Ep.Phil. 1927 pp.59-68.

He quotes the dictum of Calvin: "The humilitas carnis covers the divine majestas like a curtain". There must be no mitigation of the ἐκένωσε or the ὁμοίωμα. The second term stresses "the likeness, and not in some way the hidden unlikeness". This self-emptying brings Him down into human nature, and then, having thus become like men "he takes in that capacity the same step into the depths again". Instead of assuming some pinnacle of the human scene He humbled Himself and went the length of death, even death on a cross, thus enduring a double obscurity.

The exaltation and conferment of the name above all names are not a reward for self-denial and service. What Paul means to say is that it is precisely He who became man and was crucified that is exalted; and there is no mention of the resumption of the form of God. The humiliation is not cancelled: Christ, God's equal, who emptied Himself and humiliated Himself, is exalted. The name above all names is Kurios. It indicates a different thing from the form of God of v.6 and takes the place of it. Christ might now be called the new God-form of the Revealer and Reconciler, and as such He is to receive universal acknowledgment. In His abasement and humiliation He is Lord over all. It will be seen how closely Barth's exegesis corresponds to one of his major theological themes, "the hidden" and "the revealed" God.

In his commentary which appeared in 1928, a year after Barth, J.H. Michael¹ ranks himself with "the majority of interpreters" who

1 Moffatt com. Phil. 1928, pp.82-97.

think that the passage speaks of the pre-existent Christ. He takes Paul to mean that Christ was divine by nature, but not equal with God - that was achieved at the Exaltation. ἄρπαγμὸν can be taken in a passive sense to mean either 'booty to be retained' or 'booty to be snatched'. Michael adopts the latter meaning which goes with the view that equality with God is not something already possessed by Christ but something attainable only through self-emptying and by the favour of God. There is an implied contrast in the minds of some with Adam, or, as in the opinion of Dibelius¹, with the arrogant behaviour of Satan and other denizens of the spirit-world whose self-seeking spirit is depicted in the "Ascension of Isaiah" 10,29. Christ took upon Him the nature of a servant, which, he holds, is quite compatible with the retention of His divine nature. Paul does not specify of what He emptied Himself, whether of His divine nature, of His equality with God or of Himself in the sense of pouring Himself out as in Isaiah 53¹² where the prophet says of the Servant that "he poured himself out unto death". That this verse from Isaiah has some connexion with the passage would seem to be confirmed by the fact that in the very next clause mention is made of a servant, and that in v.8 Christ is said to have been obedient unto death. (The various echoes of the passage in Deutero-Isaiah will occupy our attention more directly later on). But in whatever way He emptied Himself it was by taking the form of a servant that He did empty Himself. The word 'form', as in

1 M. Dibelius (Handbuch zum N.T.) p.61.

v.6, points to the reality of the new state, while the word 'servant' is the common word for slave and points to the completeness of Christ's surrender to the will of God. He agrees with Vincent that ἐκένωσε is not used in a metaphysical sense "but as a strong and graphic expression of the completeness of His self-renunciation". This self-renunciation is continued in the path of humiliation He trod in His incarnate life. "Being made in the likeness of men" sets forth His real likeness to other men. The Exaltation is not a reward, but a consequence of the divine law enunciated in Matt. 23¹², Lk. 14¹¹, 18^{14b}. The name above every name is Lord, the LXX form of Yahweh. Verse 11 speaks of a universal confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father. Here is struck "the final chord of the Pauline theology" (Kennedy, Peake's Comm. p.813b). Even the Exaltation finds its climax and completion in the Son's self-surrender to the Father.

In a commentary published as recently as 1959 F.W. Beare¹ interprets the passage in a wide cosmological frame of reference. It is a hymn composed by a gifted writer of St. Paul's circle who had learned from him to think of Christ as 'the Man from Heaven' (1 Cor. 15⁴⁷). The subject is the pre-existent Christ. The 'form of God' indicates a form of existence "which in some sense exhibits Christ's true nature". ἀρπαγμὸν is translated 'plunder': 'counted not as plunder' means that Christ being in assured

1 Ep.Phil. 1959 pp.73-88.

possession of divine dignities did not think of His high estate as a kind of booty which might be His for the seizing. *ἐκένωσε* is translated as Lightfoot 'stripped Himself', He lays aside the insignia of majesty and glory. The 'form of a slave' describes the humanity, the word 'slave' indicating man's bondage under the Elemental Spirits of the universe, the *stocheia* to whom all human life is subject (Gal. 4^{3,9}). He is born into slavery to the Elemental Spirits that He might redeem those who were subject to the same thralldom. 'Being made in the likeness of men' enlarges the scope of the thought of Christ's participation in the life of humanity. 'Likeness' (as in Rom. 8³: note of C.K. Barrett ad loc.) does not suggest any unreality in His humanity, the word is almost a synonym for *μορφή* and *εἰκὼν*, but it leaves room for the thought that the human likeness is not the whole story. The pre-existent Christ renounced the condition of divine glory and assumed the enslaved condition of humanity. "There is no attempt to explain how this transition could take place, or to explore the mystery of the relation between the form of God and the form of a slave. These are theological problems of the highest importance to us, but the solution is not given to us within the words of our hymn".¹

In his "Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching" Dr. Vincent Taylor summarises the views of leading commentators since the middle of last century. Among these he includes J. Eadie² and H.A.W. Meyer³

1 Op.cit. p.83.

2 Ep.Phil. 1859.

3 Comm.N.T. 1876, pp.77-88.

prior to Lightfoot and J.A. Beet¹ and H.A.A. Kennedy² after, and a recent commentator, C. Masson³.

The views of J. Eadie are at most points in agreement with those of Lightfoot. The subject is the pre-existent Christ who possesses the divine nature and becomes incarnate at *ἀλλὰ*. The *μορφή Θεοῦ* is equated with *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ*. He rejects the active meaning 'robbery' for *ἄρπαγμὸν* as out of context and prefers "a thing to be caught at, a catch". *ἐκένωσε* implies a veiling of the *μορφή* and a temporary renunciation of equality with God. The aorist *λαβὼν* is coincident in time with *ἐκένωσε* and the phrase *μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν* is contrasted with *ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων*: Christ "descended with His splendour eclipsed". *ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος* means "He was identical in all respects with other men". *ἐταπείνωσεν* indicates a further act of condescension. The name which is above every name is Jesus.

H.A.W. Meyer refers the relative subject to Christ in His pre-incarnate being. With J. Weiss and V. Taylor⁴ he regards the *μορφή Θεοῦ* as the divine glory or *δόξα*: it indicates the form of being which corresponds to the essence and exhibits the condition. He differs from Lightfoot in preferring the active meaning for

1 Ephesians, Phillippians, Colossians, Philemon, 1890, pp.63-73.

2 Expositor's Greek Testament, 1903, iii. 435-9.

3 L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Phillippiens, 1950, pp.41-9.

4 Op.cit. p.75.

ἄρπαγμὸν which he translates as 'robbing' - "Not as a robbing did He consider the being equal with God". Nevertheless He did not use His equality with God to seize at earthly distinction. The name above every name is Jesus Christ. His exaltation is not a reward but an inevitable sequel. Christ's saying in Mt. 23¹² was gloriously fulfilled in His own case.

J.A. Beet agrees with Meyer in referring the *μορφῇ θεοῦ* to Christ in His pre-existent state, and in his interpretation of *ἄρπαγμὸν* of which the root idea denotes 'taking hold of, or snatching something not yet in our hands'. Thus attainment rather than renunciation is indicated, and Beet translates: "No high-handed self-enrichment did He deem the being equal with God".¹

H.A.A. Kennedy takes *ἄρπαγμὸν* in the sense of 'res rapienda'. The equality with God is a prize that lies before Him which is not to be greedily seized - this the First Adam attempted to do - but attained by a life of humiliation and lowly service. By *ὁμοιώματι* Paul means that Christ's humanity was real, but that it did not express the whole of His nature.² The name conferred is Kurios, the LXX equivalent of the Divine Name. Its attainment constitutes equality with God, which is even greater than *μορφῇ θεοῦ* in the sense that He is now known as such in the eyes of men.

We shall conclude these summaries with an account of Dr. Taylor's

1 Op.cit. p.64.

2 Op.cit. p.438.

own exegesis of the passage.¹ Taylor writes "No apology, I think, is needed for giving at length the opinions of leading commentators.....It seems to me that the only way to enter into the meaning of a sublime, but difficult passage is to summarise the views of many commentators and then to leave the summaries in storage for ten years. By that time the vital phrases stand out in the mind, and we grow familiar with conflicting views, so that out of the welter of opinions we can form conclusions of our own". Such a sentiment obviously gives weight to his own exegesis of which the following is a summary. With maturity of thought and mastery of linguistic detail it combines an acute literary insight.

He sticks close to the paraenetic aim of the passage, which he regards as the key to the interpretation. St. Paul's preliminary exhortations suggest that in speaking of 'the mind of Christ' he intends to describe a supreme act of renunciation on His part. The participle *ὑπάρχων* does not necessarily mean 'being originally', but in this context it can hardly mean less. 'Nature' or 'substance' is too philosophical an explanation of *μορφή* which must refer to a visible form characteristic of Christ's being, just as the 'form of a slave' is that by which the slave is recognised and known. Of this 'form of God' the best thing we can say is that it is His 'glory', the shining light in which, according to Old Testament thought, God was pictured. *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ* is a backward

1 Op.cit. pp.73-9.

reference to 'the form of God'. The view that the two are equal is preferable to the explanation that the phrase describes something achieved in the exaltation even though it remains true that in the exaltation Christ is given the name that is above every name, the name 'Lord'. The thought is that 'the mind that was in Christ Jesus' was the mind of One who possessed, and renounced, heavenly majesty. ἄρπαγμὸν is thus best taken, with Lightfoot, as 'praeda' rather than 'rapina'. Taylor notes, however, that even the rendering 'rapina' would not convey a meaning alien to St. Paul's thought, provided that the parity with God is something possessed; but it seems less apposite to the passage. He remarks that it is quite possible that in the thought there is an implicit contrast with Adam who was tempted to 'be as God, knowing good and evil', and in this case it is natural to think of the Temptation experience recorded in Mt. 4¹⁻¹¹, but the nature of the Temptation in the two instances is so different as to render the contrast doubtful.¹ The idea of renunciation is attested by ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν which he translates as 'emptied' or 'despoiled Himself'. The meaning is weakened if τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ describes a future parity. It is most in accord with the whole passage if the reference is to a pre-incarnate renunciation coincident with the act of 'taking the form of a servant'. The emphasis on renunciation recurs again

1 Allowance must always be made for the fact that often enough the New Testament writers use verbal echoes without necessarily examining the full content in any detail.

in ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος which implies the acceptance of a full humanity, reinforced by 'He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death'. But renunciation is followed by exaltation. Heaven and earth confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. That this is His reward is but half the thought, the exaltation reveals what is true all the time - which is to say that the idea of renunciation persists to the end, and Christ's word is illustrated in Himself: 'If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all' (Mk. 9³⁵).

All the fore-going commentators find their common starting-point in the Discarnate Christ, what might almost be called the Kenotic starting-point; and we must now note a group of exegetes who interpret the subject of the passage as the Incarnate Christ, a view which rules out Kenosis from the start. For C. Masson the subject is the Incarnate Christ in whom the forma Dei and the forma servi co-exist. The Incarnation does not in any way detract from His divine 'condition' (μορφή). But He did not use His divinity as a trampoline¹ (O.E.D. a pair of stilts) to attain equality but attained it by the way of humiliation and service. Ἐταπείνωσεν is a reminiscence of Isa. 53⁷. His view of the passage thus combines the two themes of the Second Adam and the Suffering Servant. The name conferred is the LXX divine name Kurios, but the reference to 'the glory of God' safeguards monotheism.

1 Masson uses 'tremplin'.

This view is clearly reminiscent of the ancient Imago tradition¹ championed by Loofs and has been adopted in recent times by several scholars of the first rank. The incarnate Christ (or possibly the historical Jesus) is regarded as the Second Adam, who, contrary to the first, did not attempt to seize equality with God but received it as a gift for choosing the way of humiliation and death. This view can be strongly presented.

The Adam-Christ contrast is set out thus by F.C. Synge:²

ADAM	JESUS CHRIST
made in the image of God	being in the form of God
thought it a prize to be	thought it not a prize to be
grasped at	grasped at
to be as god,	to be like God,
and strove to be of	but made himself of no
reputation	reputation (A.V.)
and spurned being God's	and took upon him the form
servant,	of a servant,
wishing to be in the	and was made in the like-
likeness of God;	ness of men;
and being found in fashion	and being found in fashion
as a man,	as a man,
he exalted himself	he humbled himself,
and was disobedient	and became obedient unto
unto death.	death, even the death of

1 See below, p.54.

2 Torch Bible Com. Philipians and Colossians, p.29.

the cross. Wherefore God
exalted him.

The Deutero-Isainic reminiscences of the Suffering Servant
may also be shewn in tabular form:

JESUS CHRIST	THE SUFFERING SERVANT ¹
Phil.2 ⁷ <u>ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε</u> ²	Isa.53 ¹² <u>יָשַׁן הִצִּיחַ</u>
<u>μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν</u>	Isa.52 ¹³ the figure of the Servant: <u>דָּבָר</u>
² ⁸ <u>ἑταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν</u>	53 ⁸ <u>ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει</u>
<u>μέχρι θανάτου</u>	53 ⁸ <u>εἰς θάνατον</u>
² ⁹ <u>ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπέρυψωσε</u>	52 ¹³ <u>ὑψωθήσεται</u>
² ¹⁰⁻¹¹	45 ²³ <u>אֲנִי הִנְיָ אֶשְׁׁן דָּבָר</u>

- 1 It is rather curious that the best parallels are partly in the LXX and partly in the Hebrew. If the passage is Pauline did St. Paul consult both versions or does the Hebrew suggest a pre-Pauline origin to the passage worked over by St. Paul in conformity with the LXX? There is probably no difficulty in his knowledge of the Hebrew!
- 2 Zimmerli and Jeremias note that the expression ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε (Phil.2⁷) attested nowhere else in the Greek and grammatically extremely harsh, is an exact rendering of יָשַׁן הִצִּיחַ (Isa. 53¹²). הִצִּיחַ means 'to expose', 'to pour out', 'empty'; κενοῦν 'to drain to the dregs', 'to pour out generously'. The use of Isa. 53¹² shews that the expression implies the surrender of life, not the Kenosis of the Incarnation. W. Zimmerli & J. Jeremias, *The Servant of God*, p.97. It is true that the expression is grammatically difficult Greek though naturally everything depends upon what St. Paul really meant here. St. Paul was never above twisting his Greek to make his meaning plain. The order of thought seems to tell against Z & J. If St. Paul had in mind a Kenosis on the part of the pre-incarnate Christ this might be the sort of way in which he would express it.

In 1928 Lohmeyer¹ propounded the view that the passage was a pre-Pauline Aramaic Hymn to Christ as Lord in His double rôle as Second Adam and Suffering Servant. This view is supported by Héring, Jeremias, Bultmann, E. Peterson and O. Cullmann.² It is best exemplified for English readers by Dr. A.M. Hunter³ who argues that the rendering εἰκῶν (for μορφή) fits the passage 'like a glove' and gives a clear reference to the second Adam who might have conceived the senseless project of seizing by force the equality with God (τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ = eritis sicut dei.) which he did not as yet possess, but conquering this temptation to which the first Adam fell, he chose the way of obedience and death. Thus the second Adam recapitulates victoriously what the first Adam experienced disastrously. Lohmeyer's strophic arrangement of the Hymn and Hunter's rendering are as follows:

LOHMEYER

HUNTER

1 ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο

Who being in God's image
Did not consider equality
with God

τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,

Something to be seized.

2 ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε
μορφὴν δούλου λαβών
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος

Nay, he poured himself out
Taking servant's form
Becoming in men's likeness.

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- 1 E. Lohmeyer, Der Brief an die Philipper (Meyer Commentaries) pp.90-9.
2 A.M. Hunter, Paul and his Predecessors, p.122.
3 Ibid, pp.39-44.

- 3 καὶ σήματι εὑρέθεις ὡς
 ἄνθρωπος
 ἑταπένωσεν ἑαυτὸν
 γεινόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι
 θανάτου
 [θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ]
- 4 διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν
 ὑπερύψωσε
 καὶ ἔχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα
 τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα
- 5 ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ
 πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ
 ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων
 καὶ καταχθονίων
- 6 καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται
 ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
 εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.
- And being found in fashion
 as a man
 He humbled himself
 Becoming obedient unto
death
 (and that a cross-death!)
- Therefore God also highly
exalted him
 And conferred on him the name -
 The name above every name.
 That at the name of Jesus
 Every knee might bow
 Of beings in heaven, in earth
 and in the nether-world.
- And every tongue confess
 'Jesus Christ is Lord'
 To the glory of God the Father.

After corroborating the poetic structure of the passage Hunter marshals evidence based on diction, style, context and doctrine to prove unPauline authorship. The three words ἀρπαγμὸς, ὑπερυψοῦν and καταχθόνιος are not merely absent from Paul but from the whole New Testament. μορφῇ is not found elsewhere in Paul. The apostle uses κεναῖν four times elsewhere in his writings, always in the sense 'make void' which is not appropriate to the present passage.

Nowhere else does he use the form *ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ*. There are also Aramaisms and un-Greek phrases. Characteristically Pauline ideas are lacking. Here humanity is not redeemed but subjected to the new *κύριος*. No mention is made of the Resurrection which Hunter regards as determinative for St. Paul. As in Hebrews the emphasis is on the exaltation. The hymn depicts Jesus as Lord, not of the Church, but of the cosmos! Hunter concludes that the hymn probably emanated from Antioch, discounting Lohmeyer's suggestion that it was part of the Eucharistic liturgy of the Palestinian church.

Hunter presents his case briefly but solidly, and yet it is not wholly convincing. Several scholars have attempted to recover the exact poetic form and they differ both in their strophic arrangement and in the phrases which are to be construed as Pauline glosses; while Hunter himself concedes that eminent scholars like W.D. Davies, E. Stauffer, L. Cerfaux and G.B. Caird¹ still remain unconvinced. Others, like E.F. Scott, could also be added. There is still therefore much to be said for Pauline authorship. With regard to the several hapax legomena noted by Hunter, V. Taylor remarks that there are other passages in the Pauline epistles of equal length in which as many words of the kind can be found.² In interpreting *μορφῆ* as *εἰκὼν* Hunter seems to scale down the parallelism of *μορφῆ θεοῦ* and *μορφῆ δούλου*. It is true that Paul does not make much use of the Suffering Servant conception elsewhere, yet it would hardly seem possible for Paul or any Jewish writer to dwell on the theme

1 A.M. Hunter, op.cit. p.122.

2 Op.cit. p.63.

of Christ's condescending love and humiliation without producing echoes of Deutero-Isaiah. To the objection that the hymn depicts Jesus as 'Lord' not of the Church but of the cosmos we may say that 'Jesus is Lord' is the Church's confession of faith; while the theme of Christ as Lord of the cosmos is dwelt upon by St. Paul in the Captivity Epistles as a whole, e.g. Colossians and Ephesians if Pauline. No mention is made of redemption or resurrection. But the question is: Are these omissions relevant to the paraenetic aim of the passage? There is a limit to what can be put into six verses. Few would have expected Paul, the Apostle of faith, to write a poem on Love which assigns such an inferior place to Christian faith? If there is a reference to Christ as the second Adam we may remind ourselves that the conception is almost peculiar to St. Paul in the whole of the New Testament. But is there a subtle contrast in the passage with Adam or Satan? If so, as Grayston has remarked, it would be expecting great quickness of mind on the part of his Gentile readers at Philippi.¹ It is a rather pedestrian view of Paul to assume that the creator of the matchless Hymn to Love in 1 Cor. 13 would quote a hymn rather than create his own. Whose was the mind capable of producing such a devotional gem? The Jewish community at Jerusalem or Antioch is a vague and unsatisfactory exchange for Paul. In any case, whether St. Paul is using a 'hymn' composed by himself or another, he uses it to express his own beliefs concerning

1 Comm. Ep. Phil. p.93.

the Person of Christ.

We are now in a position to summarise and compare these two distinct lines of interpretation. With some reservations at specific points the first may be described as the Lightfoot tradition. The *μορφῇ θεοῦ* is that state of existence which corresponds to the divine nature of Christ and is equated with equality with God. This divine mode of being the pre-incarnate Christ did not wish to hold on to but willingly renounced in order to take upon Him the form of a servant or slave. This great premundane act of renunciation is followed by further humiliation; and the conferment of *Kurios*, the divine name, follows as a natural sequel in the spiritual order. Christ is Lord in His humiliation. The Kenosis consists of, not a metaphysical mutation of being, but the abandonment of the divine mode of existence for the purely human mode of existence.

But there are some disagreements. M.R. Vincent, J. Eadie and V. Taylor follow Lightfoot closely. For Barth the equality with God is a different thing from the form of God which Christ utterly renounces while He remains God's equal throughout the Incarnation. Michael renders *ἀρπαγμὸν* as *res rapienda* and regards equality with God as something achieved at the Exaltation. The same rendering is adopted by Kennedy who regards equality as a prize set before Him which He achieves in the rôle of the Second Adam by a life of humiliation and lowly service. H.A.W. Meyer and J. Beet interpret *ἀρπαγμὸν* in the active sense of *raptio*, otherwise they follow the line of

Lightfoot. With these reservations, therefore, we may use Lightfoot's rendering to represent this line of thought: "Though He pre-existed in the form of God, yet He did not look upon equality with God as a prize which must not slip from His grasp, but He emptied Himself, divested Himself, taking upon Him the form of a slave."¹

In the second view of the passage represented by C. Masson the *forma dei* and the *forma servi* co-exist in the Incarnate Christ. But our Lord's divinity is not used in order to seize upon equality with God: instead he adopts the rôle of the Suffering Servant, and Lordship is achieved by humiliation and suffering. Closely allied with this interpretation is the *Imago* tradition of Lohmeyer, Héring, Jeremias, Bultmann and A.M. Hunter. The word *μορφή* as applied in the first phrase is regarded as a synonym for *εἰκών* = image. The Incarnate Christ is therefore conceived as the Second Adam who follows the path of the Suffering Servant and as a reward receives the divine title of *Kurios*.

The Lightfoot tradition is distinctly preferred in this thesis. One feature of the passage is obvious, and to be expected in a Jewish composition whether Pauline or unPauline - the Hebrew parallelism. This is important for exegesis since parallelism is basically a repetition of thought as rhyme is a repetition of sound, and may often provide a real clue to interpretation. The rendering of the Revised Version (which may be called the Lightfoot interpretation) may be set out as follows with a view to a consideration of the

1 Op.cit. p.111.

possible parallelism.

- | | | |
|----|--|------------------|
| 5 | Have this mind in you:
Which was also in Christ Jesus: | a
b |
| 6 | Who being in the form of God:
counted it not a prize to be equal with God: | a
b |
| 7 | But emptied Himself:
taking the form of a servant:
being made in the likeness of men. | a
b
c |
| 8 | And being found in fashion as a man:
He humbled Himself:
becoming obedient unto death:
even the death of the cross. | a
b
c
d |
| 9 | Wherefore God also highly exalted Him:
and gave Him the name above every name: | a
b |
| 10 | That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow:
of things in heaven, on earth and under the earth: | a
b |
| 11 | And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord:
to the glory of God the Father. | a
b |

Here is Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, breaking forth in his native style, bursting forth into prose poetry which has all the hammer strokes of Hebrew parallelism. In verses 7,9,10 and 11 the parallelism is of the kind called synonymous:

in v.7: He emptied Himself, took the form of a servant, made Himself
man;

in v.9: God exalts Him, gives Him the name above all names;

in v.10: Every knee shall bow: every knee in the universe;

in v.11: Every tongue confessing Christ confesses God.

A different kind of parallelism, but one very common in Hebrew, is seen in v.8 which is an example of stairway parallelism. The four

terms present a mounting series: He finds Himself a man, He then humbles Himself, humbles Himself to the point of death, even death on a cross.

What of verse 6? Is it not synonymous, in which the first member 'form of God' demands its equal in the second member 'equal with God'?

Confining our attention to the fundamental verses 5-8 in the light which a careful study of the parallelism affords, it would seem:

- (a) If "counted it not a prize" is a correct rendering then in v.6 "the form of God" is synonymously parallel to "equal with God";
- (b) in v.7 "emptied himself" is synonymously parallel to "taking the form of a servant" and "being made in the likeness of men";
- (c) "form" means exactly the same in "the form of God" as in "the form of a servant" to express an antithesis between the two phrases;
- (d) this antithesis suggests that a divine mode of being was abandoned or renounced in some way and a limited human life was accepted when Christ appeared as man;
- (e) the subject is Christ Jesus viewed first as the pre-incarnate One, and then, at 'but' as the Incarnate;
- (f) there would seem to be a contrast between a continuous present in 'being' and the historic(aorist) tenses of the rest of the passage;
- (g) in His human mode of being He underwent further humiliation

and submitted to death upon a gallows.

The general meaning would therefore be this: that Christ Jesus, existing eternally in the form of God, at a particular point in time, in great humility, renounced His divine mode of being in order to live a limited human life and suffer humiliation and death. And this idea of a self-renunciation, a great voluntary condescension and submission to finitude, humiliation and death on the part of Christ is in closest harmony with the paraenetic aim of the passage.¹ This is the Lightfoot interpretation, and one that is firmly based on literary, linguistic and exegetical grounds. The balance of modern evidence is in its favour; it is grammatically, stylistically and exegetically the more natural; and it may be said still to hold the field in modern scientific exegesis. And it is because the Lightfoot interpretation of Phil. 2⁵⁻¹¹ has still preponderating weight that the Kenotic hypothesis of Christology demands the most serious consideration. This is not to say by any means that the Lightfoot interpretation necessarily involves a Kenotic Christology, but that it is the only interpretation which provides the necessary foundation on which a Kenotic Christology can be built.

1 A striking parallel to the passage is to be found in c.16 of Clement's Letter to the Corinthians.

2. EXEGETICAL:

(B) Patristic Exegesis of Phil. 2⁵⁻¹¹

Patristic references are given as follows. In the case of Greek Fathers quotations are from the Berlin corpus (G.C.S.) followed by volume and page or from Migne Patres Graeci (P.G.) by volume and column. In the case of Latin Fathers quotations are from the Vienna corpus (C.S.E.L.) followed by volume and page or from the Migne Patres Latini by volume and column. Writings of St. Cyril are cited by preference from E. Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, Pt. I or T.W. Bindley-F.W. Green, *Oecumenical Documents of the Faith*. In other cases individual editors are cited under the editor's name.

The chief crux of the passage, as we have seen, is the rare word ἄρπαγμός. Among the Western Fathers the sense of 'raptio', number 1 of Loofs' classification¹, is almost universal.² The Latin 'rapinam' would not perhaps suggest the secondary meaning ἄρπαγμα so easily and the Latin contrast between 'non' and 'sed' is probably not so strong as that between οὐχ and ἀλλὰ. The Greek Fathers, however, tend to accept the interpretation 2bα. Equality with God was not a windfall to be greedily clutched and openly displayed.³ This is also the view of Hilary.⁴ Loofs classifies all Greek Fathers under one of the two categories of 2b.

We may now consider the exegesis of the passage in greater detail.

1. The classical interpretation of the passage (Loofs' Auffassung B) takes the relative ὅς which acts as subject both of ἑκένωσεν and ἐταπεινώσεν as the Discarnate or Pre-existent Christ. The phrase ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων must, in that case,

1 Supra pp.20-21.

2 Tertullian adv. Prax.7 (C.S.E.L.XLVII, p.237), adv. Marc. V.20 (ibid. p.647), de carn. res.6 (ibid. p.33); Augustine in Psa. XC.2 (P.L.XXXVII, 1161), Serm.XCII.2 (P.L.XXXVIII, 572), Serm.CVIII.1 (672), Serm. CLXXXIII.4 (990), Serm.CLXXXVI.3 (1000), Serm.CCXIII.3 (1062), Serm.CCXIV (1150), Serm. CCXLIV.3 (1150), Serm. CCLXIV.3 (1214), Serm.CCXCII.3 (1321), Serm.CCCIV.3 (1396).

3 Eusebius H.E.V.2.2.(G.C.S.I. p.428), Origen Com.Ser.in Mt. 118 (G.C.S.XI, p.250), Com. in Jn.VI,57 (G.C.S.IV. p.166), Sel. in Rom.V,2 (P.G.XIV, 1022), Sel. in Rom.X,7 (ibid. 1259), Ps. Athanasius Hom.de Se.9 (P.G.XXVIII, 153), Cyril Alex.c.Jul.6 (P.G.LXXVI, 797), Isidore Pel.Ep.IV,22 (P.G.LXXVIII, 1072).

4 Hilary De Trin.VIII, 45 (P.L.X. 270).

refer to His permanent nature or οὐσία as God. For this there is a fair body of evidence. ὑπάρχων implies grammatically a permanent relationship. Aristotle equated μορφή and οὐσία and the contrast between μορφή (enduring) and σχῆμα (fleeting) is justified by Lightfoot's notes. This is again equated in the passage with τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ . Whether 2a α or 2b α is the meaning attached to ἀρπαγμὸν , so long as it implies that equality with God was the possession of the Pre-existent Logos, it must be taken with reference to His Discarnate Existence and ἀλλά be given a strongly adversative force. The μορφή δούλου is His human nature or manhood.

The patristic support for this view has considerable strength, though its origin is lost in obscurity. The earliest example has none too promising a history - the extracts from the Gnostic Theodotus preserved by Clement of Alexandria.¹ That the Gnostics as a whole generally held such an interpretation is a fair inference from the use of κένωμα and πλήρωμα in certain Gnostic systems and an amended text of the passage was used by Marcion in support of his docetism.² From this Loofs deduces the origins of the concept in

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- 1 Clement Exe. e. Theod.19.5 (G.C.S.III, p.113) ὅθεν καὶ μορφήν δούλου λαβεῖν εἴρηται οὐ μόνον τὴν σάρκα κατὰ τὴν παρουσίαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ἐκ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου, δούλη δὲ ἡ οὐσία ὡς παθητή. *ibid* 35.1 (p.118) ὁ Ἰησοῦς, τὰ φῶς ἡμῶν..... ἐαυτὸν κενώσας, τούτεστιν ἐκτός τοῦ ὄρου γενόμενος, ἐπεὶ ἀγγελὸς ἦν τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ ἀγγέλους τοῦ διαφερόντος σπέρματος συνεξήγαγεν ἐαυτῷ
- 2 Hippolytus Ref.V.19.20 (G.C.S.III, pp.120-1), Tertullian adv. Marc.V,20 (C.S.E.L.XLVII, p.647).

Greek Epiphany ideas which formed no part of the original Gospel, and which came into the Church about the time of the Gnostic movement.¹ Such an argument might equally be used to discredit the *ὁμοούσιον*... , and the probable use of the interpretation by Irenaeus and Hippolytus should be sufficient to rehabilitate it in the eyes of most historians of dogma.² But Loofs may well be on safer ground in his connexion of Interpretation B with the wave of interest in the cosmological Logos, the Discarnate Person behind and before the Incarnation, which characterised the theology of the Apologists.

In Clement of Alexandria³ and Origen⁴ this interpretation

- 1 Loofs, Th.St.u.K., pp.72-6.
- 2 Irenaeus adv.Haer.I,2 (Harvey I, p.91), III,12,11 (II, p.63), IV,38,2,(II, p.232), V,16,1 (II, p.368). Only the third is unambiguous. *Verbum, naturaliter quidem invisibilem, palpabilem et visibilem in hominibus factum et usque ad mortem descendisse mortem crucis.* Hippolytus in Dnl.III,4 (G.C.S.I, p.150), de Antichristo 6 (G.C.S.II, p.8), *ibid* 8 (p.9). The first is the most convincing *μελλήσειν αὐτὸν τὸν λόγον ἐπ' ἐσχάτων, σωματοποιεῖσθαι καὶ σχῆμα ἀνθρώπου ἀναλαμβάνειν* cf.Loofs, Th.St.u.Kr., p.16, n.2 for references and discussion.
- 3 Clement Protrept, I.8.4. (G.C.S.I. p.9) *ἐκένωσεν δὲ ἑαυτὸν ὁ φιλοκτίρμων θεὸς, σῶσαι τὸν ἀνθρώπον γλιχόμενος...* , Paed. III.1.12 (*ibid.* p.237) *ὅτι γὰρ δούλου μορφὴν τὸ σαρκικόν, ἐπὶ τοῦ Κυρίου φησὶν ὁ ἀπόστολος, τὸν ἔκτος ἀνθρώπου δούλον προσειπὼν πρὶν ἢ δουλεύσαι καὶ σαρκοφορῆσαι τὸν Κύριον.*
- 4 Origen c.Cels.iv,15 (G.C.S.I, p.285), In Joan.Fr.18 (G.C.S. IV, p.498) *ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ἂ εἰς ἀνθρώπους οἰκονομῆι οὐ γυμνῆ τῇ θεότητι ἐνεργεῖ, ἀλλὰ μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν ὡς τὴν πορείαν αὐτοῦ τὴν κατὰ τὴν ἐνεργεῖαν τῆς οἰκονομίας κεκαλυμμένην* Rom. in Lev.II.3 (G.C.S.VI, p.294), In Cant.1 (G.C.S.VIII, p.107) *Unigenitus filius, cum in forma dei esset, exinanivit semel ipsum et formam servi accepit. Ibid* 2 (p.170) *exinanita divinitatis forma, servilis formae suscepta dignatus.*

establishes itself in Alexandrine circles. It occurs also in Malchion's dispute with Paul of Samosata¹ and in the Letter of Hymenaeus², connected with the same cause célèbre. Similar passages are found in Phileas of Thmuis³, Eusebius of Caesarea⁴, Athanasius⁵, Didymus⁶, the Cappadocians⁷, Apollinarius⁸ and Cyril of Alexandria.⁹

2. There is, however, a second view of the Kenosis passage (Loofs' Auffassung A) to which many modern scholars have returned. This interprets the subject throughout as the λόγος ἑνσαρκος or the unitary historical Personality of Jesus Christ. The μορφή δούλου will then represent the life of lowly service and voluntary humiliation to which Christ subjected Himself. On this interpretation ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων might be a reference back to Genesis 1²⁷ "in the image of God created he him", and μορφή be connected

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- 1 Malchion (Disp.Fr.12); Loofs, Paulus von Samosata, p.336. divina sapientia antequam se exinanisset indiminuta permansit.
 - 2 Ep. Hymen. (Loofs) p.329,6 θεὸς κένωσας ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ.
 - 3 Eusebius H.E.VIII,10,2 (G.C.S.II, p.760) οὐκ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγάσαστο = ἐνανθρώπησις.
 - 4 Ibid. de Eccl.Theol.I.20 (G.C.S.IV, pp.90-2) πρὸ τοῦ κενῶσαι ἑαυτὸν καὶ μορφήν δούλου λαβεῖν ἦν καὶ προῆν καὶ ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπῆρχεν, Dem. Ev.ix.2 (G.C.S.VI, p.430).
 - 5 Athanasius Orat.c.Ar.i,40 (P.G.XXVI,93), ii,53 (260C), iii,29 (385B), iii,59 (448BC).
 - 6 Didymus, Psa.XVII/XVIII,v.10 (P.G.XXXIX, 1244/5).
 - 7 Basil adv. Eunom.i,18 (P.G.XXIX,552); Gregory Naz. Orat. XXXVII,2 (P.G.XXXVI,284C) ὁ ἦν ἐκένωσε, ibid 3 (285B), Ep. 102 (P.G.XXVII, 197B); Gregory Nyss.c.Eunom.iii.2 (Jaeger ii, p.100).
 - 8 Apollinarius (Lietzmann), pp.187-8 δούλος ὁ κύριος καλεῖται καὶ πλαστός ὁ ἄκτιστος ὀνομάζεται τῇ συναφείᾳ τῇ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ δούλου μορφήν, pp.243-4 εἰ θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ κατώκισεν οὐκ ἐκενώθη
 - 9 Cyril Alex. Ep. ad.Jn. Ant. (Bindley-Green, p.143) ὁ θεὸς λόγος ἐξ οὐράνου καταφοίτησας κενώκεν ἑαυτὸν μορφήν δούλου λαβών.

rather with *εἰκῶν* than with *οὐσία*. The words *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ* will then represent the original destiny of the First Adam as resumed and fulfilled in the Second Adam and the sense require either 2aβ (*res rapienda*) or 2bβ (*res habenda*) for *ἄρπαγμὸν*.

Loofs¹ makes out an elaborate case in favour of the acceptance of this view as the correct exegesis of the passage.

(1) The Greek Epiphany theology which underlines the classical view and entered the field during the Apologetic period, has no place in the thoroughly Jewish milieu of St. Paul. It empties the manhood of its true significance and tends everywhere in a docetic direction. In Pauline theology, however, Christ is not so much the God who manifested Himself, but the Man who began a new humanity.² He is the *Ἀνακεφαλαίωσις* or Summary Recapitulation of humanity. This new humanity we put on as we assume Christ.³ He is the Second Adam⁴ who restores the image marred by the First Adam. If the First Adam lost his heritage by an act of *ἄρπαγμὸς*⁵, the Second Adam will win "the name that is above every name" by a life of lowly service.

(2) The passage with its reference to the two *μορφαὶ* fits in with the "Dual Point of View" Christology which is the earliest

1 Th.St.u.Kr., pp.76-101.

2 Eph. 1¹⁰.

3 Eph. 4²⁴, Col. 3¹⁰, Rom. 13¹⁴.

4 1 Cor. 15⁴⁵, cp.Gen. 1²⁰.

5 Gen. 3^{4ff.}

schema which we possess. This Loofs describes as "Die Wechselform der Beurteilung des geschichtlichen Christus" and in its simplest form is seen in Romans 1³ (κατὰ πνεῦμα as contrasted with κατὰ σαρκά). This is, of course, a much more primitive stage than the "Two Natures Theory" which always tends to set up a dualism within the one Christ. The name for our Lord used in the passage indicates the historic and unitary Christ and every attempt to shew that the title Christ could represent the pre-existent Christ is held by Loofs to have broken down. This is not to suggest that Paul had no knowledge of the concept of pre-existence in relation to Christ, but that he preferred other ways of expressing it. The pre-existent Christ is approximated by him to the Spirit.

(3) The other form of the tradition which Loofs examines when dealing with the patristic evidence is the "Imago-form" which identifies μορφῇ and εἰκὼν . There is good evidence for this in the LXX¹, in a passage from the Christian Sibyl,² and in the Old Latin translations of the passage which render μορφῇ by Imago or effigies. Pauline parallels are numerous, the image of the invisible God,³ or the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.⁴ Its connexion with the Second Adam doctrine can be traced in passages like "be transformed by the renewal of your mind", "transformed

1 LXX Dan. 3¹⁹.

2 Orac. Sibyll (Geffcken) viii, pp.157-9, 250, 256-61, 264-8.

3 Col. 1¹⁵, 2 Cor. 4⁴⁻⁶, Rom. 8²⁹.

4 2 Cor. 4⁶.

after the image of His Son", "till Christ be formed in you".¹

(4) The connexion *μορφῇ δούλου - ἀρπαγμὸν - τὸ ὄνομα ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα* suggests a further association. That which the Second Adam refused to grasp in the way which led the First Adam to disaster must probably be taken as the Title and the Reality of *Κύριος* or Lordship. There is perhaps a reminiscence of Isaiah 42⁸ "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another". *Κύριος - δούλος* is a well-known contrast, and the presence of *δούλος* in the immediate context would not lend particular point to the title *κύριος*. Loofs himself sees in the passage a hymn to Christ as Kurios, an idea which Dr. A.M. Hunter has carried a stage further in his view that it is based on an Aramaic original and is thus probably pre-Pauline.

Thus a strong (though not in many ways an entirely conclusive) case can be made out for the interpretation of the Pauline passage along other lines than the classical exegesis. It must be admitted that in the earliest period evidence for anything like Interpretation A is completely lacking, but Loofs keeps the way open in the following directions.

(i) The idea of the "New Man" leading to a new humanity is found in Ignatius and Irenaeus. Christ is "perfect man" and His incarnation is described as "the economy to the new man".²

(ii) The title Christ is used of the historical Jesus in the

1 Rom. 12², 8²⁹, Gal. 4¹⁹.

2 Ignatius (Lake) i, p.194 (Eph.xx.1), i, p.256.

Apostolic Fathers. An exception is the Epistle of Barnabas.¹

(iii) The "Dual viewpoint" of the Person of Christ is the dominant Christological category.² Christ was "first spirit, then flesh". 'Spirit' is still used to designate the divine element in the one Christ.³ Later forms of the Two Natures Theory with its tendency to a rigid duality tended, however, to break up Interpretation A into a mixed form which reads like an approximation to Interpretation B (so Theodore and Nestorius and the West, less certainly Chrysostom and Theodoret). This is noticed by Loofs in connexion with Ambrosiaster (Th.St.u.Kr. p.39) though it is not made sufficiently prominent in his treatment of the Greek evidence.

(iv) The idea of *κένωσις* is connected with the *πλήρωσις* of the human nature in which the Godhead dwelt. This is especially clear in Hermas,⁴ and the Epistle of Barnabas⁵ where the manhood is regarded as "the vessel of the Spirit".

(v) Hermas narrates a vision which he sees *ἐν μορφῇ τῆς ἐκκλησίας*⁶, and has other passages where *μορφῇ* clearly represents *εἰκὼν* and not *οὐσία*. This Loofs uses as direct evidence of the existence at this date of the Imago-form of Interpretation A of Phil. 2⁵⁻¹¹, but this seems to go well beyond

1 Barnabas (Lake) i, p.384-6 (xii. 7-11).

2 2 Clement (Lake) i, p.50 (xiv.2).

3 Hermas (Lake) ii, p.166 (Sim. v.65).

4 Hermas (Lake) ii, p.274 (Sim. ix. 22.2); ii, p.268 (Sim. ix. 19.2); ii, p.92 (Mand. v.2-7).

5 Barnabas (Lake) i, p.364 (vii. 3); i, p.381 (xi. 9).

6 Hermas (Lake) ii, p.216 (Sim. ix.1.1); ii, p.24 (Vis. ii.4.1); ii, p.52 (Vis. iii, 10, 3-5).

the evidence.

The first unambiguous trace of this interpretation is found in the Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons preserved by Eusebius.¹ Here the passage is quoted with reference to the Incarnate Christ and implying the view of ἀρπαγμὸν which agrees with 2bβ of Loofs' classification noted above. The letter also includes the verb ταπεινοῦν which is also found in the Kenosis passage. Though there is no positive evidence on the point, Loofs considers the interpretation nearer to the "Imago-form" than the "Wechsel" form.

We shall consider first the development of Interpretation A in the East. The fragmentary nature of the evidence makes it difficult to be certain about the interpretation of Paul of Samosata, but the phrase ἐν σχήματι εὐρίσκεισθαι is probably a reminiscence of Phil. 2⁷. The Incarnate person is described as "Jesus Christ", and the divine element in Christ is equated with the Wisdom or Spirit. Two points of uncertainty remain. The use of terms like ὁ φαινόμενος for the humanity and the description of the divinity as μειζὼν τῶν ὀρωμένων would be consonant with either view since whether the Incarnation is treated as a Theophany or an indwelling, in each case there is a veiling as well as a revelation of the Divine Nature. The "deus revelatus" is still the "deus absconditus". Whether then, the Incarnation is

1 Eusebius H.E.V, 1-3 (G.C.S.I. pp.403-31).

thought of rather as a *κένωσις* of the Godhead or a *πλήρωσις* of the Manhood, whether it involves the conjunction of a complete man or the mere assumption of a logical humanity, the *κένωσις* can still be regarded in terms of *κρύψις*. The emphasis upon the duality of the historical Jesus might suggest that Paul of Samosata belonged to the "Wechsel Form" of the tradition, though Loofs cautiously does not insist upon this interpretation of the evidence.

Eustathius belongs rather more clearly to this tradition. There is a reference to the "manhood of Christ exalted and glorified" in which may reasonably be seen an allusion to Phil. 2^{5ff}. A similar reference to the manhood of Christ as "enthroned with the divine Spirit" may be taken into connexion with the "Wechsel" form of the tradition.¹ Loofs makes no allusion, however, to two further passages in Eustathius which may have a further bearing on his interpretation. On Rom. 8²⁹, the locus classicus for the interpretation of *μορφῇ* in terms of *εἰκῶν*, he relates the image of God to the "humanity of Christ". This has, no doubt, a primary reference to Col. 1¹⁵, but it suggests Interpretation A and it might be taken as evidence that the Imago form and the Wechsel form were complementary. The second passage speaks of the form of weakness as attaching to the Manhood, a distinction which would be impossible on Interpretation B where the form of the servant was the manhood

1 Eustathius, P.G.XVIII, 685C ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγειρόμενος ὑψοῦται καὶ δοξάζεται 685B σύνθρονος ἀποδέδεκται τῷ θειοτάτῳ πνεύματι.

itself.¹

Loofs thinks that there is little evidence in Diodore to enable us to come to any conclusion about his exegesis of Phil. 2^{5f}, but there is one passage in his comments on the Psalms which contrasts the *προσῶπον* of the Only Begotten apart from the Incarnation, with the Incarnate Life of the humiliated Christ with the form of a servant and His human life. If Diodore equated *προσῶπον* with *μορφῇ* (an inference which Loofs accepts in the case of Nestorius) the passage would imply Interpretation B rather than A.² Another omission of Loofs is Flavian whose views seem to approximate to the 'classical' tradition or at least to a form of the A tradition under the influence of a strongly marked Two Natures Theory.³

Marcellus of Ancyra probably represents the Imago form of Interpretation A, but Chrysostom definitely breaks the connexion of the Antiochene Fathers with this interpretation. The Form of God represents His unchangeable nature. The passage excludes the Arian

- 1 Ibid. P.G.XVIII, 677D commenting on *συμμόρφους τῷ εἰκονι τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὁ ἄνθ* 681D *εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀσθένειας εἶδος περιπατέον ῥωπος ὅν ἐφόρησεν αὐτῷ προσήκον ἦν, τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ταῦτα εἰκὼν ἐστὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ. προσαρτεῖν ἀκόλυθον εἶναι φαίη τις ἄν.*
- 2 Diodore, Fr. in Psa.LXVIII/LXIX, v.17 (P.G.XXXIII, 1604) *οὐ πιθανὸν τὸ ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ταῦτα λέγεσθαι, γύνου οὔσης τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως ἀλλὰ ταῦτα δηλονότι κένωσας ἑαυτὸν καὶ μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν καὶ ὁμοιωθεὶς ἡμῖν κατὰ πάντα.*
- 3 Flavian (Cavallera), Fr.7 *εἰ γὰρ καὶ δούλου μορφὴν ὑπήλθε..... ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐτράπη τὴν φύσιν ἀλλ' ὡν ὅπερ ἦν, συνεχώρησε τὸ θεῖον σῶμα θανάτου πείραν λάβειν* where the "forma servi" is clearly equivalent to the human nature.

interpretation of a lesser God seizing by violence an equality with the supreme God which does not belong to him. Alone of the Greek Fathers Chrysostom took ἀρπαγμὸν "in malam partem" and gave it the sense of 2αα. Nor can the anarthrous θεοῦ in μορφῇ θεοῦ be taken in support of Arian pretensions for in the context θεῷ is used again without the article with an obvious reference to the Father. All this clearly implies Interpretation B with its equation $\muορφη\ θεου = τὸ\ εἶναι\ ἴσα\ θεῷ = οὐσία\ θεοῦ$. Chrysostom even goes further and expressly excludes Interpretation A. Some interpret the form of a servant with reference to the lowly service of Our Lord as in the washing of the disciples' feet (Jo. 13^{1f}) but this is not μορφῇ δούλου but ἐργὸν δούλου, and he ends with a contrast between the two modes of being which is completely in accordance with the "classical" view. He became, he took the one, he was the other.¹ It is perhaps legitimate to suggest that the adherence of Chrysostom to Interpretation B might confirm the similar impression formed of Diodore as represented in the passage quoted above.

Theodore, however, represents with greater certainty Interpretation A. His view of ἀρπαγμὸς clearly returns to the normal 2b type (non magnam reputavit illam). The designation "Christ Jesus" is confined to the Incarnate Lord.² He emptied Himself by

1 Chrysostom Hom.6 in Phil.1 (P.G.LXII,218) $\muενων\ ὁ\ ἦν\ ἔλαβεν\ ὁ\ οὐκ\ ἦν.\ τούτο\ ἐγένετο.\ ἐκεῖνον\ ὑπῆρχε.\ ἐνταῦθα\ περὶ\ τῆς\ θεότητος,\ ἐνταῦθα\ περὶ\ τῆς\ ἐνανθρωπήσεως\ λέγει.$

2 Theodore Com. in Phil. (Swete i, p.219 simpliciter et ut moris erat de una persona, dicens. p.220 de una persona dixit.

refusing to display Himself openly.¹ The form of a servant is the human nature, but as the term covers all created things it has comparatively small significance. But, as Loofs notices, in one passage,² Theodore deserts the full purity of the Antiochene interpretation. It is a mixed form (Int. AB).

Nestorius adopts the same position. He notices that the Apostle does not say "Let this mind be in you which was also in God the Logos". The two names Jesus and Christ represent the unitary prosopon of the historical Christ. Yet he ascribes the early part to the Discarnate Word, and if his term prosopon contains a reminiscence or at least an echo of *μορφή*, then he must contain something more than a "Wechsel" form of Interpretation A. In one passage which Loofs seems to omit, the "forma servi" clearly represents the humanity.³

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- 1 Ibid. i, p.216 *ἑαυτὸν ἐκέκρωσεν ἀντὶ τοῦ οὐκ εἰδῆν ἑαυτὸν* p.219 the *μορφή θεοῦ = φύσις* and not merely *ἐνεργεία* as Marcellus and the Photinians, hold. p.227 the Apostle speaks not of *ἔργον* but of *μορφή*.
- 2 Ibid. p.218 usque in hunc locum (*ἐταπεινώσεν ἑαυτὸν*) illa quae divinae naturae condecabant, visus est apostolus edixisse in subsequentibus vero ad illa transit quae humanae possunt aptari naturae. ibid (Staab) p.116 (Rom.2²⁰) *μόρφωσιν οὐ τὴν προτύπωσιν ἀλλ' αὐτῶν τὴν ὑπόστασιν καὶ τὴν γνῶσιν καὶ τὴν ἀληθείαν* quoting Phil.2⁷.
- 3 Nestoriana (Loofs) p.254, 9-12. οὐκ εἶπε « τοῦτο φρονεῖσθω ἐν ὑμῖν ὁ καὶ ἐν τῷ θεῷ λόγος » ἀλλὰ λαβὼν τὸ « Χριστὸς » ὡς τῶν δύο φύσεων προσηγορίαν, σημαντικὴν ἀκινδύνως αὐτοῦ καὶ δούλου μορφήν ἣν ἔλαβεν καὶ θεὸν ὄν. cp. p.274.15; p.176.6; ibid. p.175.16. The Bazaar of Heracleides (passim) makes the connexion between *μορφή* and *προσῶπον* even clearer. Nestoriana (Loofs) p.215.375 Si quis servi formam per se ipsam, hoc est secundum propriae naturae rationem colendam esse dixerit....Si quid formam servi consubstantialiorem esse dixerit spiritui sancto. Here 'forma' and 'natura' are clearly identified.

The last Father quoted by Loofs is Eutherius of Tyana¹ who wrote in a letter to Alexander of Hierapolis soon after the Union of 433 in terms similar to Nestorius. Paul does not say "God the Logos Himself descending from Heaven, emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant", he says rather "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". The two names represent the Two Natures of Christ and the passage cannot be taken as referring to anything else than the whole Christ, human and divine.

He fails to mention Theodoret² who accepts the "classical" view of the passage. The first two names were concerned with God the Word who, though He was God, was not seen as God. The *κένωσις-κρύψις* equation is clearly accepted. He attacks the interpretation of Marcellus and Paul of Samosata. "If the form of God is not the *οὐσία* of God, let them tell us what they understand by the *μορφή δούλου*". Thus, despite his emphasis upon the reality of the human nature which our Lord assumed, Theodoret cannot quite be explained as holding Interpretation AB.

In the West there existed a tradition considerably nearer to Interpretation A than to the "classical exegesis". Novatian³ asks

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- 1 Eutherius Ep. ad Alex. 17 (Testur pp. 65-6) non ait ipse de caelo descendens deus verbum exinanivit semet ipsum formam servi accipiens.
 - 2 Theodoret in Phil. 2 (P.G. LXXXII, 569) *περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου ταῦτα φήσιν ὅτι θεὸς ὢν οὐχ ἐώρατο θεὸς τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην περικειμένους οὐσιν . v. 8 ὑπήκουσεν ὡς υἱὸς καὶ οὐχ ὡς δούλος . v. 11 μορφή = φύσις οὐ οὐσία ; in Ezek. xxxvii, 234 (P.G. LXXXI, 1196) δούλος = human nature as in Phil. 2⁶; in Isa. xi, 1 (ibid, 312). *τὸν τοῦ λόγου ναὸν = τὴν τοῦ δούλου μορφήν ἣν ὁ θεὸς λόγος ἀναλαβὼν ἤνωσεν ἐαυτῷ.**
 - 3 Novatian de Trin. 22 (P.L. II, 957-8.)

to whom the "forma dei" refers. It cannot allude merely to the manhood, for while that is "in imagine dei" (John 1²⁷) it is not "in forma dei", nor can it be ascribed to angels, but only to God the Word, the Son of God. Yet although he is in the form of God he never compared or set Himself up as a rival to God the Father, remembering well that what he had, he received from the Father. Even before the Incarnation, but especially during the Incarnate Life, He shewed Himself a model of perfect obedience. If he were merely a man He would not have humbled Himself, for birth is not a loss but a gain to man. His humiliation extends to the injuries which He received and the insults which he heard. He received the name which is above every name (God). Thus our Lord Jesus Christ is proved to be God, though the heretics do not admit it.

The background of this interpretation is clear enough. Novation has ideas which are subordinationist in tendency and certainly suggests a sharp differentiation between the Son of God and equality with God. He gives to *ἀπαρχὴν* the meaning of $2b\beta$ (*ἔρμειον habendum*) if not $2a\beta$ (*res rapienda*). Yet he also relates the form of God to the divine nature, making a direct distinction between the "forma dei" and the "imago dei" of Gen. 1²⁷. This suggests a mixed form - an Interpretation AB with A as basis.

Tertullian¹ betrays much the same mixture of traditions and is

1 Tertullian adv. Prax.7 (C.S.E.L.XLVII, p.237), de carne Christi 5 (P.L.II, 816), de Bapt.ii (C.S.E.L.XX, p.210), de Carn. Res.6 (XLVII, p.33) Et fecit hominem Deus. Id utique quod finxit, ad imaginem Dei fecit illum, scilicet Christi. Et Sermo enim Deus qui in effigie Dei constitutus, non rapinam existimavit pariari Deo.

rather difficult to assess. Loofs concludes that in his earlier period Tertullian accepted Interpretation A, but in his later work *adversus Praxeam* shews traces of the "classical tradition".

Ambrosiaster interprets "in Christo Jesu" of the unitary Christ, God and man, and quotes 1 Cor. 10⁴ of the use of Christ for the pre-existent element in Christ. He already possessed the form of God, He acquired the form of a servant, not, as some think, in the act of incarnating Himself, but in the conditions of His earthly life.¹ He knew, though he rejected, an interpretation which referred Phil. 2¹¹ and probably the rest of the passage to the "homo Christi"². He also connects the "forma dei" with the "imago dei".³ Loofs suggests that the strong form of the Two Natures Theory which prevailed in the West hindered the progress of Interpretation A. It is just possible that it was the increasing complication of the doctrine in the East which led Theodore and Nestorius to a mixed form of the tradition.

Pelagius interpreted the passage of the historical Jesus Christ. The subject or object of each experience mentioned in the context is Christ according to His human nature. He interprets the whole passage of the Incarnate Christ. While aware that many interpreted

1 Ambrosiaster, P.L.XVII, 409-411.

2 Ibid. 409A quibusdam videtur homini donatum esse nomen. 4A si homo deo patri oboedivit, quid magnum est? 411B quid poterat se exinanire homo, res in forma. 411C Adoptivo deo non flectit creatura genu.

3 Ibid. 408A Christus semper in forma, dei erat, quia imago est invisibilis dei...ideo enim forma et imago dei appellatus est ut intelligeretur, non ipse pater esse deus.

the passage according to the classical exegesis he cannot see how this escapes Arian conclusions.¹ If He is exalted by God in His divine nature, we are clearly left with a lesser God. He gives alternative glosses of "forma Dei" either "in his nature as God" or "in the image of God". (Gen. 1²⁶) and refers to the washing of the disciples' feet in connexion with the "form of a servant", a view which Chrysostom observes and contemptuously rejects.² The exaltation concerns the human nature rather than the divine. The Pelagian Interpolator also refers the passage to the total Incarnate Christ but has no doubt that the two forms represent the two natures - a much more typical "mixed" form than that found in Pelagius himself.³ According to Loofs this interpretation is not specially Pelagian but can be traced in Western authors before his time. Pelagius was a sound Greek scholar and spent much time in the East but we must not over-estimate his indebtedness to Greek

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- 1 Pelagius (Souter, p.397 (Phil. 2⁵⁻¹¹) Multi praeterea hunc locum ita intelligunt quod secundum formam videlicet dei, secundam quam aequalitatem dei non rapinam usurpaverit quam naturaliter possidebat, et exinaniverit se non substantiam evacuans sed honorem inclinans, formam servi, hoc est naturam hominis induendo et per omnia ut homo tantum modo appendo atque humilitatis suae oboedientia nec cuius mortem recusando.
 - 2 Ibid. v.6 in quo erat deus vel quia absque peccato erat, ad imaginem scilicet de v.7 forma servi ut etiam pedes levaret discipulorum.
 - 3 Pel. Int. (Souter, p.14 (Rom. 8³) unde filius dei formam servi accipiens factus est homo, (Rom. 10¹) Quia Christus deus et homo est in eo quo deus verbum qui in forma dei erat. semet ipsum exinanivit formam servi accipiens factus est homo. 59 (Phil.2⁵¹) forma dei substantia deitatis, forma servi assumptionis hominis.

exegesis. Much may have come from indigenous Western material.

It must be admitted at the close of this enquiry that the work of Loofs is not sufficient to establish Interpretation A in place of the "classical view" of Philippians 2^{5f} either as the true exegesis of the passage or as the balance of Patristic evidence. The impression still remains that the *prima facie* interpretation is grammatically and exegetically the more natural. Perhaps the difficulty of finding a pure form of Interpretation A among the Fathers is testimony to the same conclusion. His treatment of the Patristic evidence is brilliant and suggestive. Inevitably in many points it falls short of conviction usually because the evidence on which it is based is incomplete and fragmentary. A more serious fault is the occasional omission of passages and, in two cases, even of entire Fathers. He has, however, proved that the alternative interpretation is not without considerable support and to that extent increased its probability.

3

HISTORICAL:

(A) Doctrine of Kenosis in the Fathers

We have seen from our survey of the Patristic exegesis of Phil. 2⁵⁻¹¹ that the interpretation we have called the classical, which provides at least a framework for a Kenotic theory of Christology, appears to be, on the whole, the prevailing view. Nevertheless there is truth in Loofs' contention that "no theologian of any standing in the early Church ever adopted such a theory of the Kenosis of the Logos as would involve an actual supersession of His divine form of existence by the human - a real 'becoming man', i.e. a transformation on the part of the Logos".¹ On the other hand the view of the Kenosis and of Christ's person during His earthly manifestation which was held was practically universal. That view combined in one formula both the earthly humiliation and the unimpaired cosmic and Trinitarian functions of Christ. During the incarnation the Logos was not confined 'intra brevissimi corporis claustra' but rather 'et in corpore et ubique totus aderat Dei filius'². That the Logos during His incarnation continued to rule over all things, that He was not wholly in Christ but also wholly 'extra carnem' was almost the general thought of all the theologians of the early Church in both East and West.³ He is substantially correct in saying that this view was firmly held by all

1 E.R.E. Article on Kenosis, p.682.

2 Origen, de princ. IV.3 (30) (G.C.S.V. p.352).

3 cp. Irenaeus, adv. Haer. V,18,2 (Harvey II, p.374); Clement, Strom. VII,2,5 (G.C.S.III, pp.5-6); Origen, Com. in Mt. 65 (G.C.S.XI, p.752); Eustatius Frag. (P.G.XVIII, 684BC); Athanasius, de inc. 17 (Cross, p.26).

theologians whatever exegesis of Phil. 2⁵⁻¹¹ they favoured. The modern Kenotic theory, therefore, in the rigid sense defined by Loofs, is utterly unsupported by the Fathers; and this lack of Patristic support is one of the weightiest objections to be brought against it, as Anglican theologians have fully recognised.

But is the lack of Patristic support an insuperable objection to Kenoticism? One cannot help feeling that Patristic exegesis was not completely free to handle the concept of Kenosis. The scriptural exegesis of the Fathers is often very acute and searching, and it is wrong to say, as does Bishop Gore, that they aimed at edification rather than truthfulness to facts. They did their best with the material and knowledge at their disposal. But Gore undoubtedly puts his finger on the right place where he says that a truly detached consideration of the human phenomena of our Lord's life was made difficult by the prevailing fear of Arianism and the influence of the axiomatic belief in the Hellenistic, non-Biblical doctrine of divine immutability.¹ These are the two factors which hindered the Fathers in their exploration of the possibilities of Kenosis. The metaphysical categories with which they were working were largely Greek in origin. The custom of describing God by means of metaphysical adjectives beginning with an alpha privative had the object of denying any metaphysical limitation to God.² While no doubt the negative form is intended to express a positive

1 C. Gore, Dissertations, p.202.

2 This has been studied by G.L. Prestige, God in Patristic Thought, pp.1-54, 2nd ed.

content, fulness or perfection of being, the influence of Greek metaphysics was not wholly beneficial. It tended to obscure the priority of ethical and spiritual categories. Here the Fathers were pulled two ways. The New Testament emphasised the human experiences of the Master, yet if He were even as Incarnate God the Logos the same absence of limitation must still apply to Him.

In Arianism the tension took on an acute form. As Athanasius in his Orations against the Arians shews, they argued from the incarnate experiences of Christ to the discredit of the Logos. The Incarnate suffered, therefore the Logos was passible and not fully God. He confesses His ignorance (Mark 13³²) or asks questions as if He did not know the answer, therefore the Logos was ignorant. He was tempted and experienced changes of mood, therefore the Logos was mutable. These inferences were hardly convincing and neglected completely the new conditions imposed by the Incarnation. Athanasius who shares their general assumptions with regard to the Being of God appeals to a sound exegetical principle, a careful reference to the context to determine whether a statement is made about the Discarnate or the Incarnate Logos. This constitutes an effective defensive technique; it does not rise to the level of a positive Christology.

Both motives recur in the thought of later Fathers. For reasons connected with their theology of redemption theologians of the Alexandrine type emphasised that the Logos was the centre of the Incarnate Lord. Only so could our redemption be achieved. They

therefore insisted that even as Incarnate He remained what He was. Long before the outbreak of the Arian Controversy Origen speaks of Him as remaining immutable in ousia: *μένων τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἄτρεπτος*.¹ In Cyril phrases like *μεμένηκεν ὅπερ ἦν* and *οὐκ ἀποβεβληκῶς ὅπερ ἦν* recur with great frequency. But similar statements are found in Chrysostom, Augustine and Pelagius.² Whatever divided the main schools of Christology it is certainly not to be found here. The same doctrine sharpened and negatively expressed against Arianism is equally common. Apollinarius, a vigorous anti-Arian, asserts that the Incarnation is a matter of circumscription, not of change.³ No *μεταβολή, μετάπτωσις, τροπή* or *ἀφανισμὸς* is involved in the Incarnation.⁴ Antiochenes suspected terms like *περιβολή* or *περιγραφή* and regularly accused their opponents of failing to provide for this denial in their own Christology. The community of axiom (despite differences of method) could not be more strikingly illustrated.

Three main aspects of Kenosis were stressed by the Fathers. It was conceived as *κρύψις*..., the veiling or concealment of the divinity by its human conditioning. The idea after all lay ready

- 1 Origen c.Cels.IV,14 (G.C.S.I., p.284).
- 2 Chrysostom hom.7,2 in Phil. (P.G.LXII,231 *μένων ὅ ἦν ἔλαβον ὃ οὐκ ἦν*); Augustine de Trin.VII, 3,5 (P.L.XLII, 938 non mutando divinitatem suam); Pelagius in Phil.II, 11 homo factus sed manens deum.
- 3 Apollinarius Fr.124 (Lietzmann p.237 *κατὰ τὴν περιβολὴν οὐ κατὰ μεταβολὴν* . cp.de unione 6 ibid. pp.187-8).
- 4 Cyril Hom.Pasch.XVIII,4 (P.G.LXXII, 813); Chrysostom Hom.7 in Phil. (P.G.LXII, 231); Theodoret in Phil; Eutherus Antilogia 4 (Testuz p.8).

to hand in the dominant exegesis of the Philippians passage during the period. It is familiar in the concept of the Incarnation as the self-revelation of the Logos studied by Mlle. Harl in the thought of Origen.¹ On this aspect of his theology Bigg comments 'Some saw but the figure without grace and comeliness of the carpenter's son, but those whose eyes were opened by the Spirit discerned the fair beauty of the Word flashing through the veil of matter'.²

Apollinarius speaks of the uncreated God revealing Himself in a created 'envelope'.³ Theodore defines ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν as οὐκ ἔδοξεν ἑαυτὸν for 'He concealed His glory'.⁴ It is also the motif of the analogy of the King disguised in the dress of a soldier.⁵ Kenosis is often interpreted as a withdrawal of dignity (ἄξια) or of glory (δόξα). There is little difference between the two traditions at this point.

A second term used to expand the concept of Kenosis was πρόσληψις (addition or assumption). It expressed the way in which Kenosis is effected. Thus Gregory of Nazianzus links the 'kenoticised' Godhead (ἡ κενωθεῖσα θεότης) with the flesh assumed (ἡ προσλημφθεῖσα σὰρξ), while Cyril answers his own question 'Of what order is the Kenosis?' with the reply 'that which takes

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- 1 M. Harl *Origène et la fonction révélatrice du Verbe incarné*. I have not been able to consult this book.
 - 2 C. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p.191.
 - 3 Apollinarius de unione 6 (Lietzmann pp.87-8).
 - 4 Theodore Com. in Phil. (Swete I, p.217).
 - 5 Nestorius, Baz. Heracleides (Driver & Hodgson p.21).

place through the assumption of the flesh'.¹ For him 'what He was not He assumed' is as familiar a theme as 'what He was He remained'.

This use of the word "addition" in reference to the limitation involved by the Incarnation is clarified by Dr. Prestige.² It was 'necessitated in order to avoid assuming that His deity was changed or impoverished by the incarnation; what He experienced in the flesh had to be something outside the scope of His divine experience, unless its limitations were to be reckoned as limitations of the infinitude and transcendence of God'. References from Antiochene writers would be superfluous. The only differences here between the two schools lay in the balance of emphasis on the two components and their estimate of the completeness of what was assumed.

More significant for the purpose of this thesis is the third concept of Kenosis as *μείωσις* or reduction in compass. This is especially relevant to the thought of Cyril but some anticipations of this idea may be noted here. St. Irenaeus can speak of the Son as the measure of the Father quoniam et capit eum. Origen uses the analogy of little and big statues in which the small copy in the same material can be treated as a replica of the larger on a smaller scale. Similarly he argues that as we could not have beheld the splendour of the pure light flowing from the divine majesty of the

1 Gregory Naz. Orat.ii,23 (P.G.XXXV, 432); Cyril Quod unus sit Christus (P.G.LXXV, 1302).

2 G.L. Prestige, Fathers and Heretics, pp.163-4, 1958 ed.

Logos, by His kenosis He made it possible for us to look into His divine light: *brevissimae insertus humani corporis formae virtutisque similitudine Dei Patris in se immensam atque invisibilem magnitudinem designabat.* Methodius even uses the interesting analogy of the factorised number. Eusebius suggests that 'He receded from His deity and stunted Himself from His natural bigness'. 'He emptied the ineffable glory of His deity' says Gregory of Nyssa, 'and stunted it with our diminitiveness; so that what He was remained great and perfect and incomprehensible, but what He took was of equal size with our scale of nature'.¹ "From this point of view the manhood of Christ", writes Prestige "is presented as deity viewed through the wrong end of a telescope. The lens consists of the constitutive principles of human nature: used in the ordinary way they point through the highest that exists in man towards the nature of the God in whose image man is made; if reversed, they show how diminutive God made Himself when He Himself became man".²

But of all the Fathers the theme of Kenosis is most prominent in Cyril. All the three aspects we have just considered make their appearance, but particularly the last, to which he returns again and again. 'Christ', he says, 'reduced Himself in diminution, that is, under our conditions'. He speaks of the Logos as accepting and

1 Irenaeus *adv. haer.* IV,6 (Harvey II, p.153); Origen *de princ.* I,2,8 (G.C.S.V., pp.38-9); Methodius *Symp.* VIII, 11 (G.C.S. pp.94-6); Eusebius *Dem. Ev.* VI,9,1 (G.C.S.VI, p.259); Gregory Nyssa. *adv. Apoll.* 20 (P.G.XLV, 1164).

2 *Op.cit.* p.105.

submitting to the *μέτρα* or *λόγοι* (measures or proportions) of the humanity. 'He who is above all principality is within the measures of manhood'; 'We assert that the very Word out of God the Father, in the act by which He is said to have been emptied for our sake by taking the form of a slave, lowered Himself within the measures of manhood'; in becoming flesh He made the human scale His own.¹

Very prominent, too, in Cyril is the description of Kenosis as voluntary, of which again there are anticipations in earlier Fathers. The voluntary nature of the Incarnation follows automatically from the fact that it was an act of the Logos who cannot be continued from outside Himself. But even more directly it reflects the New Testament insight into the Incarnation as an unconditioned act of the love of God. Origen puts this in its simplest form in His Homilies on Luke: 'When He had evacuated Himself taking the form of a servant, He resumed what He had laid aside'.² The active tenses should be noted here. Kenosis was something which He did, not what He experienced or suffered. Athanasius speaks of a *ἐκούδιος κένωσις* a phrase later to be used freely by Cyril.³ Linguistic variants

1 Cyril Ep.40 ad Acac. (Schwartz A.C.O.I,1,4 pp.26-27); contra Nestorium III Proem. (Schwartz op.cit. I,1,6 p.54); Apol.c. Theodoret 3 (Schwartz op.cit.I,1,6 p.119).

2 Origen Hom in Lc.20 (G.C.S.IX, p.135) quoniam evacuaverat se formam servi accipiens, id quod amiserat resumebat.

3 Athanasius Exp. in Psa. LVI,6 (P.G.XXVII, 60).

(*ἐθελούσιος κένωσις*, *ἐλευθερὸς ὢν* or *ἐθελοντῆς*) occur in Cyril.¹ More precisely the Logos descended into this voluntary kenosis or submitted to the measures of humanity.² With their special emphasis on will as a Christological category we should expect the Antiochenes to welcome this Cyrilline emphasis. For them however it was largely negated by Cyril's theory of a physical or hypostatic union. Thus Nestorius can argue that even if the Logos entered into it by a voluntary act, once physical union is accepted, it ceases to be a voluntary act.³ Theodoret urges the same argument, from Kenosis against the theory of a hypostatic union which, he maintains, makes the Kenosis a matter of physical necessity, instead of a voluntary act of condescension. 'Nature', he says, 'is a thing of compulsory character and without will. For example, we hunger physically, not suffering this willingly, but by necessity; for certainly those living in poverty would cease begging if they had it in their power not to hunger. In like manner we thirst, sleep, breathe by nature, for these are all without will; and he who does not experience these things, of necessity dies. If, therefore, the union of the form of the Son to the form of a servant was physical,

- 1 Cyril Hom. Pasch.X,1 (P.G.LXXVII, 612) *ἐθελούσιος* ; Apol. c.Theodoret, 6 (Schwartz op.cit. I,1,6 p.129) *ἐλευθερὸς ὢν ἐθελοντῆς*.
- 2 Cyril Ep.3 ad. Nest. (Bindley-Green p.112), adv.Jul.8 (P.G.LXXVI, 895) cp. In Isa.IV,4 (P.G.LXX, 1053).
- 3 Nestorius Bazaar of Heracleides (Driver & Hodgson, p.38 and 181).

then God the Logos was joined to the form of a servant as compelled by a certain necessity, not in the exercise of philanthropy, and the universal Lawgiver shall be found complying with compulsory laws, contrary to the teaching of Paul who says: "He humbled Himself taking the form of a servant". The words *ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε* point to a voluntary act'.¹ Probably both Nestorius and Theodoret believed in a continuous act of will throughout the Incarnation and suspected (perhaps mistakenly) that for Cyril the act of will was a single pre-incarnate choice replaced within the Incarnation by a different principle of organisation.

As Professor Bruce² points out Cyril certainly recognised a reign of physical law in the incarnate Life: it was precisely in His voluntary self-subjection to the laws of humanity that the Kenosis consisted. It was in accordance with this principle that Cyril explained the facts of birth, growth in stature, hunger, thirst, sleep, weariness, etc. He could have formed a body for Himself by His own power, refusing birth from a woman, but that might have given occasion to unbelievers to calumniate the Incarnation saying it was not real, therefore it was necessary that He should go through the ordinary laws of human nature.³ With reference to physical growth

1 Cyril Ep.3 ad Nest. Anathema 3 (Bindley-Green, p.114 *Ἐἰ τις ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς Χριστοῦ διαίρει τὰς ὑποστάσεις μετὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν μόνῃ δυνάπτων αὐτὰς συναφέρει τῇ κατὰ τὴν ἀφίαν ἡγουν αὐθεντίαν ἢ δυναστείαν, καὶ οὐχὶ δὴ μᾶλλον σύνοδον τὴν καθ' ἔνωσιν φυσικὴν.*

2 A.B. Bruce, The Humiliation of Christ, pp.53-6.

3 Contra Nestorium I,1 (Schwartz op.cit. I,1,6 p.17 *κεχώρηκεν ἀναγκασίως διὰ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως νόμων.*

he writes: 'It was not impossible that God, the Word begotten of the Father, should lift the body united to Him out of its very swaddling-clothes and raise it up to the measure of mature manhood. But this would have been a thaumaturgical proceeding, and incongruous to the laws of the economy; for the mystery was accomplished noiselessly. Therefore in accordance with the economy He permitted the measures of humanity to prevail over Himself.'¹

Cyril, however, seems to have been reluctant to carry the reign of physical law beyond the material sphere and thus fails to apply the principle of Kenosis in toto. In respect of the intellectual and moral the divine nature is allowed free and unlimited scope in the sphere of the incarnate life. The result, as Bruce remarks, is that the Kenosis is real in the physical region, it is docetic in the intellectual. The docetism applies particularly to Christ's human knowledge. This question has been studied by J. Liébaert in "La Doctrine Christologique de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la Querelle Nestorienne" (Lille, 1951)² in which he analyses the relevant portions of St. Cyril's writings, namely Ch.22 of the Thesaurus, the Dialogue VI on the Trinity and various allusions in his Commentary on St. John.

Very different conclusions have been reached by scholars on

1 Quod unus Christus sit (P.G.LXXV, 1332) Ἐτελείτο γὰρ ἀψοφητι τὸ μυστήριον. Ἦφίει δὲ οὖν οἰκονομικῶς τοῖς τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος μέτροις ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ τὸ κρατεῖν.

2 Deuxième Partie, Chapitre 1: pp.87-100.

this difficult problem and it is perhaps not possible to reach an entirely confident conclusion. Two opinions, among others, have each received substantial support. According to the one, the ignorance of our Lord in His incarnate life is purely apparent or exterior. This is the opinion of Lebreton and Liébaert himself. On the other hand P. Dubarle and many others affirm without hesitation a real ignorance on the part of the Incarnate Lord.

In the first part of Ch.22 of the Thesaurus Cyril reproduces faithfully the thought of Athanasius in the Contra Arianos III. On the basis of the questions asked by Christ the Arians denied that the Son was the Wisdom of the Father; because of his ignorance of the Day of Judgment he could not have been consubstantial with Him. In reply St. Athanasius explains the ignorance of Christ as purely apparent. It was necessary that Christ should be ignorant as man but this does not imply ignorance in Christ who asks the questions. Christ, when he asked questions, in reality knew what he was asking. The knowledge of the Word was absolute. Christ's reply to the question about the Day of Judgment was spoken "pour notre bien, pour ne pas peiner les apôtres, et on ne peut l'accuser de mensonge parce que, étant devenu homme, il avait le droit de parler humainement".¹ Cyril argues to the same effect. As the Word of God Christ knows everything, but in so far as He is man He is ignorant. Christ knew the day and hour 'as God', but 'as man' He says He does not know. He shows ignorance "car il est propre a

1 Liébaert, op.cit. p.89.

l'humanité de ne pas savoir l'avenir".¹ This is exactly the position of Athanasius; He speaks "humainement", "comme d'un homme". The conclusion of Athanasius is: "Ignorance de droit, non de fait".

But Cyril makes use of a new formula: "il a dit ignorer *οἰκονομικῶς*".² Father Dubarle maintains on the basis of this type of expression a real ignorance on the part of Christ as man. "Selon de P. Dubarle, quand Cyrille parle de l'économie il emploie un mot d'une valeur très précise dans la tradition grecque: il s'agit de l'Incarnation et spécialement dans cette période d'abaissement et d'efficacité rédemptrice que fut la vie terrestre du Christ. Le sujet grammatical des propositions étant le Verbe incarné, parler d'une ignorance "économique", c'est attribuer une ignorance réelle à la nature humaine du Sauveur, par opposition à sa science divine". But Liébaert argues that the attachment of 'ignorance' to the 'economy' does not prove that Cyril conceives it as real. Cyril does not write 'le Christ ignore économiquement', but 'le Christ dit ignorer économiquement'.³

Cyril uses another expression in the first part of ch.22: "il simulait aussi notre ignorance (*ἐδχηματίσθητο*)".⁴ According

1 Op.cit. p.89.

2 Ibid, p.90.

3 Liébaert op.cit. p.91.

4 Ibid. p.92. I owe the following note to Professor H.E.W. Turner: 'The problem is whether this ignorance is real or apparent. The question largely turns on a phrase in Cyril's Thesaurus 22 (P.G.LXXIV, 53 *οἰκονομικῶς ἐδχηματίσθητο ἄγνοειν*); *οἰκονομικῶς* may mean either 'incarnationally' (*οικονομία* is a technical term for the Incarnation) or 'usefully' while *ἐδχηματίσθητο* may mean 'has the *σχῆμα* of ignorance or, more simply 'pretend'. The second interpretation is preferable.'

to Lebreton the use of the word *ἀλήθεια* does not necessarily imply apparent ignorance for Cyril also makes use of the term to indicate the human side of Christ as in Phil.2⁷. Dubarle goes further: Cyril represents the human ignorance as apparent not in order to deny its reality but to shew that there is in him, beneath the human appearances, a divine nature. According to his view all the human infirmities are real but they are only the exterior of the person of Christ: for him Cyril's docetism is purely verbal.

But would Cyril really admit "une ignorance réelle" "à l'extérieur de la personne du Christ (Dubarle) or "à la surface de la vie du Christ" (selon l'expression du P. Lebreton)? When Christ enquired the place where the body of Lazarus was lying, when he asked the apostles: Who do men say that the Son of man is? he knew perfectly the replies that he was going to receive. Why then did He ask? Cyril replies that He had in view a useful purpose, a wise intention. So also when He said He did not know the day of judgment.

Interrogated again concerning the day of judgment after the Resurrection Christ replies: 'Il ne vous appartient pas de connaître les temps et les moments que le Père a fixés par son autorité' (Acts 1⁷). Athanasius contrasts this reply with that given before the Resurrection. Before the Resurrection He was able to speak as man and say He did not know. After the divinisation of His flesh at the Resurrection He could only speak as God and so

gives a more positive answer. Cyril, on the contrary, attempts to harmonise the two replies. Christ knew both before and after the Resurrection, and His reply in each case was to dispel an indiscreet question. It is not a case of Christ's ignorance coming to an end after the Resurrection for Christ was never truly ignorant before the Resurrection. Christ's words, whether He asks questions or confesses ignorance, are motivated not by ignorance but by a wise intention.

Why did Christ say He was ignorant? To be like unto His brethren, to sustain His human part or character. He says He does not know just because He is man, having the power to say it because He has assumed flesh and has appropriated the weaknesses of the flesh. His ignorance is "de droit, non de fait".

St. Cyril links the problem of ignorance with that of His worship. The Word being God and equal with Him has shewn Himself like unto us, not merely by assuming flesh but also by assuming all the characteristics of humanity. It is a characteristic of humanity to be subject to God and to render Him obedience and adoration. Cyril puts both adoration and ignorance among the *ἰδιώματα τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος*. This was the result of His *κένωσις*. But He has appropriated the humanities without renouncing His divine glory. He can therefore worship God as a man and as a Jew without ceasing to be Himself worshipped as God. This leaves us wondering, as in the case of Christ's knowledge, whether His worship could have been

a truly human sentiment of piety towards God.

In Dialogue VI "une nuance nouvelle" is added to Cyril's former explication. When the disciples interrogated Him on a point exceeding their capacity He replied as clearly as possible, but if their curiosity led them to ask on matters they should not know the Saviour exhorted them to occupy themselves with things more useful. It is in this manner He deals with the subject of the day of judgment. He tells them that the day has not been revealed by the Father to the angels and He would not have made it known to the Son Himself if he had been simply an ordinary man like them and had not been divine by nature. The inference is: as in fact He is more than man, He is not ignorant of it. Cyril's conclusion is: although He declares Himself ignorant along with them in His humanity, since He is God He knows as the Son all that the Father knows. The confession of ignorance reported by the Evangelist is only a pedagogic proceeding which does not correspond at all to a real ignorance.

What does this amount to? God Himself is speaking incarnation-ally in Christ as He has a right to do since He has taken upon Him the flesh and bears all the characteristics of the flesh in likeness to His human brethren. It bears out the fundamental weakness of Cyril's Christology, that Christ acts in two ways: He acts as the Omniscient Word and He acts in keeping with the limits of the human mind as He has a right to do since He has assumed flesh and all the

characteristics of the flesh. On this position G.L. Prestige makes the best comment: Cyril could not forget that it was God speaking. In the Incarnation the Word merely sustains the part of a human character.

But Kenosis requires a genuine human growth in knowledge: in Cyril it would seem to be the gradual manifestation to, or concealment from, others of a knowledge already inwardly complete. Here Cyril stands in sharp contrast to his Antiochene opponents who were able to take the Gospel statements in their plain literal sense. In Cyril the manhood becomes a mere instrument or veil through which the Godhead communicates. "He could never forget", writes Prestige, "that whenever Christ spoke it was God speaking, even though His speech issued through human lips and was conditioned by human faculties. That is why he represents the Saviour's moral and intellectual growth as a voluntary unveiling of His divine mind.... Cyril is little interested - too little interested - in Christ's human moral effort and His human apprehension of truth....The one fact which Cyril will never let go is that God was learning and deciding in His manhood, "economically" - that is to say, within the sphere and terms of the Incarnation (in Greek 'economy') - what He already knew and had decided from all eternity as God. 'Sometimes He discoursed as man, economically and manwise; sometimes He makes His utterances with divine authority, as God': Ep.45 ad Succens 1 (P.G.LXXVII, 232)".¹ Thus Cyril having made such

1 Op.cit. p.158.

promising use of the principle of Kenosis to establish Christ's unitary personality by means of an hypostatic union finally deserts the principle to be led in the direction of Apollinarius. Had he applied the principle consistently throughout he would have produced a theory similar to some later theories that have been broadly called Kenotic.

The principle of Kenosis is also employed in the Christology of St. Hilary which must be reckoned one of the most profound and original of ancient times.¹ For him Kenosis is the condition of the Incarnation. The Son of God emptied Himself of the form of God in order that He might exist in the form of a servant. On Psalm 68 he writes: 'In forma veniens evacuavit se a Dei forma. Nam in forma hominis existere manens in Dei forma qui poterat?'² In his De Trinitate: 'Erat enim (sc.Christo) naturae proprietates, sed Dei forma iam non erat, quia per eius exinanitionem servi erat forma suscepta'.³ On Psalm 53: 'Cumque accipere formam servi nisi per evacuationem suam non potuerit'.⁴ The 'forma Dei' he equates with 'countenance' (Dorner), the full personality as expressed in the countenance, the glory of His pre-incarnate being. This he renounces in order that during the period of His earthly humiliation He might

1 Dorner, Doctrine of the Person of Christ div. 1, vol. 2, pp. 399-421, on which the following summary is based.

2 Hilary Tract. in Psa. LXVIII, 25 (C.S.E.L.XXII, p.334).

3 De Trin. IX, 51 (P.L.X., 322).

4 Tract. in Psa. LIII, 8, 14.

assume the 'forma servilis'. He does not renounce the divina natura which remains, says Hilary, unalterably His, but only the forma or facies. For the purpose of redemption it was necessary that the divine should be introduced right into the servant's form, or humanity. "Aboleri autem Dei forma, ut tantum servi esset forma, non potuit. Ipse enim est se ex forma Dei inaniens et formam hominis assumens. Evacuatus non est divinae naturae interitus".¹

The Son of God laid aside His divine form in order that in Him there might be no obstacle in the way of making the servant's form His very own. The "evacuatio" and the "assumptio formae servilis" are regarded as two distinct moments, the one preparing the way for the other. The assumptio itself does not constitute the servile form. That would be a conversion of the Logos and would introduce suffering into the Logos. The assumption is a distinct act of the Son wherein He retains power over Himself; the potestas generis sui.²

Hilary's Christology is individualised by his anthropology. The human soul he regarded as a likeness of the image of God (imagineis Dei exemplum). Human souls are laden with guilt, but as they proceed from God they are pure and are only defiled by their entrance into the body. Likewise the soul of Christ was pure; and it remained pure in His case for His body was conceived of the Holy Ghost who sanctified the inner being of the Virgin. Thus the humanity of Christ was raised above all suffering and need. This

1 Tract. in Psa. LXVIII, 25 (C.S.E.L. XXII, p. 334).

2 De Trin. IX, 51 (P.L.X, 324-5).

must not be taken to mean that Christ was incapable of suffering and death or of normal human growth and development. Hilary merely wished to avoid representing the human weakness as a natural necessity, and to view all His sufferings as deeds, that is, as ethical. Indeed, in the mind of Hilary, such a necessity did not pertain to the true idea of humanity but merely to the kind of humanity embodied in us. For Christ not to have been able to suffer at all would have been an imperfection, would have been a limit imposed on His love; His ethical would have been restrained by His physical nature. And it was necessary for Him to become like us in order to redeem us. He therefore gave Himself up freely to suffering and death. He allowed all the hostile powers to work upon Him in order that they might exhaust themselves on His person and He might triumph over them in patient endurance. The assumption thus amounts to a glorification or deification of human nature.

This view brings Hilary into conflict not merely with the scriptural passages in which Christ declares His ignorance but equally with all true development on the part of His humanity. Hilary attempts to solve this problem by conceiving of the Incarnation not as absolutely completed in one act, but as a process. Had a perfect humanity been assumed from the first the "evacuatio" of the divine nature would not have been necessary. Room therefore must be left for the 'forma servilis' to be a reality, and the 'forma Dei' must become latent. "Decedere ex Deo in hominem nisi

ex forma Dei Deus evacuans non potuit".¹ But because as a result of the "evacuatio" the Son of God took to Himself the 'forma servilis', an "offensio (disturbance) unitatis" of the divine nature took place. The unity of the Son with the Father was not entirely done away with for otherwise the Incarnate Word could not have attained His purposed end. He entered into humanity in its low estate in order that God might be born into humanity;² consequently He must have retained within Himself the divinity He was to bestow. Only, however, by becoming like us, and unlike or unequal to Himself, that is by entering into a state inadequate to Himself, into the 'forma servilis', was it possible for the Word to do away with the inequality of humanity with itself and its idea, to make it like Himself, in the glory to which the Son should restore Himself. To this glory, however, He returned not merely as Logos, but as the God-man; that is, created humanity was in Him and through Him translated into the sphere of the divine essence. He retained His divine nature, He was Son always, for only so was it possible for Him finally to restore Himself to equality with Himself; into which equality human nature too is to be taken up: Si nativitas hominis naturam novam intulit, et humilitas formam demutavit sub assumptione servili; nunc donatio nominis (Phil.2¹⁰) formae reddit aequalitatem.³

1 Hilary, De Trin.XII,6 (P.L.X, 437).

2 Hilary De Trin.X,7 (P.L.X. 348).

3 Ibid. IX,54 (P.L.X, 324).

Hilary distinguishes three stages in the eternal existence of the Logos, each initiated by a birth: ante hominem, in homine, post hominem.¹ As the eternally-begotten of the Father He was equal to Him in all things. In His second birth into humanity, in the forma servilis, He acquired a different mode of existence. By descending into the depths of humanity He raised it into Himself. But He was only relatively separated from the divine unity for it was only by retaining hold of Himself that He was able to create a 'forma Dei' out of the 'forma servilis'. His perfecting of humanity coincides with His full return to Himself, and henceforward as God-man He became what He was formerly before all time as Logos.

In the accomplishment of this third stage the whole of humanity is recreated. He took upon Himself the likeness of our servile form in order that we might bear the likeness of His divine form, that we might be converted to the image of the Creator in accordance with His original purpose in the creation of man. By faith believers become essentially one with Him, and it is in the light of this principle that Hilary sees the significance of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

Such in brief outline is the closely wrought-out Christology of St. Hilary by which, more effectively than Apollinarius, he succeeds in combining the divine and human in the personality of Christ. He has no need to sacrifice the human soul of Christ,

¹ Opuscit. IX,6 (P.L.X, 285).

although it is an obvious defect that he fails to deal with the question of the freedom of Christ's human will. Undoubtedly the main plank in his structure is the principle of Kenosis. Only by a self-emptying was an Incarnation possible; only by renouncing the *forma Dei* was the Logos able to assume the *forma servilis*. But the self-emptying does not involve the surrender of His divine nature, otherwise the purpose of the Incarnation, viz. the deification of humanity, would have been rendered impossible. Nevertheless the *assumptio formae servilis* was equally necessary and this could only be achieved at the expense of an *evacuatio*. But Hilary is not clear as to the nature of the expense involved. A new mode of being seems to be involved. In laying aside His divine form as far as He did the obstacle to His assuming the form of a servant was removed, and the servant's form became His very own. Yet Hilary does not clearly indicate what exactly was surrendered although his argument implies some real impoverishment. He really goes no further than the scriptural affirmation that He renounced 'the form of God'.

The theme of Kenosis is also touched upon in the famous Tome of Leo. Reference will be made to this epoch-making book in the appropriate place, but it will be convenient to give here a brief summary of Leo's Christology and to note the place he gives to the Kenosis.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God born of Mary the Son of man, both

divine and human, true God and true man, the one Mediator between God and man, "totus in suis, totus in nostris" save sin. Each nature in the one person of Christ performed what was proper to itself in communion with the other, the one shining forth in miracles, the other submitting to injuries. Yet while the natures are distinct in their properties, because of the unity of the person who is subject of both, "things are sometimes predicated of the one which in strictness belong to the other. The Son of man is said to have descended from heaven in allusion to the Incarnation, and the Son of God is said to have been crucified and buried, though He suffered these things not in His divinity, but in the infirmity of human nature".¹ This is the time-honoured principle of *Communicatio Idiomatum*.

This assumption of servile form by the Son of God exalted the humanity of Christ but did not diminish His divinity. The *Kenosis* did not involve any loss of power on the part of the Son of God, but was an act of condescending compassion: *Inclinatio fuit miserationis, non defectio potestatis*.² Yet Leo expresses a genuine kenotic insight when he asserts that, so far from introducing an alteration into God, the *Kenosis* demonstrates the unchangeableness of His will which cannot be deprived of its benignity. The Incarnation was an act of divine love. But

1. Bruce, *op.cit.* p.63.

2. Leo Tom. 3 (Bindley-Green, p.170).

contrary to Scripture he asserts that there was no loss of divine glory. He descended from His celestial abode, not receding from the glory of His Father: De coelesti sede descendens et a Paterna gloria non recedens.¹ His majesty was simply veiled by the assumption of the servile form. For Leo the Kenosis is a krupsis.

¹ Leo Tom 4 (Bindley-Green, p.170).

3

HISTORICAL:

(B) Chalcedon and After

Having established that the Kenosis is exegetically sound and that the Fathers had a lively sense of the Kenosis though uncommitted to the more radical type of Kenotic theory to be described later, we must now consider the principle in relation to the Definition of Chalcedon and post-Chalcedonian Christological thought. This is rendered necessary for three reasons: first, the Definition of Chalcedon, while hardly a Christology in itself, is an ecumenical decision of the Church and is the acid test of any Christological theory; secondly, it is the exaggerated duality which has infected all Christology since Chalcedon against which the strength and significance of Kenoticism can be most fully appreciated; and thirdly, because this is the background against which later thinking must be studied.

Three Christologies were involved at Chalcedon: those of Antioch, Alexandria and the West (Leo). In "Christology and Myth in the New Testament" Geraint V. Jones speaks of an 'anagogic' and a 'Katagogic' Christology. Anagogic Christology bases itself firmly on the human and historical Christ who is exalted to Lordship; Katagogic Christology starts with the pre-existent Logos who 'descends' to live a human life. These two categories are obviously applicable to Antioch and Alexandria.

Antiochene Christology is anagogic, from below above. Redemption is a divine work effected in and through man in the light of God's original creative purpose for man. God has created man a free moral

agent and man's response must be made voluntarily in moral freedom. Hence Antioch insists on Christ's full humanity with its freedom and moral responsibility. Christ must be homoousios with us. Antioch thus starts from duality and works upwards towards unity. This they find in the region of will, in a perfect and continuous moral unison.

Alexandria is katagogic, from above below. The divine act is vital and central. The personal subject of Jesus Christ is the Logos. Hence they start from a Logos-centred unity and work towards an assessment of the humanity. Christ must be homoousios with God. Only so can the reality of redemption be assured. They prefer an organic theory of the unity of Christ's person, a physical or hypostatic union. Christ is the God-man.

Between the two there is thus a difference of starting-point, a different order of priorities and a difference in the categories with which they work. The difference might be put succinctly thus. If the Logos were taken away from the Incarnate Person what would be left? Antioch would answer, A man. Alexandria would find the question horrifying. They would insist upon the completeness of the manhood assumed but would be unable to give it independent representation. The Incarnate Person is one organic unity.

The West stood far closer to Antioch than to Alexandria in its order of priorities and approach to the problem though it lacked the speculative gifts of the Antiochene school. The two elements of Godhead and manhood are held in balance, merely juxtaposed one might

say to account for the scriptural facts. Jesus Christ is Mediator between God and man because in His own person He is both perfect God and perfect man. Yet Church historically speaking its influence at Chalcedon was decisive and it had some influence on the language of the Chalcedonian Definition, though the Antiochene school, while virtually in eclipse after the condemnation of Nestorius, contributed more to the formula through documents like the Formulary of Reunion of 433. It will help in clarifying the doctrinal significance of the proceedings at Chalcedon if we begin historically a little before Chalcedon, at the point of the condemnation of Nestorius. There was then need for a drawing together of men of good will of all parties. Having accomplished his 'mission' of vanquishing Nestorius Cyril realised this and became more amenable theologically. Not that he begins to produce a new theology but a new emphasis is apparent. Most of his references to the human soul in Christ come from this period and he is prepared to give more to the duality within the unity than he did in the heat of the Nestorian controversy. He signs the Formulary of Reunion, a document very probably drawn up by Theodoret! And he was also prepared to allow his Twelve Anathematisms virtually to become a dead letter. John of Antioch and Theodoret likewise proved more co-operative, and more moderate than their old leader. A rapprochement was in sight. The Formulary of Reunion is one of the sources of Chalcedon as are also two other moderate 'dualist' documents, the Tome of Proclus (435)

and the Confession of Flavian (448).

The situation caused by the Robber Council of Ephesus (449) at which the Tome of Leo was flouted by the Council meant that leadership passed to Leo. Yet at Chalcedon, while the Pope through his legates carried the Council and his ideas were of paramount importance in the Formula (which his legates regarded as unnecessary) the Two Letters of Cyril against Nestorius as well as the Tome were accepted as canonical, and the other three documents noted above were no less important. Complying with the emperor's insistence upon a definition of faith the Council of Chalcedon produced the following credal statement:

1. Ἐπόμενοι τοίνυν τοῖς ἁγίοις πατέρας ἕνα καὶ τὸν
2. αὐτὸν ὁμολογεῖν υἱὸν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν
3. συμφώνως ἅπαντες ἐκδιδάσκοντες, τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν
4. θεότητι καὶ τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι, θεὸν
5. ἀληθῶς καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἀληθῶς τὸν αὐτὸν ἐκ ψυχῆς
6. λογικῆς καὶ σώματος, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν
7. θεότητα καὶ ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν τὸν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὴν

8. ἀνθρωπότητα, κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον ἡμῖν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας,
 9. πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γενηθέντα κατὰ τὴν
 10. θεότητα, ἐπ' ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν τὸν αὐτὸν δι'
 11. ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς
 12. παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα,
 13. ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστὸν υἱὸν κύριον μονογενῆ, ἐν δύο
 14. φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως ἀτρέπτως ἀδιαιρέτως ἀχωρίστως
 15. γνωριζόμενοι, οὐδαμῶς τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς
 16. ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν, σωζομένης δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς
 17. ἰδιότητος ἑκατέρας φύσεως καὶ εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν
 18. ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης, οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον
 19. ἢ διαιρούμενον, ἀλλ' ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν υἱὸν καὶ μονογενῆ
 20. θεὸν λόγον κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, καθάπερ ἄνωθεν οἱ
 21. προφῆται περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
 22. ἐξέπαίδευσεν καὶ τὸ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῖν παραδέδωκε
 23. σύμβολον.

The above statement is divided into two parts after Dr. R.V. Sellers who shews that they differ in respect of both literary origin and doctrinal theme. The first part deals with the unity of the Person of Jesus Christ and is modelled on Flavian's Confession which in turn is based upon the Formulary of Reunion, the Antiochene document which Cyril had accepted in 433.¹ Yet some of the very expressions used by Cyril make their appearance. Cyril speaks of Jesus Christ as 'the Same, at once both God and man' *ὁ αὐτὸς θεὸς τε ὁμοῦ καὶ ἄνθρωπος*² (v.11 1-2 Def. above); as 'perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood'³ (v.11 3-4); and as homoousios with us, while remaining homoousios with the Father *καὶ γέγονεν ἡμῖν ὁμοούσιος, τούτέστιν ἄνθρωπος ὁμοούσιος δὲ μεμενηκῶς καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ θεῷ*⁴ (v.11 6-8).

In the second part, which deals with the reality of the two natures, the opening passage contains the well-known four Chalcedonian adverbs: (v.1 14): Godhead and manhood co-exist in Jesus Christ 'without confusion' *ἀσυχχύτως*, 'without change' *ἀτρέπτως*, 'without division' *ἀδιαιρέτως* and 'without separation' *ἀχωρίστως*. "It is significant", Sellers⁵ holds, "that the first two adverbs

1 R.V. Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon, p.211.

2 Cyril contra Nestorium Proem. (Schwartz A.C.O.I, i, p.76), and other passages cited by Sellers op.cit. p.212.

3 Cyril Ep. ad Joan. Ant. (Bindley-Green, p.143).

4 Cyril contra Nestorium III, 3 (Schwartz op.cit. p.65).

5 Sellers, op.cit. p.215.

are frequently used together by Cyril as he upholds the reality of the divine and human elements in Jesus Christ; and it may be that the third and fourth are based on this teacher's injunction that the natures must not be 'divided' or 'separated' and Sellers adds in a footnote that *διαιρεῖν* is the word most frequently used by Cyril when he speaks of 'dividing' the natures. In the phrase 'made known in two natures' (v.11 13-15) Sellers¹ sees the influence of the papal legates who had learned to speak of unus in utroque and were determined that the wording of the Definition should be brought more into harmony with that of the Tome. Next in the statement come two quotations, the first from the Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius, 'the difference of the natures having been in no wise taken away by reason of the union' (v.11 15-16) *οὐχ ὡς τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν*²; the second (v.11 16-17) due no doubt to the papal legates, from Tertullian's *Adversus Praxeam* (27) 'but rather the properties of each being preserved', negative and positive assertions to emphasise the denial of the Eutychian position.³ The final passage which speaks of a 'concurrence' of both natures into one prosopon and one hypostasis (v.11 17-18) is reminiscent of Cyril's Second Letter to Nestorius (*Obloquuntur*) where, after the words already used in the Definition (11 15-6) come these words: "but rather God-head and manhood perfected for us the one Lord and Son through the

1 Sellers op.cit. p.217.

2 Ep.II.ad Nest. (Bindley-Green, p.96).

3 Sellers op.cit. pp.217-18).

ineffable and unspeakable concurrence into unity *διὰ τῆς..... πρὸς ἐνότητά συνδρομῆς* " - though, lest the words might be taken in a Eutychedian sense, a 'concurrence' not into 'oneness' - *ἐνότης* but 'into one prosopon and one hypostasis' is spoken of (v.11 17-18).¹

Literary analysis of the whole Definition reveals the influences both of Cyril and Leo and would seem to endorse the judgment of MacArthur that "it was explicitly based on the Christologies of Leo and Cyril, and attempted to effect a synthesis of them".² The question is whether Cyril and Leo are compatible and which has priority.

Professor Bruce comes down heavily on the side of Leo. Indeed for him the Definition is merely a transcript of the Tome of Leo which "guided the deliberations and fixed the judgment of the Fathers assembled at Chalcedon".³ In this letter Leo represents the Incarnate Word as "totus in suis, totus in nostris"⁴ which means exactly the same as "perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood" of the Definition (v.11 3-4), while the four negative adverbs (v.1 14) "merely condense into four words the various phrases scattered up and down the letter, in which the writer sets forth the distinctness and integrity of the two natures on the one hand, and their intimate, inseparable union in one person on the other".⁵ This, however, is to discount the Cyrilline

1 *Op.cit.* p.220.

2 J.S. MacArthur, Chalcedon, p.141.

3 A.B. Bruce, The Humiliation of Christ. p.61.

4 Leo, Epistle to Flavian, c.3 (Bindley-Green, p.169).

5 Bruce *op.cit.* p.63.

'tell-tales' indicated above and Cyril's signature to the Formulary of Reunion which is a principal theological source of one part of the Definition. The dualism of the Definition is certainly pronounced and the monophysite reaction does not go for nothing, but there would also seem to be something in the Definition for Alexandrian monists.

On the 'recommended reading list' of the Council were the Two Letters of Cyril and the Tome of Leo. Did this mean the accord of Cyril and Leo? The exception taken by some members of the Council to the three so-called 'Nestorian' passages¹ in the Tome, and the battle over the two readings 'out of two natures' and 'in two natures' (v.11 13-14) might indicate the contrary. The former was the phrase which the East and Alexandria were familiar and the monophysites later deliberately charged the Council with its omission. Yet Cyril can on occasion use the phrase 'in two natures' though not necessarily in the dualised western sense while preferring the

καὶ φύσιν τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη formula. The first draft of the Definition apparently read 'out of two natures' and was hailed with

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1. (i) et mori posset ex uno et mori non posset ex altero: Tom.3.
- (ii) Agit enim utraque forma cum alterius communione quod proprium est; Verbo scilicet operante quod Verbi est, et carne exsequente quod carnis est. Unum horum coruscet miraculis, aliud succumbit iniuriis: Tom.4.
- (iii) Quamvis enim in Domino Jesu Dei et hominis una persona sit, aliud tamen est unde in utroque communis est contumelia, aliud unde communis est gloria. De nostro enim illi est minor Patre humanitas; de Patre illi est aequalis cum Patre divinitas: Tom.4. (Bindley-Green, pp.169-171).

general delight. The Roman legates however threatened to return home if it did not agree with the Tome of Leo. The bulk of the Council at first refused to accept the 'in two natures', but it was at last accepted it seems on the insistence by the commissioners that the phrase was included in the Tome of Leo which the Council had already accepted, but the exact steps which led to the change of mind of the assembly are not on record.

The positive part of the Definition was that henceforth Christ was to be confessed as one hupostasis or prosopon made known in two natures, perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood. As such it indicates the conditions or ingredients of a Christology rather than presents a clear-cut theory. Of these ingredients it may be said:

(1) The term 'hupostasis' is found in Cyril hardly distinguishable from his famous and debateable 'one incarnate physis of God the Logos'. This formula originated with Apollinarius but Cyril believed that it was Athanasian. Hupostasis was probably his own coinage; at least its origins are obscure and it was not widely used by the Antiochenes. In the Definition it appears to be used (as Cyril had not used it) to express a bond of union allowing for and not excluding two natures. So far as terminology went the monist theory of unity might well be 'unlaced' with some advantage to permit a greater duality than Cyril or others had already allowed. (ii) The term 'prosopon' was familiar both to Eastern dualists and to Leo. It emphasised the bond of union in a way that Nestorius had seemingly failed to do. (iii) The double

homocousion of perfect Godhead and perfect manhood allow a measure of duality familiar enough both to Leo and to the Eastern dualists, but such was deeply suspect in monist circles, and Cyril had never admitted as much. It is true he had signed 'a union of two natures' in the Formulary of Reunion but this phrasing left open whether it was 'in two natures' or 'out of two natures'.

Allowing for all these ingredients the Definition of Chalcedon would appear to be susceptible of interpretation along any of three lines:

- (i) It might be interpreted in the sense of Cyril as a dualised monism. A Christology holding firmly to the unity of Christ's person but allowing more fully for two full natures is now possible as in the cases of Leontius and John of Damascus.
- (ii) It also leaves room for a monised dualism such as Theodoret might have attempted, in which the two full natures cohere more closely by some strengthening of the bond of union.
- (iii) Or it might be read in the sense of Leo whereby the unity of personality and the duality of natures are held in balance, a statement of the facts rather than a doctrine.

The Definition of Chalcedon may be said therefore to indicate the three cardinal points of a true Christology, namely the true divinity and humanity and the unity of personality in Jesus Christ, but it does little more. This, it has been generally agreed, is a merit in the formula which is a credal statement of the Church, and

like all such "are designed to safeguard the mysteries which the Church has in her keeping" from those supposed full and clear statements "which, by their illusory completeness, paralyse those efforts of the spirit whereby it apprehends to some degree, however slight, that which it cannot comprehend".¹ F.W. Green remarks about the question which Loofs asks (Leitfaden³, p.172) namely whether, when the Definition of Chalcedon had to be interpreted, it would be read in the light of Cyril's teaching, or Theodoret's or Leo's, that this is perhaps theologically, as well as historically, the justification of its claim to have defined the Doctrine of the Person of Christ in such terms that it has been the starting-point for a large and fruitful range of Christian thought through the centuries, which is by no means yet exhausted because the Subject itself is inexhaustible".²

The task of correlating these three cardinal principles of Christology as set forth in the Definition of Chalcedon in a complete intellectual synthesis was left to the thought of future generations under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and the work is still in progress. The Definition has been aptly compared by Dr. W.S. Bishop³ "to a stereoscopic view in which two pictures taken from two slightly different angles are set in juxtaposition in such a way that when looked at simultaneously through an appropriate optical instrument

1 J.S. MacArthur, op.cit. p.136.

2 T.H. Bindley (rev. F.W. Green) Ecumenical Documents of the Faith, p.187.

3 In a volume of essays entitled "The Theology of Personality" quoted by MacArthur op.cit. pp.135-6.

one single picture is seen, the features of which stand out, giving an impression of depth which is ordinarily lacking in linear representation. The impression of depth is produced by the blending of the two pictures, though the impression received is that of a single unit". MacArthur develops a further analogy. It is only when the stereoscope is brought into action that the single impression of depth and lifelike relief is produced. "Applying this further analogy to the Definition, we may say that it must be viewed through the appropriate spiritual medium, a medium into which various moral, philosophical and psychological factors enter, before it will clearly reveal the lineaments of the one Christ".¹

But in modern times the Definition has been much less sympathetically viewed, and has been strongly criticised by the great historians of dogma, Dorner, Bruce, Harnack and Mackintosh. The two most trenchant criticisms were forcefully expressed by the last-named in his history of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ, and these still remain valid in spite of many recent attempts to answer them. The first concerns the unnatural dualism which Dr. Mackintosh sums up in the following passage which he quotes from an article by Dr. Oswald Dykes in the "Expository Times", Oct. 1905, p.10: "A Being who combines in an inscrutable fashion Divine with human properties, and of whom consequently contradictory assertions can be made, whose single Person is Divine, while His dual natures hold an undefined

1 J.S. MacArthur op.cit. p.136.

2 H.R. Mackintosh op.cit. p.150.

relation to one another: this is not a scheme to satisfy head or heart. It is but the bare skeleton of a dogma, in which one cannot readily recognise either the Jesus of the Gospels or the Christ of the Church's worship".

Dr. John Knox¹ has recently made the same criticism. The Chalcedon statement, he writes, "is not fully satisfactory because of the manifest impossibility of a truly human existence actually having this character". It requires that Jesus should be "what as a human being he could not have been". From the very beginning the Church has held "the full, unqualified humanity of Jesus....Can we", he asks, "hold fast our memory of him as 'made like his brethren in every respect', sharing, in the whole range of his conscious and sub-conscious life, our human existence, his joys our joys, our griefs his griefs - can we hold this fast and at the same time think of him as having also another 'nature', which was not human at all?".

The second criticism concerns the inadequacy of the ancient categories, 'substance', 'nature' etc. to express the truth of the Incarnation. A host of modern authorities might be cited under this rubric. According to Dr. Mackintosh, following his great predecessor P.T. Forsyth, love lies behind the Incarnation which consequently cannot be explained in other than spiritual, ethical and dynamic categories. MacArthur replies that 'substance' and other similar terms used by the Fathers are apt to have for us a connotation of materiality that they did not always have. He instances the use of

1 The Church and the Reality of Christ, pp.99-100.

the word 'nature' in 'natural history', 'natural sciences' which have a completely non-moral significance. "But that is a limitation of the sense of the word which we must be aware of applying to the 'nature' (*φύσις*) of the Greek theologians. The word both in Greek and Latin had a metaphysical connotation, and that gives it a legitimate place in Christological terminology."¹

Christology, he goes on to say, must be discussed in terms of the metaphysical, and "it is not to be lightly assumed that Christological relations can be properly described as "essentially" ethical or personal....We often find ourselves thinking of the spiritual world as standing in a kind of antithesis to the physical and material universe; the former is the realm of value judgments, the latter of existential. Yet must these two realms remain for ever separate? If we believe that our value judgments are something more than of our own fabrication, that they repose on reality, that they are objective, then we believe that the things for which they stand are as much a part of God's plan as is the physical world which is the sphere of our existential judgments. The Incarnation, on this view, is the supreme example of the realisation of value in the existential world". This is very sound comment but it does not meet the charge that the metaphysical categories are too "static" to explain the dynamism of the Incarnation. The scriptural data include movement as well as being: He was in "the form of God", but He also "emptied" Himself": we praise God for His mighty acts

1 Op.cit. p.152.

as well as for His excellent greatness. But MacArthur has touched upon an important point which must come up for treatment later when we discuss the compatibility of Kenotic doctrine with the statement of Chalcedon.

Harnack's dictum that Chalcedon meant the bankruptcy of Greek metaphysical theology is hardly true in so far as the Christological debate went on for three centuries. But the discussions were becoming subtly scholastic and more and more they presented to view a mere skeleton in place of the living Christ of the Gospel history. Bruce notes the interesting fact that orthodox theologians like Bede taught the extreme Monophysite view that Christ from His conception was full of wisdom and therefore did not really grow in knowledge as in stature, while the Agnoetes, i.e. those who asserted that the human soul of Christ was like ours even in respect of ignorance belonged to the Monophysite party. "Amid the smoke of battle men had got bewildered, and fighting at random fired upon their own side".

Between Chalcedon and the end of the Patristic period two great controversies succeeded one another. In the first, the Monophysite, the subject of dispute was the question of compatibility between the unity of the person and the duality of natures. In the second, the Monothelite, it was the problem of demarcation of 'nature' and 'person', and in particular the question as to which of the two categories the 'will' is to be reckoned.

One feature of the Monophysite controversy deserves some

attention in view of its prominence in the modern Christological debate, namely the doctrine of Enhypostasia which forms part of the Christology of Leontius of Byzantium who interpreted the Definition of Chalcedon on Cyrilline lines. Chalcedon makes it obligatory to maintain two phuseis but only one hypostasis. But the extreme Monophysites who opposed him maintained that it was impossible to have a phusis without its proper hypostasis, and that therefore the Chalcedonian assertion of two natures implied the existence of two hypostases or two persons in Christ, which was Nestorian. In reply Leontius notes three possible situations:

(i) Idiohypostatic. This is a rather complicated way of expressing what is true of ourselves - one phusis inhering in one hypostasis. This is the way in which the divine nature inheres in the divine hypostasis. It cannot explain the humanity.

(ii) Anhypostatic. This represents a phusis 'going spare', or lacking any hypostasis in which to inhere. It aptly describes the Christology of Apollinarius.

(iii) Enhypostatic. This is his own idea. The human nature does not lack a hypostasis but can be truly predicated of the divine hypostasis because in being God the Logos He was all that perfect humanity could ever be, and more besides. This contribution of Leontius represents the first attempt to transcend the gaping dualism between God and man customary in Patristic Christology. This same concept was used by John of Damascus and reappears in the

Christology of Dr. H.M. Relton. It is possible that even Bishop Weston is really urging a form of Enhypostasia as we shall see.

The Monothelite controversy marks the close of the Patristic period. Patristic Christology was always perplexed over the relationship between phusis and will; and controversy broke out between the adherents to the Chalcedonian formula because it was not self-evident to which of the two categories, the nature or the person, the will should be referred. In one sense the faculty of will seems to be an essential attribute of a rational nature; in another 'to will' is personal. What actually happened was that the thesis (will) followed phusis (nature) and Dyophysitism led to Dyotheletism, and Monophysitism led to Monotheletism. The latter was condemned at the Sixth General Council held at Constantinople in 681.

It remains now to consider the Christology of John of Damascus who flourished about the middle of the 8th century and represents the state of Christology at the close of the controversy concerning the two wills. His system of thought substantially represents the orthodox Christology up to the Reformation, and the intellectual background against which Kenoticism stands out so prominently. Once again we shall draw upon the pages of Professor Bruce for a summary of his doctrine. The Damascene carries out the theory of two distinct natures of Chalcedon to the utmost limit short of the recognition of two hypostases in the One Christ. Christ has the full nature of the Father except the property of being unbegotten, and the full nature

of Adam, save sin.

Yet he does not concede separate independent personality to Christ's humanity. Here he employs the concept of Enhypostasia of Leontius. Christ's human nature was without hypostasis in itself, never having had an independent subsistence; but it became enhypostasised through union with the Logos. In Christ the human and divine natures meet in one hypostasis.¹ Christ thus becomes a human individual and the person of Christ is to be regarded as composite: *εἰς μίαν ὑπόστασιν σύνθετον* ².

Yet in spite of the emphasis upon the duality of Christ's incarnate life, the original intention of which was to preserve the integrity of both human and divine in Christ, the humanity of Christ in the system of the Damascene remained a lifeless thing. The human nature became "an inanimate carcass with the form and features of a man, but without the inspiring soul".³ What Dorner calls the "transubstantiating process" had begun whereby Christ's humanity was evacuated of all its contents to leave an outward shell with a God within. Christ is no longer homoousios with us. His body was not formed gradually in the Virgin's womb but was perfected at once: *οὐ τὰς κατὰ μικρὸν προσθήκαις ἀπαρτιζόμενον τοῦ σχήματος ἀλλ' ὑφ' ἐν τελειωθέντος* .⁴ The holy child did not grow

in wisdom. He is said to have increased in wisdom and stature because

1 John Damasc. de fid orth.III,9 (P.G.XCIV, 1008-12).

2 Ibid.III,3 (P.G.XCIV, 993).

3 A.B. Bruce, op.cit. p.70.

4 John Damasc. op.cit.III,2 (P.G.XCIV, 985).

He did indeed grow in stature and caused the manifestation of the indwelling Wisdom to keep pace with the physical growth: *τῇ μὲν ἡλικίᾳ αὐξῶν, διὰ δὲ τῆς αὐξήσεως τῆς ἡλικίας τὴν ἐνυπάρχουσαν αὐτῷ σοφίαν εἰς φανέρωσιν ἄγων.*¹ This is Cyrilline doctrine

which is again reproduced in the thought of the indissolubility of the hypostatic union whereby His human soul, ignorant per se, was enriched with the knowledge of future things: *διὰ δὲ τὴν τῆς*

*ὑποστάσεως ταυτότητα καὶ τὴν ἀδιάσπαστον ἔνωσιν κατεπλούτησεν ἢ τοῦ Κυρίου ψυχὴ τὴν τῶν μελλόντων γνῶσιν,*² To assert growth in wisdom and grace is to deny that the union was formed ab initio, to deny the hypostatic union altogether. Such a view of course mitigates the force of temptation for such a Christ.

He was tempted from without, not by any internal suggestions, and He repelled and dissipated the assaults of the enemy "like smoke":

*ὡς κάπνον διέλυσεν.*³ Similarly Christ has no personal need for prayer. He prayed simply as sustaining our human part, "asking what He did not need by way of example to us; teaching us to ask of God and to raise our souls to Him and through His holy mind preparing a way for our ascent to the throne of grace": *τὸ ἡμέτερον οἰκειοῦμενος πρόσωπον καὶ τοπῶν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ ἡμέτερον, καὶ ὑπογραμμὸς ἡμῖν γενόμενος, καὶ διδάσκων ἡμᾶς παρὰ Θεοῦ αἰτεῖν, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνατείνεσθαι, καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου αὐτοῦ νοῦ ὁδοποιῶν ἡμῖν τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν ἀνάβασιν.*⁴

1 Ibid. III, 22 (P.G. XCIV, 1088).

2 John Damasc. de fid orth. III, 21 (P.G. XCIV, 1084).

3 Ibid. III, 20 (P.G. XCIV, 1081).

4 Ibid. III, 24 (P.G. XCIV, 1089).

Communication between the two natures is established by the *περιχώρησις*, permeation, which involves something approaching at least to the real communication of the Lutherans. Both the permeation and the hypostatic union bring about the perfection in knowledge of the human soul of Christ already spoken of, and also that the flesh of Christ is life-giving. But as in the Cyrilline and Lutheran Christologies the communication of attributes is one-sided, there is no kind of communication by which the divine nature becomes a participator of the lowliness and humility of humanity. There is no participation in the sufferings of the flesh. "For the divine nature in Christ the words humiliation, service, suffering have no real sense. Christ, we are told, was not a servant - to teach otherwise is to Nestorianise; all that we may say is, that the flesh of Christ per se, and conceived of as not united to the Word, was of servile nature. The relation of the Logos to the passion is illustrated by the metaphor of a tree on which the sun shines being cut down with an axe. The axe fells the tree, but it does no harm to the sunbeams; and so in like manner the divinity of the Logos, though united hypostatically to the flesh, remains impassible while the flesh suffers".

This is the sort of Christology which is still being taught in Roman Catholic orthodoxy and is popularised by such modern writers as Daniel-Rops¹, F.J. Sheed² and Ronald Knox³, and against which the

1 The Book of Life, pp.43,51,85.

2 See p.7 supra.

3 See p.7 supra.

great kenotic theologian Dr. Mackintosh and others have made their impassioned protest.

But is Kenosis, it must be faced, in harmony with the Definition of Chalcedon? The Definition appears to speak of two fully co-present natures, of a Lord who is concurrently perfect God and perfect man. Kenosis, as we have already said in anticipation, involves some kind of reduction of the divine factor in the Incarnation to leave room for the human. Does not such a concept run counter to ἀπέναντος (v.1 14) and the double homoousion, and is not therefore Kenoticism excluded by Chalcedon in advance? If it is held, we may say at once, that the Church is committed to literal fidelity to Chalcedon then Kenosis must be disallowed. For then the divine perfection must be conceived in terms of Greek metaphysics as eternal, static and immutable, which makes the theory of Kenosis simply unthinkable. If, however, as we here maintain, the Definition of Chalcedon is regarded as only the skeleton of a doctrine, a setting of the ingredients of the problem in order in the best way available at the time then nothing appears to exclude a re-arrangement of the material such as Kenosis provides. Provided we adhere to the principles of Chalcedon: the full divinity, humanity and unity of personality of our Lord there seems nothing to preclude what Dr. Forsyth calls "the moralising of dogma", the re-interpretation in categories more spiritual, ethical and dynamic. The question is whether the perfection of God may be conceived in such a way as to

allow for Kenosis. It is to be noted that Kenosis is a dynamic term and may harmonise with a more dynamic conception of the eternal Being of God. Now the whole difference between ancient and modern ways of thinking about God may be expressed in terms of these contrasting concepts of the 'static' and the 'dynamic'. The ancient categories of hypostasis, physis and housia may be inaccurately described as 'mechanical' or 'materialistic' but they are certainly 'static'. Today we are more interested in the categories of will, purpose and action. And yet both must be held together somehow, for it is obvious that life and movement presuppose an abiding something which moves and persists through its successive changes. But from our present point of view it is salutary to remember that God is God not only in what He is but also in what He does.

It is perhaps the category of will which will provide us with the best clue to the radical difference between these two modes of thought. For the ancient theologians there was, as we have seen, some difficulty as how to place it - in relation to person or to nature. It was finally fitted atomistically into the physis as one among many other attributes. But the alternative, to conceive of will as personal, something bound up with the whole being, is the modern way of conceiving it. In modern thinking will is conceived as the whole being organised for action. Whereas the ancients spoke of the divine hypostasis and physis, modern thought inclines to speak of the Will of God.

The Will of God we may conceive as the driving power of the total energies of the divine nature, and is expressed in terms of holiness and love. As such it is immutable and we prefer to speak of the immutability of God's holy will of love rather than of the immutability of the divine nature. For modern thought nature follows will. For the Fathers it was the other way about. It was just this that was at the root of their Christological difficulties with regard to Kenosis. The Antiochenes did place importance on will but they applied it anti-kenotically in the modern sense, that is, they relaxed the bond of union rather than 'modified' either element in its entirety. A more realistic exegesis thus permits the human experiences to be taken seriously but only of the homo assumptus. The influence of the traditional metaphysic, however, is seen in their judgment of the Cyrilline Kenosis. They argued that even if Kenosis was an act of will on the part of the divine Logos it nevertheless subsequently involved a submission of the divine nature to the laws of human nature, which was unthinkable. But Cyril's theory, too, was vitiated by the current metaphysics. That is why he insisted upon regarding the Kenosis as an addition to the Trinitarian life of the Logos, and explains his hesitancy in applying the principle of Kenosis throughout the full range of Christ's manhood. He speaks of the Logos as allowing the measures, laws or proportions of humanity to prevail over Himself but restricts these to the physical conditions of the Incarnation and does not extend the principle to its mental, moral and spiritual

conditions. The difficulty of both schools of thought lay in their 'static' concept of 'nature'. God's perfection is wrapped up in a concept that renders Him static and immobile. Had they viewed nature conatively in terms of will the difficulty of Kenosis would not have arisen, as it does not arise for the modern theologian who sees an act of Kenosis possible because consistent with God's changeless and holy will of love.

The same difficulty may be illustrated from the Christology of Pope Leo. In the Tome Leo argues that the Kenosis demonstrates the unchangeableness of God's will which cannot be deprived of its benignity and which refused to be baffled by the wiles of the devil aiming at the destruction of mankind. But for Leo it is not only God's will that is unchangeable but the whole divine nature of which it forms a part; hence, contrary to Scripture, he asserts that the Kenosis entailed no loss of power or glory. Professor Bruce's comment on this passage from the Tome is very pertinent to our argument: "If God's unchangeableness be secured by the immutability of His loving will, why guard His majesty in a way that tends to make His love a hollow unreality? Why not let love have free course and be glorified, even though its glorification should involve a temporary forfeiture of another kind?"¹ The answer is obvious enough: for Leo not only the divine will but the entire divine nature is immutable.

This interpretation of Chalcedon, it may be said, does not necessitate a rephrasing of the Definition for it is not laid down

¹ Op.cit. pp.64-5.

in what manner we are to conceive of God's nature. We need some such word as nature but it must be capable of a dynamic interpretation. There is nothing wrong with the intention or meaning of Chalcedon; what is wrong is the framework which employs categories that do not yield to a Kenotic interpretation; and it must be insisted upon that we are equally justified in using our own categories as the ancients made use of theirs. There is nothing sacrosanct about either terminology.

This question of the compatibility of Chalcedon with Kenotic doctrine has been discussed by O.C. Quick in his *Doctrines of the Creeds* and it may be fittingly reproduced here in support of the view we have advocated in the preceding pages. The reason why, he argues, the patristic theologians were unable to work out the suggestions of a Kenotic Christology to be found in St. Paul's Epistles is to be sought for in their "Hellenic conception of the divine nature". To follow the Kenosis would have been to lay themselves open to the charge of transgressing the fundamental principle of the impassibility and changelessness of the Deity. "But if we conceive God's changelessness to consist simply in the absolute steadfastness of his perfect will of love, we can at once deny that the self-limitation of the eternal Son in the historical manhood of Jesus involves any real variableness in the deity; since it is the consistency of God's love for man which is the very cause and ground of the self-limitation." And he adds, "Anglicans at any rate can

hardly be accused of heresy for appealing to the Bible against a doctrine of the divine nature which, whatever its value, is certainly derived from extra-biblical sources".¹

We may therefore now proceed to see how Kenosis in the modern sense emerges in post-Reformation theology with some confidence that although the subject of this thesis requires a re-interpretation of Chalcedon in modern categories it is not fundamentally at variance with this Christological statement.

1 O.C. Quick, *Doctrines of the Creed*, pp.143-4.

3

HISTORICAL:

(C) Post-Reformation Kenotic Christology

It will be useful at this stage of our inquiry to recall the discussion of the doctrine of Kenosis in the Fathers in chapter 4. We saw there that although the Kenotic aspect of the Incarnation was very much present to the minds of the Fathers there was no hint of such a Kenosis as involves a diminution of the Logos. Even in St. Cyril and in St. Hilary where there is the fundamental assertion that it is the Kenosis which makes the Incarnation possible, it is seen as an act on the part of the Logos relative to the Incarnation only while He continues extra carnem to be as He always was. The patristic Communicatio Idiomatum, as we have seen, does not involve any real transfer of attributes to or from the divinity or the humanity and is merely an exegetical device whereby divine and human attributes are predicated of the divine Logos who is subject of both natures. On such a view of the Incarnation Kenosis therefore involves little more than Krupsis: the divine Logos "Hid beneath a form of earth".

We are now to see that in modern Christology Kenosis implies a much more radical and dynamic act than mere concealment and connotes in one form or another an actual subtraction of divinity whereby, it is supposed, full humanity is made possible. It arises first as an alternative to Krupsis in Lutheran Scholastic theology where it is used as a Christological expedient to ease the difficulty involved in the Lutheran sacramental doctrine of the ubiquity of our Lord's body. But from this point it is seized upon as the fundamental

principle of a new and distinctive type of Christology. We must therefore first see how these two devices of Krupsis and Kenosis emerge in Lutheran controversy before we turn to consider some of the early Christologies in which Kenosis is elevated into a key principle of interpretation. For this purpose we shall draw upon the two classic accounts of Dorner and Bruce for the long drawn-out Krupsis-Kenosis controversy and upon the latter particularly for the beginnings of Kenotic Christology.¹ The Christology of Martin Luther forms a logical starting-point.

Luther was not a systematic theologian; his powerful genius was more religious than theological. Dorner would derive his Christology from his doctrine of faith. For Luther faith is a divine-human thing and effects a unity between the divine and human. It is the fulfilment of man's true and essential nature. Human nature is susceptible to the divine life and the divine life longs to enter therein; faith is the door of communication between the two. By faith we share the divine life offered to us in Christ. It may be described as the humanification of God and the deification of man. This faith is an image of Christology of which the fundamental principle is the intimate union of God and man in Christ. Luther was not content to conceive of their union in the traditional manner as one that was effected merely by the unity of the divine Ego but strove to bring the two together into such a close and intimate union that, although both natures remain essentially distinct, each becomes the other,

1 J.A. Dorner, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*.
A.B. Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*.

the human receiving and thereby fulfilling itself in the divine and the divine in condescending love entering into the human. God became man in order that man might become God.

Luther made use of the patristic formula of the *Communicatio Idiomatum* but in a new and different sense to accord more closely with his own peculiar view of the Person of Christ. In the hands of the Fathers it was a mere exegetical technique for the purpose of correlating the two natures in the one Person. In the hands of Luther and his followers it becomes a Christological principle which, however much its advocates may claim to be faithful to Chalcedon, clearly modifies the Chalcedonian conditions 'perfect in Godhead... perfect in manhood...truly God and truly man'. Idioma he used to cover all that pertains to the divine and human natures and these he conceived to be really united in the personal union of the God-man so that the divinity was actually communicated to the humanity and the humanity to the divinity. The incarnation of God in Christ once again is mirrored in the act of faith. God in His love desires to give Himself to man and man by faith cleaves to God. In Christ the deity includes the man and man includes the deity. Both are one in the new personal entity of the God-man. Thus it may be said that Christ's manhood is divine, a distinct departure from Chalcedon.

Yet Dorner argues that whatever Luther may have said in unguarded moments he intended nothing docetic in his Christology. He quotes Luther as saying in the "Kirchenpostille" for Christmas Day: "We ought to let Christ be a natural man, precisely such as we are, and not make a difference between His nature and ours, save in the

matter of sin and grace". He might have become such a man as He is now in His exalted state, but such was His humility and condescension that He assumed not merely our limited humanity but our humanity in its fallen state and became subject to death. Likewise he stresses Christ's true human growth and development and insists that St. Luke's words must be taken in their strict literal sense. So also His temptations were real, historical conflicts.

The question then arises as to how Luther was able to harmonise the reality of Christ's human growth and conflicts with his principle of the intimate union of the two natures which he undoubtedly conceived as existing from the beginning of the Incarnation. In the beginning he maintained a union in principle, essence or potency only. In the state of exaltation an absolute interpenetration of the two natures was complete, but in the interim there was a resting or restraint on the part of the Logos relative to the free human development. Actual God-manhood was the subject of a process, the Logos actualising Himself in the humanity gradually as the latter grew in susceptibility to the divine.

Such is Dorner's reading of Luther's Christology to which he is greatly indebted for his own personal contribution to Christology. It is possible, however, as against Dorner, to derive Luther's Christology from the rigid position he took up in his Eucharistic controversy with the Swiss theologian Zwingli. For Luther the Eucharist meant the real, corporeal presence of the living, exalted

Lord who wills to be present in, with and under the Eucharistic elements. This implies the ubiquity of the Lord's body. But ubiquity is a divine attribute whereas the possession of Body and Blood is a human characteristic. He is therefore compelled to use the Communicatio Idiomatum to cover a genuine transference of attributes from Divinity to Humanity. His theory requires a Christ with the divine attribute of ubiquity. For the sake of consistency he must extend the principle to cover the entire incarnate life, but as this would produce a monophysite Christ contrary to the plain facts of Scripture he is compelled to represent the union at the beginning as simply a union in principle, essence or potency which only gradually actualises as the humanity develops and is not completely actualised till the Exaltation. One wonders if this is genuine Christology or merely a Christological necessity imposed by Eucharistic doctrine, and one suspects that Luther was not really a serious Christologist but only became one by accident by reason of the Eucharistic Controversy. It is the plain fact that in the hands of later Lutheran theologians Christology ceased to have any independent life of its own and was reduced to dependent status on the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrament, and this may well have been a legacy from Luther himself.

This too would explain the absence of any modification of Chalcedonian orthodoxy in the Reformed Christology. The Swiss theologians did not accept the 'in, with and under' partly because

they held to the principle 'finitum non est capax infiniti' even in the Incarnation, partly because of their symbolic interpretation of the key passage in the Gospels and partly because it offended against Luther's (and their own) principle of justification by faith alone. For these reasons they had no need to seek any particular Christological refinement to make their Eucharistic doctrine reasonable. To them the Eucharist was simply a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice. The divine and human natures of Christ were each possessed of their own proper attributes. They therefore admit the omnipresence of Christ in His deity and His spiritual presence in the Eucharist, but not His body which even after the Resurrection was only in one place at once.

The controversy was continued by the Lutheran theologians after the death of Luther. The great principle to be upheld was Christ's corporeal presence in the Sacrament. Inevitably the doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's body led to differences of opinion, and to the great controversy between Brentz and Chemnitz. John Brentz of Wurtemberg vigorously opposed the Swiss idea that Christ's humanity was the same as the humanity of men in general and stressed its uniqueness by virtue of the personal presence and self-impartation of the Logos in the God-man. God in His omnipresence is present to all His creation but His union with the humanity in Christ is so close and permanent that He has no existence apart from that humanity. The humanity of Christ is exalted into the "majesty", i.e. the full

divine nature of God by virtue of the Communicatio Idiomatum. But whereas Luther had spoken of a mutual communication Brentz concerns himself merely with the *Kenosis* of the man. He confidently affirms that the fulness of the divine nature (majestas) is not incompatible with the humanity as Zwingli maintained. *Finitum capax infiniti*. This exaltation of the human includes the attribute of ubiquity whereby Christ is corporeally present in the Sacrament, though Brentz took exception to the term ubiquity which suggests extension in space whereas he did not conceive the divine attribute of omnipresence as local at all, but as a superiority over time and space. Brentz again differs from Luther in maintaining that the possession of the majestas on the part of the humanity was complete from the very beginning of the Incarnation and consequently finds himself in difficult straits to explain the humility and self-abasement of the historical Christ; indeed the difficulty of all this early Lutheran Christology is how the Logos kept Himself human at all, i.e. within the limits proper to the Incarnation. The self-emptying of Phil.2 he refers to the God-man from the first moment of His existence. The simultaneous existence of majestas and kenosis he explains by an act of dissimulation: Christ dissembled, appeared to be other than He was. This is to replace Kenosis by Krupsis and does not really go beyond Cyril. Yet both are qualified when he says that it was not God's will that Christ's humanity should always be subject to natural laws and illustrates by Christ's walking on the sea. Generally however He was

not omniscient or ubiquitous. Yet how can this be squared with his fundamental position that the union of the Logos with the manhood was so close that the Logos does not exist apart from or outside of the humanity? If the manhood possesses the full actuality of the Logos how can it at the same time grow into and acquire this actuality?

While accepting the indissoluble unity of the Logos and the humanity in Christ Martin Chemnitz of Brunswick opposed a real communication of attributes. As in Reformed Christology each nature, he maintains, retains its own proper attributes. The human is not susceptible to the divine so as itself to become divine. *Finitum non capax infiniti*. The humanity of Christ is limited and never becomes infinite. It is however capable of receiving the divine as iron is capable of light and heat although fire and iron are both distinct, the fire never becoming the property of the iron. In some such manner of *περιχώρησις* the human nature participates in the majestas of the Logos. Thus the human can become present whenever the Logos wills. This quality of ubiquity he describes as *multipraesentia*.

The controversy between Brentz and Chemnitz was followed a generation later by that between the theologians of Tübingen and Giessen in which the central issue was the relation between Christ's majestas and His earthly humiliation, between a fully Logos-centred Christ and His historic manifestation. Both parties started from the principle that the entire fulness of the divine nature was

communicated by the Logos to the humanity of Jesus from the very first moment of the Incarnation. The Tübingen theologians held that the humanity of Christ is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent and governs the world along with the Logos, even on the Cross, even in the manger. But how was such a humanity compatible with the reality and growth of the humanity? They adopted the position of Brentz and made use of the principle of Krupsis. The divine majesty is in full possession and use by the humanity but it is screened from our eyes by the earthly veil of weakness and humility as the sun is veiled by a dense cloud. The Giessen theologians saw that this explanation reduced the whole of Christ's earthly life to a dramatic show, a mere docetic seeming. They themselves however were able to give reality to the historic Life, that is, treat the Kenosis seriously, only by modifying the fundamental premise of the Communicatio Idiomatum. They denied that the humanity of Christ was ubiquitous or that it governed the world during its earthly life, sufferings and death. The possibility (dunamis) of these things was present in Christ's humanity and He occasionally manifested them in act, but they denied the use of this potency generally during the earthly sojourn. To the concealed use, Krupsis, they opposed the principle of non-use, Kenosis.

In one sense the difference between Giessen and Tübingen seems to be merely one of degree. It certainly fails to do justice to the Gospel image of Christ. A humanity which has the full potency of

the divine and can actualise that potency at will is not true humanity. Neither is there any real connexion between the humanity of Christ which has divine potency and His ordinary humanity which is presumably quite uninformed by divinity. It might be argued therefore that we do not see God in the ordinary human historical Christ.

On the other hand it is plain that a new and radical step has been taken in Christology by the Giessen theologians. In effect the one-sided Lutheran application of the *Communicatio Idiomatum* is reversed! The divinisation of the humanity is replaced by the humanification of the divine. Instead of an addition to the humanity there is a subtraction from the divinity. A new content has been given to *Kenosis*: it is no longer merely a *krupsis*, a mere concealment of the divine factor in the Incarnation, but a genuine diminution or subtraction of divinity: a principle which once admitted might henceforth be variously conceived as restraint, retraction, partial withdrawal of divine attributes or complete self-emptying of the Divine Logos in His incarnate state.

This new content of Kenoticism was not of course a discovery of the Giessen theologians, but it begins to be unfolded after Giessen. Luther, Brentz and Tübingen all use the category of *Krupsis*, i.e. full possession but partial concealment. Giessen explains the facts in terms of non-use by the Logos of the full range of what it means to be the Logos, i.e. full possession but

partial non-use. Again Giessen was restricted to problems arising from the Eucharistic theology of the Lutherans. Later Kenoticism was to deal with the general problem of the conditions of the Incarnation as such in the light of critical theory.

Kenosis, then, in the modern sense must be clearly distinguished from the Kenosis of the Giessen theologians. It arose in the first half of the nineteenth century, an age of historical realism, in which all thought is dominated by the principle of development. Under the influence of the new historical criticism Theology was re-discovering Luther's early intuition of Christ's real humanity and was no longer content to read Scripture by a doctrinal key. They found the doctrine in Scripture itself, in St. Paul's teaching on the Kenosis. Instead of being used merely to relieve an awkward position in Christology Kenosis takes the place of the Lutheran *Majestas* as a major principle of interpretation of the whole problem of the Incarnation. The principle of *Majestas* gave a fully Logos-centred Christ with all its attendant problems arising from the human, historical Life; the principle of Kenosis still gives us a Logos-centred Christ but depotentiated in some major way in order, it is held, to accord more easily with the historic record.

The basic principle of Kenotic Christology may be stated thus: The second Person of the Trinity, the eternal Logos, in order to become incarnate and to live a truly human life as described in the Gospels, "reduced Himself to the rank and measures of humanity" (Bruce).

But this self-reduction may be conceived in a variety of ways:

- 1 (a) First, the self-reduction may be only relative, that is, relative to the Incarnation only, while the Logos continues His creative and sustaining work and retains all His divine attributes in relation to the rest of the universe. In this view, of course, there is nothing new for it would apply to the Christology of St. Cyril; or, as in post-Giessen forms,
 - (b) it may be absolute, taking place without any qualification whatever so that from the beginning to the end of the Incarnation the Logos "is denuded of everything pertaining to Deity, but its bare, naked, indestructible essence" (Bruce).
- 2 (a) Secondly, the incarnate Person (the God-man) may be conceived metamorphically, that is, the self-emptied Logos may take the place of a human soul; or
 - (b) it may be conceived dualistically, that is, it may be conjoined with the human soul in the man Jesus.
- 3 Thirdly, the extent of the Kenosis may be variously conceived so as to produce different degrees of humanity and divinity in the God-man.

Professor Bruce gives four samples of what he calls "this protean Christology" which he describes as:

- (1) Absolute Dualistic, represented by Thomasius;
- (2) Absolute Metamorphic, " " Gess;
- (3) Absolute Semi-metamorphic, " Ebrard;
- (4) Real but Relative, " Martensen.

(1) Thomasius claims to be true to the teaching of Scripture and the doctrine of Chalcedon. The image of Christ in the Gospels is that of a genuinely human personality: Jesus is a man. But the Gospels also represent Jesus as more than man. He speaks of Himself as standing in a peculiar relation to God. His pre-existence is asserted: He was the Logos who was in the beginning and was with God and was God. Yet there are not two egos in Christ, but only one, who is conscious at the same time of His divine origin and of His human existence. The personal subject of the Incarnation is therefore the Ego of the Son of God, and the Incarnation is to be regarded as the assumption by the Son of God of human nature in its integrity and as the self-limitation of the Son of God in the act of assuming human nature. The self-limitation is necessary in order to bring about an equipollence of the two natures and so to give its rightful place to the humanity. For without such a self-limitation the mutual relation of the two united natures would involve a certain duality. The divine would encompass the human, would far outreach it in scope of knowledge, life and activity. The consciousness of the Logos per se would not coincide with that of the historical Christ but would, as it were, hover over it, and there would thus be no true incarnation.

The personality of Christ, therefore, is a divine-human personality. While the Son of God continues to be essentially Himself, though self-limited, He is now also a human Ego. Christ is the personal unity of divine essence and humankind, the man who is God.

Furthermore, the two natures are preserved entire and distinct, for God is not destroyed by self-limitation. Self-limitation is an act of will, therefore not negation but rather affirmation of existence. Self-emptying is an act of self-determination. On the other hand, the humanity too remains intact for it is assumed entire, with a reasonable soul as well as a body. Hence the claim of Thomasius to be in harmony with Chalcedon.

Likewise he claims to be in agreement with Scripture. For the Son of God Incarnation involved a self-emptying, not indeed of that which is essential to Deity in order to be God, but of the divine manner of existence, and of the divine glory which He had from the beginning with the Father, and which He manifested in governing the world. Such is the view demanded by the evangelic history; for on no other view is it possible to conceive how, for example, Christ could sleep in the storm on the Sea of Galilee. What real sleep could there be for Him, who as God not only was awake, but on the anti-Kenotic hypothesis as ruler of the world, brought on, as well as stilled, the storm? This is expressed in true scriptural vein and is quite acceptable, but when he begins to speculate on the abandonment of the divine attributes involved in the Kenosis he raises a serious problem for Christology.

Thomasius distinguishes between those attributes of God which are essential such as those of absolute holiness and love which the Son of God retained in His incarnation and those which are merely

relative, expressive of His free relation to the world which He has made, such as omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. He supposes that God can part with these attributes and still be God. The incarnate Christ was not omnipotent. The miracles of Christ, for example, were wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, and proved not Christ's divine nature, but only His divine mission. Neither was He omniscient or omnipresent. The Son of God had parted with all these attributes in becoming man. Here Thomasius adopts a position which many Christologians have found difficult to accept. Apart from the somewhat dubious metaphysics, it involves on the part of the incarnate Lord a complete severance from His cosmic and Trinitarian life. It is held that both Church tradition and Scripture are against it. Bishop Gore writes: "To begin with, it must reckon with a weight of Church judgment such as no thoughtful Christian, Catholic or Protestant, can underrate. But more than this: it is opposed to the fairly plain implications of the very apostolic writers who impress upon us the reality of the Kenosis, St. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; while, on the ground of reason, the assumption of the surrender on the part of the Son of such a divine function as that of mediating the procession of the Holy Ghost, or such a cosmic function as maintaining the universe in being and unity, is in itself so tremendous that nothing short of a positive apostolic statement could drive one to contemplate it".¹

1 C. Gore, Dissertations, p.189.

(2) The Kenotic theory of Gess, like that of Thomasius, stands like a great landmark in the history of Kenotic doctrine. It is even more daringly expressed for whereas Thomasius posited a distinction between essential and relative attributes of the Deity of which the latter were abandoned by the Son of God when He became man, Gess disallows the distinction and remarks that if the doctrine of Kenosis has to be built on such an insecure foundation, it is in a bad way. For Gess nothing less than a distinction between the divine person and the divine nature is required. In other words all the divine attributes, essential as well as relative, are abandoned by the Son of God in becoming man.

Gess represents the Incarnation under three scriptural aspects: (i) as an outgoing from the Father; (ii) as a descent from heaven, and (iii) as a becoming flesh. The result of the first was not to dissolve the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son and Spirit, but to suspend the influx of the eternal life of the Father who has life in Himself into the Son with the result that the Son pro tempore ceased to have life in Himself. By the descent from heaven is signified the humiliation or Kenosis of which the Apostle speaks. This, according to the most natural interpretation of his words, indicates a transition on the part of the Logos incarnate from a state of equality with God into a state of dependence and need, a laying aside of His pre-temporal glory and of the life which is independent and self-sufficient and of which omniscience and omnipotence are attributes. But He parted with the immanent or essential

attributes as well as the relative. According to Gess the Logos in becoming man suffered nothing less than the extinction of His eternal self-consciousness to regain it after many months as a human, gradually developing consciousness, sometimes as in childhood, in sleep, in death, possessing no self-consciousness at all. This is involved in becoming flesh. His personal soul developed *pari passu* with the development of His physical organism. His life at first was a purely natural life; then it became a personal, self-conscious life; and at the close of His human development the body of His flesh became transformed into a glorious body, i.e. a body fitted to become the perfect organ of the Logos once more restored to the fulness of divine life.

Throughout His incarnate life the divine life was present in potency for the Logos essence remained unchangeable. The attributes of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence were present in an inactive state, and could not become active so long as the moving power, the eternal self-consciousness itself was not present. How then did the Logos attain to His original self-consciousness? It was not by recollection, for a clear and constant recollection would be incompatible with a life of faith. Nor was it entirely by reflexion and inference exercised on the Old Testament, although this was undoubtedly one means towards His self-knowledge. Christ was born a Jew and this made it possible for Him to attain to a knowledge of Himself as divine by a truly human development. But

there must have been besides a certain latent instinct. As the prophet knows that God has called him, so the knowledge possessed by Jesus of the secret of His person was based upon the peculiarly intimate fellowship which subsisted between His Father and Himself; while the recollection of pre-existence might occasionally flash through into His human consciousness. "As to when the attainment of a clear self-consciousness came to Him it cannot be precisely determined. The morning twilight of His self-knowledge appeared when He was a boy of twelve years; the perfect day had arrived by the time He went forth to commence His ministry. Between 12 and 30 the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, had become fully revealed to the incarnate mystery Himself".¹

Thus according to Gess the Logos became a human soul and thereby the presence of another soul, as in the theory of Thomasius, was rendered superfluous. This theory of the depotentiation of the Word to the status of a human soul is strongly presented by Gess, but it carries three inferences which do not receive general acceptance. First, and most serious, is the total abandonment of all the divine attributes. Secondly there is the cessation of the Son's cosmic status and function within the Blessed Trinity against which, as we have noticed in the case of Thomasius, there are strong objections. The third inference implied in our Lord's true human development is the peccability of Jesus. It certainly seems difficult to avoid such an inference if it be held that Christ's humanity

1 cit. A.B. Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*, p.147.

is consubstantial with ours. There has, however, always been a strong ecclesiastical tradition against it. On the other hand the posse peccare, as involved in Christ's assumption of our fallen human nature, has received expression right throughout the Christian era, and there is no doubt that several modern theologians of the highest standing would endorse it. To this extent the magnificent and daring theory of Gess is less open to objection than was formerly the case.

(3) The Kenotic theory of Ebrard is expounded in "A Work on Christian Dogmatics" published in 1851-52. It is a distinct type and a contribution of the Reformed Communion. Ebrard agrees with Gess in making the incarnate Logos take the place of a human soul. The eternal Son of God in becoming man gave up the form of eternity and in full self-limitation assumed the existence-form of a human life-centre. This self-reduction, however, does not amount to a depotentiation of the Logos, as in the theory of Gess. In fact Kenosis in Ebrard comes very close to Krupsis when he argues that the Son of God in becoming man underwent not a loss, but rather a disguise, of His divinity. His Kenosis suggests a deployment of the divine powers to meet a new situation when he says that the divine properties were retained but were possessed only in the time-form appropriate to a human mode of existence. The Logos, in assuming flesh, exchanged the form of God, i.e. the eternal manner of being, for the form of a man, i.e. the temporal manner of being.

Christ did not lay aside His omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence, but He retained them in such a way that they could be expressed or manifested, not in reference to the collective universe but only in reference to the particularities of time and space. Omnipotence remained, but in an applied form, as an unlimited power to work miracles; omniscience remained in an applied form as an unlimited power to see through all objects which He wished to see through; omnipresence remained in an applied form as an unlimited power to transport Himself whither He would. As the incarnate Son of God He had dominion over nature, not, indeed, in the form of world-governing omnipotence but in the form of omnipotence applied to particular cases in particular times and places. He no longer possessed eternal omniscience, but in reference to particular objects He possessed a knowledge which, compared with that of sinful man, is altogether supernatural. In walking on the sea He worked a miracle of applied omnipresence. In this way Ebrard attempts to shew how the divine and human attributes which constitute the two natures can co-exist in the same person without cancelling each other. Christ is not partly man and partly God, but wholly man. The powers of the eternal Godhead revealed themselves in Christ, not alongside of the powers of His humanity, not as superhuman, but IN the powers of His humanity; powers which were supernatural in that they exceeded the capacities of human nature as depraved by sin. Existing in an applied form the divine attributes

are truly human. Applied omnipotence is simply the domination of spirit over nature, which belongs to the true idea of man. Applied omniscience is the domination of spirit over the objects of knowledge to which man was originally destined. Applied omnipresence, the power to be where one wills, is simply the domination of the spirit over the natural body, which man was designed to attain, the body in its ultimate idea not being a foreign burden subject to elemental influences, but a free projection of the soul in space, released from all subjection to the elements, to death or to the law of gravitation.

Somewhat surprisingly Ebrard ascribes to the incarnate Christ a posse peccare. Christ learns obedience by its practice under trying circumstances and He gains heavenly glory as a reward of His filial virtue. All this is demanded by the time-form of existence. In these respects his theory is similar to that of Gess. Yet essentially it is quite different. The theory of Gess is thoroughly anthropocentric: the theory of Ebrard is theocentric, almost Apollinarian in appearance.

(4) In the theory of the Danish bishop Martensen the depotentiation of the Logos is only relative to the Incarnation itself. He distinguishes between the Logos revelation and the Christ revelation. Through Him the divine life flows into creation. He is the ground of all reason in the world. In the fulness of time the eternal Word became flesh as Mediator, Saviour and revealer of God to men.

This, however, does not mean that with the Incarnation the eternal Logos ceased to exist in His general world-revelation. In the divine economy the Son of God has a two-fold existence: as Logos He pervades and upholds the whole of created nature, and as the incarnate Christ He demonstrates the divine grace and works man's redemption. Bishop Gore aptly describes it as the theory of the double life of the Word, a characterisation which seems justified by the following passages from Martensen:

"In that He thus lived as a man, and as "the Son of Man" possessed His deity solely under the conditions imposed by a human individuality in the limited forms of a human consciousness, we may undoubtedly say of Him that He lived in humiliation and poverty, because He had renounced that majestic glory by which, as the omnipotent Logos, He irradiates the entire creation.....

"We are to see in Christ, not the naked God, but the fulness of Deity framed in the ring of humanity; not the attributes of the divine nature in their unbounded infinitude, but the divine attributes embodied in the attributes of human nature (Communicatio Idiomatum). Instead of the omnipresence we have that blessed presence, concerning which the God-man testifies, "He that seeth me seeth the Father" (John 14⁹); in the place of omniscience comes the divinely human wisdom which reveals to babes the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; in the place of the world-creating omnipotence enters the world-vanquishing and world-completing power, the infinite

power and fulness of love and holiness in virtue of which the God-man was able to testify, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28¹⁸).

"Still, there are not two Sons of God, but one Son; Christ did not add a new second Son to the Trinity; the entire movement takes place within the circle of the Trinity itself. At the same time, it must be allowed that the Son of God leads in the economy of the Father a two-fold existence; that He lives a double life in His world-creating and in His world-completing activity. As the pure Logos of Deity, He works through the kingdom of nature by His all-pervading presence, creates the pre-suppositions and conditions of the revelation of His all-completing love. As the Christ, He works through the kingdom of grace, of redemption and perfection, and points back to His pre-existence (John 8⁵⁸, 17⁵)".¹

Unfortunately Martensen makes no attempt to reconcile the duality of the life of the Logos with the unity of Christ's personality, and rests content with its faithfulness to Scripture. He thus lays himself open to the charge he makes against the old Lutherans who introduced the monstrosity of a Christ who as a child in the cradle secretly carried on the government of the world and at the same time in His human nature grew in knowledge and wisdom. Such a grotesque representation he contends annuls the unity of the person, two parallel series of conscious states are introduced without any connexion between them. Yet Martensen himself is in no

1 cit. C. Gore, Dissertations, pp.192-3.

better case in so far as he does not shew the possibility of such a double life as he sets forth and its compatibility with the unitary personality of Christ.

"It is admitted on all hands", writes Professor Bruce, "that every Christological theory must be reckoned a failure which does not faithfully reflect the historical image of Jesus as depicted in the Gospels and allow Him to be as He appears there, a veritable, though not a mere man".¹ It must be equally admitted that in the entire history of Christian doctrine no Christology has succeeded so well in this respect as Kenoticism, as the foregoing theories plainly shew. But it is also true that we must see God in Christ; and it is plain from these theories that the difficulty of Kenotic Christology lies in clearly presenting the divine aspect of the incarnate Life, or at least in reconciling the two. But is this not the perennial difficulty of all Christology, to find a formula which will do justice to both aspects, the human and the divine? And with its undoubted religious power and its faithfulness to Scripture it can surely be said that the principle of Kenosis is a great gain to Christology. It is not surprising, therefore, that Kenotic Christology did not cease after its first flowering in continental theology but entered upon a new and fruitful phase in British theology. To this new phase of development in Kenotic thought it may be said that four fundamental questions were bequeathed by Post-Reformation Kenoticism:

1 A.B. Bruce, op.cit., p.135.

- (1) Is the very idea of Kenosis compatible with the ancient doctrine of the Divine Immutability?
- (2) Of what exactly did Christ empty Himself when He became incarnate?
- (3) Is the Kenosis capable of meeting the needs of man's redemption? Do we see God in the Kenotic Christ reconciling the world unto Himself?
- (4) Is Kenoticism compatible with Trinitarian doctrine?

These four questions must be squarely faced by all future Christology.

3

HISTORICAL:

(D) Modern Kenotic Views in British Theology

The Kenotic tradition in British theology may find a convenient starting-point in the Christology of DR. A.M. FAIRBAIRN¹ who introduced a form of doctrine very similar to that of Thomasius in Germany.

The purpose of the Incarnation of the Son of God was to exhibit the true nature which created human natures were intended to realise. Of all God's acts of grace it is the one that becomes Him most and would have taken place even apart from the accident of sin. It involved a supreme renunciation, a Kenosis. There could be no real assumption of the form of a servant without the renouncing of the form of God. Here he adopts the Thomasian distinction between the physical (relative or external) and moral (immanent or internal) attributes of the Godhead. The external attributes of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence are withdrawn whereas the internal attributes of truth and love remain. The external are under the command of the internal; omnipotence, for example, has no meaning apart from character. The external attributes by themselves might make a Creator, but not a Deity; the internal attributes would make out of the Creator a Deity. The former could be surrendered, but not the latter; indeed within the Incarnation God may seem the more Godlike if He limits, restrains or veils the external attributes. That which marks the whole life of Deity is the regulation of His physical by His ethical attributes. The lesser qualities of Godhead were renounced in order to the

1 A.M. Fairbairn, Christ in Modern Theology, 1893, pp.354, 476-9.

realisation of the more Godlike qualities.

The preparation for such an act as the Incarnation is already to be found in creation where time overrides His eternity, respect for freedom His omnipotence, the physical universe His ubiquity. The Incarnation does no more violence to the physical attributes of God than creation does. The one continues the process begun in the other, but raises it to the level of personal union.

Like Thomasius he claims to be true to the doctrine of Chalcedon and he is perhaps more successful in effecting the union of the two natures. He maintains the distinctness of the two natures in Christ but insists that their integrity must not be developed into antagonism or incompatibility. Because of their kinship and affinity a real and reciprocal communicatio idiomatum is possible. The humanity is not superseded or diminished by the Deity, but rather realised and enlarged, while the Deity is not lessened by the humanity but actualised and made articulate. For the purpose of the Incarnation the manhood was capable of receiving the Godhead and the Godhead was capable of personal union with manhood. Thus, in a sense, a double incarnation was achieved of both manhood and Godhead. "In Him humanity was realised before God and revealed to man; in Him God was revealed to man by Godhead being realised before him".¹

We shall find Fairbairn's distinction (following Thomasius) between the internal and external attributes of Godhead and his

¹ Op.cit., p.479.

anticipation of the Incarnation in Creation very relevant to the Kenotic argument in chapter 8.

Dr. Fairbairn was closely followed by CHARLES GORE, pre-eminent theologian and historian of doctrine, and it is to him more than any other that is due the place and importance of Kenosis in British Christology. His thinking on this subject is controlled throughout by two governing considerations: truthfulness to the historical facts and faithfulness to the great ecumenical decisions of the Church. He sets forth two extreme views only to reject them on historical grounds. The first is the "a priori, dogmatical and unhistorical view that Christ's human mind was from the first moment of the Incarnation and continuously flooded with complete knowledge and with the glory of the beatific vision, so that He never could really grow in knowledge or be ignorant of anything, or be personally in any perplexity or doubt".¹ The second he describes as the "a priori, humanitarian and also unhistorical view that The Son in becoming man ceased to be conscious of His own eternal sonship and became, not merely a human, but a fallible and peccable teacher".²

Intermediate between these two extreme views he places the Leonine juxtaposition theory which has been referred to as the two-nature theory, namely, that during our Lord's earthly life He possessed both a divine and a human consciousness whereby He acted and spoke now as God and now as man. This view also Gore firmly

1 C. Gore, Dissertations, p.95.

2 Op.cit. pp.95-6.

rejects.

It is Gore's conviction that the Son of God while remaining conscious of His Sonship assumed human nature, lived under properly human conditions and thereby ceased from the exercise of those divine functions and powers, including the divine omniscience, which would have been incompatible with a truly human experience. Jesus Christ was, and is, personally God made man. "The Son of God really became and lived as Son of Man...A real self-emptying was involved in the Incarnation...He, the Christ, the Son of God, was personally living, praying, thinking, speaking and acting - even working miracles - under the limitations of manhood".¹ Yet the abandonment by Christ of His divine prerogatives and powers is not absolute, but relative to the Incarnation; by which he means that while we must hold tenaciously to the reality of Christ's humiliation "we must be content to hold that, even in a way we cannot conceive, this state of limitation within the sphere of the humanity must have been compatible with the exercise in another sphere, by the same divine person, of the fulness of divine power".²

This position, as Gore himself admits, seems to imply thinking of the Incarnation after the manner of Bishop Martensen's theory of the double life of the Word - the personal life of the Word is lived from two centres of being. This is a difficult conception and is felt most acutely in relation to Christ's human knowledge. We have already noticed that the interpretation of the view of St.

1 Op.cit., p.203.

2 Ibid., p.204.

Cyril on our Lord's human knowledge on which we can most confidently rely is that it was only apparently limited: in the words of Lebreton, "ce n'est pas une véritable ignorance".¹ Such a view involved for St. Cyril an abandonment of the principle of Kenosis in the moral and intellectual spheres of the Incarnate Life. By contrast, Bishop Gore adheres to the principle of Kenosis without reservation throughout the Incarnation. Thus with regard to His human knowledge, He expresses surprise; He asks for information; He confesses ignorance of the day and hour of His second coming. As a result, however, Gore is faced with the difficulty, which does not arise with Cyril, of reconciling our Lord's human ignorance with His continuing omniscience in the Trinitarian life of God. How could the one eternal Son know in one sphere and not know in the other? He is obliged to leave the problem unsolved, but he offers certain considerations to assist us in this difficulty.

First he argues that the difficulty is neither desperate nor unique. There are deep antinomies in physical science which are just as baffling to the scientist and if, urges Gore, there are such mysteries in what is below us, it is to be expected that deeper mysteries are involved in the spiritual world which is above and beyond us. Then he suggests that it is along the line of sympathy and love that we can best hope to understand the mystery. "Sympathy, love", he says, "this is the keynote of the Incarnation.....here.....

1 This view has the support of Lebreton, Liébaert, G.L. Prestige, A.B. Bruce and H.E.W. Turner, and many other authorities could be added.

we have something analogous to a double life, and a double life which affects the intellect as much as any of our powers. To sympathise is to put oneself in another's place. Redemptive sympathy is the act of the greater and better putting himself at the point of view of the lower and the worse. He must not abandon his own higher standing-ground if he is to benefit the object of his compassion; but remaining essentially what he was he must also find himself in the place of the lower; he must come to look at things as he looks at them; he must learn things over again from his point of view. This is...how Origen would have us understand the mystery of the divine condescension. It is the grown one learning to speak as a child: it is the Divine putting Himself at the point of view of the human". And again: "All real sympathy of the unconditioned for the conditioned demands, as far as we can see, real self-limitation".¹ Gore's final suggestion to aid us in the consideration of the mystery is one which we shall find very pertinent to our Kenotic argument in chapter 8. God's self-limitation is evidenced in His relation to nature and man as a whole. In nature God allows each form of life to realise itself in its own way, and this respect for His creatures is seen most of all in His relation to man to whom He allows a real, if limited, freedom and from whom He prefers to receive free as distinct from mechanical service. God respects the free nature of man which He has created and therefore restrains His own power, and even His own fore-knowledge. All such considerations,

1 Op.cit., pp.218-20.

he concludes, "prevent our reason...from falling back simply baffled before the facts, in the way of limitation of divine knowledge, presented by the Incarnation of the Son of God".¹

This unrounded and tentative solution of the problem bears all the marks of a scientific conclusion. As Archbishop Ramsey remarks, Gore was not concerned to propound a metaphysical theory but to give due prominence to the historical fact of Christ's human limitations and to demonstrate the necessity of "some view" of the operation of the divine consciousness which does not imply that it overrides them. For him such a view demanded "some sort of Kenosis".²

Bishop Gore leaves an hiatus between the Self-emptying, the limited condition of the Son as Incarnate, and the unlimited exercise of all the cosmic functions of the Eternal Word. An attempt was made to synthesise the two by FRANK WESTON in his book "The One Christ". Bishop Weston objected to the view of a wall of separation between the Logos in glory and the Logos in manhood. The subject of the Incarnate Life is a divine Person and His incarnation in no way interfered with His trinitarian life. The Kenosis by which the Incarnation took place was a continuous self-limitation, a self-restraint exercised continuously throughout the whole of the Incarnate Life, and even extended to His relation qua Incarnate to the Father. There is no prior act of self-abandonment as in most Kenotic theories, whether absolute as in the case of Gess or

1 *Op.cit.*, p.224.

2 A.M. Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, p.34.

partial as in the theory of Dr. Fairbairn. The measure of self-restraint involved is the degree to which humanity at its highest level is able to mediate the divine life. As St. Irenaeus wrote: "He filled the manhood with as much of the Godhead as it was able to bear". And this is a progressive process for as the humanity grows and develops so also does its ability to reflect the life of the Logos, a thought which we shall find developed by P.T. Forsyth who envisages a plerosis of the manhood parallel with the Kenosis of Godhead. But while thus self-restricted in the incarnate sphere He is free and unlimited in the eternal. The following extracts from his eminently readable book may help to summarise his position.

"His manhood is in all points like our own except in the matter of sin. Taken from the womb of the Virgin Mary in the power of the Holy Ghost, by a miracle, it came into the world sinless; and being from the moment of its conception united with the eternal Son of God it remained without spot of sin. But in every other respect His manhood is like ours, having the same natural weaknesses and limitations that hinder us" (p.151).

He came to exhibit manhood to God: therefore He was content to accept "the limitations that are proper to and normal in man" (p.152). But it was to exhibit manhood at its best with all those excellencies that are possible to it when constituted in God the Son, the creative Word: "Ideal manhood is manhood dependent upon God, and God-aided" (p.152).

"The Person who became incarnate is purely divine....He is of one substance with the Father, God of God.....His Incarnation in no way interferes with His true life in the eternal Godhead, or hinders Him from His divine activities in the universe. He remains true Word of God, 'upholding all things by the word of His power'" (p.149). His incarnation does not involve the absolute abandonment of any one of the attributes of His divinity. Weston's position in contrast to Gore is thus made clear.

Combining these truths we must say that "the Incarnate Son must at every moment live under a law of self-restraint as to all His divine powers, in some measure. The measure of the self-restraint is the capacity of the perfect manhood to receive, assimilate and manifest divine power". He must not pass the limits of manhood's capacity. "Within the relations of the Incarnate we think of the law of self-restraint as applied continuously, as it were momentarily; but none the less it is absolute, putting out of action whatever measure of divine power that manhood cannot mediate" (p.152). His self-restraint was not the same at every stage of development. "It varied as the capacity of His manhood varied. As His human soul grew and developed, so did its capacity widen, and the degree of His self-restraint was always determined by the state of His human soul" (p.154). Thus the Incarnate state is one of progress at every moment.

This continuous self-restraint, Dr. Mascall aptly points out,

provides a conception of the highest value in the interpretation of the Incarnation: "For, when we consider the incarnate Lord moving towards his passion, with all the anguish both of body and of soul that it brings with it, we see him not just undergoing the consequences of an irrevocable past decision but accepting stage by stage a whole series of sufferings of increasing intensity, which culminate in the unimaginable desolation of the Fourth Word from the Cross and from which he is perfectly free physically to escape".¹ Mascall quotes Matt. 26⁵³ and John 10¹⁷⁻¹⁸ in support, though the textual evidence for the former is rather insecure.² This is a strong point, but whether it is a more realistic interpretation than the Kenotic view is a matter of opinion. But it has an advantage in another respect in that it enables a smoother transition from the state of humiliation to that of glorification which, as Mascall remarks, has proved difficult for more than one Kenotic theory.

Weston maintains that his own view of the Incarnate Christ "is far truer than that of the Athanasians and Cyrillines who postulate as ego the unlimited Logos, or Word, arguing for an unreal relation of Him to a growing manhood, thus requiring two centres of activity within the one Incarnate being. So again, it is far truer than the advanced Kenotic view which merely substitutes for the unlimited Logos the self-abandoned Son of God. Such a

1 E.L. Mascall, *Christ, the Christian and the Church*, p.30.

2 McNeile, *Comm. on St. Matthew*, p.395.

theory leaves too much to manhood to accomplish in its own power, while it does not save us from the dual centre of activity" (p.160).

Whether Weston himself succeeds in rescuing the Incarnate Logos from such a "dual centre of activity" must be decided by a careful consideration of the relevant passages from which the following may be quoted here.

"We postulated the distinction between the eternal, universal relations of the Son of God, and the new, particular relationships that make up the world of the Incarnate and His redeemed people. In the former sphere we found all the unlimited activities of the eternal Son for all time, activities from which He has never ceased; and among them we found the promulgation of the law of self-emptying which He imposed upon Himself: the law of self-restraint that was to make possible the second set of relationships, the sphere of the Incarnation.

"Within the sphere of the Incarnation we found the eternal Son living under that law of self-restraint, by which the limits of His manhood at every moment are constituted as the limits of His consciousness and freedom as Incarnate Son of God. We saw Him unconscious of any self that is too great to be mediated by the human soul that He had joined to Himself; He who is God, possessing all the attributes of God, lives entirely and utterly under conditions of manhood. Apart from His manhood He has no existence as incarnate,

although all the while He lives and reigns in the eternal sphere as the unlimited Word of the Father".¹

What Weston's doctrine really amounts to is summarised by Professor H.E.W. Turner in an Article in the Expository Times, Vol.lxxii, pp.277-9. Turner writes: "Without alteration or subtraction the Logos is from eternity to eternity a constituent member of the Holy Trinity. This set of relationships persists. But in Time He becomes incarnate adding to Himself a human nature with a new corresponding set of relationships. The measures of this humanity He allows to prevail over Himself and thus manifests Himself during the Incarnation no longer as the Logos simpliciter but as the self-limited Logos". The problem for Weston and for us is to understand how the Logos simpliciter can at the same time be the subject of the self-limited Incarnate life. He offers many analogies to shew the possibility of a single subject in a duality of relationships but they all fail to shew the simultaneity of both relationships. Indeed Weston can only fall back upon the omnipotence of God and a "recognition of the plain facts of the Gospel narrative" and has to admit that "the Holy Spirit has not given us a revelation concerning the conception of a single person as the centre of two sets of relationships at the same moment" (p.187). It cannot be said therefore that Weston effectively removes the hiatus left by Martensen and Gore.

1 F. Weston, The One Christ (1914 ed.) pp.324-5.

Weston's difficulty is that which faces every theologian who would seek to interpret the traditional Christology in a modern idiom. Weston's habit of thinking is patristic and metaphysical while he expounds his Christology in modern psychological categories. It is true he has occasional lapses as when he says of our Lord "He who suffered is actually the Son of God Himself" yet He "suffered only in respect to human nature" (p.208) and with respect to the Kenotic view of the Passion and Cross he says we must avoid "the extreme Kenotic position in which we can see no divine power at all" (p.210). One wonders what other power there is to see 'when we survey the wondrous cross' save 'love so amazing', the power of omnipotent love. In these instances Weston seems still tainted with the ancient metaphysic! But that he is not entirely successful in the new Christological method is no discredit, and we do not by any means align ourselves with J.S. Lawton who in "Conflict in Christology" regards the attempt to restate the traditional Christology in modern terms as "fundamentally misconceived" (Turner). On the contrary, as we argue in this thesis, such an attempt is both laudable and necessary and Weston's book is a most praise-worthy pioneer attempt in this new Christological method. Along with the great contemporary work of P.T. Forsyth it must be regarded as one of the greatest books of the century in the field of Christology.

Professor Turner has said that Weston's theory "does not pigeon-

hole at all easily". Is it a Kenotic theory? It is noticeable that Weston's main strictures upon Kenoticism are directed against the "advanced Kenotic view" and Vincent Taylor seems to accept it as a Kenotic theory. Weston himself describes the process of a continuous self-limitation of the Logos a "real self-emptying", and there are many kenotic touches besides: the Incarnate Christ holds communion with His Father through His human soul, His state in glory is but a "memory", His self-restraint is absolute "putting out of action whatever measure of divine power that manhood cannot mediate." Yet we feel that Weston does not fully strike the characteristic chord of Kenoticism: 'He became poor'. He never speaks unambiguously of Jesus as a man and humanity is generally conceived as a set of relations. He equates 'the law of self-emptying' with 'the law of self-restraint' though the content of Kenosis is normally richer than mere restraint. A continuous Kenosis in the incarnate sphere would seem to fit his theory equally well. Perhaps Professor Turner comes nearest the mark in describing his Christology as "a slightly kenoticised form of the Enhypostasia". Christ is able to live a human life because all the constituent elements of perfect humanity are already present in Him. In the incarnate sphere he lives a truly human life by reducing Himself to the human constituents of which He is already possessed while exercising all His divine prerogatives and powers extra carnem. At several points Weston's language is strongly

reminiscent of the ancient doctrine of Enhypostasia. But whether Kenotic or Enhupostatic the chief defects remain: it does not effectively synthesise the Unlimited Logos with the Self-limited Logos who is subject of the Incarnate life and so does not really take us beyond the position of Bishop Gore; and it fails to do justice to the humanity of Christ "consubstantial with ours". This is clearly illustrated in his treatment of Christ's human knowledge on which subject most theologians would prefer to take their stand with Gore rather than with Weston.

The difference between the two approaches of Gore and Weston to the subject of the human knowledge of Christ may be put very simply. Both start from the axiom of Christ's sinless perfection but whereas Gore allows the Gospel facts to speak for themselves and so reproduces the truth-to-human-life of the historical portrait, Weston interprets each fact in the light of his theory and paints a final picture which many would feel is not entirely true to the Gospel history. Each moment in the life of our Lord from His birth onward reveals a little extra of the divinity of the Logos in relation to the growing human capacity, each moment is full of its serene perfection in the gradually accumulating picture of total divine-human perfection. On the question of Christ's knowledge of the Father we are told that "at each stage of His growth He had the highest possible knowledge of the Father and of His relation with the Father, and with those to whom the Father had sent Him, that

such a human soul, at its stage of development, could possibly mediate. And this knowledge we call the Beatific Vision, the Vision of God" (p.212) and "it is impossible to conceive of the Eternal Word ever losing the Beatific Vision". Christ also possessed creative knowledge "which knows a thing by causing it to exist" (p.213). He is aware that it will be objected that one who employs creative knowledge is hardly to be called true man, and he is prepared to admit "comparatively few examples of its use"! (p.213). Neither Gore nor Forsyth would agree that Christ was never without the Beatific Vision and that He exercised creative knowledge. On this reading of Christ's human knowledge one would expect Weston to represent Christ as really aware of the day and hour of the Last Judgment but no, for this fact was of such a nature as could not be mediated by a human soul. In His incarnate life Christ was truly ignorant of the day and hour. For the larger part of His life, Weston concludes, Christ acquired knowledge humanly by way of experience. Thus Weston portrays a human and historical Christ perfectly in keeping with his view of His Person but whether it is true to the lineaments of the Evangelical portrait is at times doubtful.

In his series of lectures on the "Person and Place of Jesus Christ" DR. P.T. FORSYTH, Congregationalist scholar and preacher, forcefully demonstrates both the religious appeal and logical force of the principle of Kenosis, and his presentation must be undoubtedly regarded as the most powerful in the English Kenotic tradition.

His exposition is not a mere academic exercise, but one that springs into being out of the evangelical facts of Redemption.

Forsyth views the Incarnation as the background of Atonement; the supreme moment in the life of Christ is not His birth, but His death, and the Person of Christ must be read in the light of the Work He accomplished for us men and our salvation. This work he conceives to be no less than the reconciling, uplifting and transforming of the human race: "His charge is the second creation and the divine consummation of humanity" (p.281). For this creative work no mere man is sufficient. The apostles were driven by their experience into a cosmic interpretation of Christ's work and they have carried the Church with them. "The greatest thought and passion of the Church, its experience, and not its philosophy or its theology alone, has been driven to postulate behind all the acts of Christ's will on the earth, behind all his pity and power, an act of His (not merely of his God and ours), eternal in the heavens, an act which held all these earthly acts within it. His person has been felt to be greater than these earthly acts could express. They had all a volitional foundation in the heavens" (p.282).

The starting-point of Forsyth's Christology, therefore, is the pre-existence of Christ and His Kenosis in Ch. 2 of Philippians. While he accepts the assured results of historical criticism he is not in the least shaken by those critics who would warn us that the allusion by Paul is almost a hapax legomenon and he derides the

tendency to base theology on what he calls "quantitative criticism" alone (p.265), the assumption that because references are rare they are therefore insignificant, and pleads for a criticism that has some "psychological imagination" and "theological venture" about it. "The more rare the reference the more seminal it may be, and often has been. Isaiah 53 is quite unique in the Old Testament. Yet one might venture to say it is the passage in the Old Testament which is the link with the New, yea, the germ of it, and the passage which has most affected the conception of the most unique thing in the New Testament - the cross - both with the Saviour, the Church and the world. And so also the Kenotic passage in Phil. 2 has had an effect upon Christian thought, faith and adoration out of all proportion to the space the New Testament gives to the idea; as it must have had a power in a mind like Paul's far larger than the space it covers in his letters" (pp.266-7).

But it is further objected that, except in the Fourth Gospel, Christ says nothing about His pre-existence, therefore it cannot be real. This is to forget that the consciousness of pre-existence is inseparable from the *ἄναξ λέγων* of Matt. 11²⁷; nor must it be forgotten that "the Kenotic explanation of his limited knowledge in certain other respects should apply here, and should suggest an oblivion in Christ of his eternal past both to the reality of his human life and to the efficiency of his divine work for us". The thought of pre-existence may have come to Christ "only in the

uplifted hours and the great crises". Nor would we expect Christ to be other than reticent on the deepest, inmost matters. Christ's own references to His pre-existence may be like those references to His atoning death in the Synoptics. One might argue that they are few just because they bulked unspeakably in Christ's mind.

"The captain" says Forsyth finely "is not loquacious in the rapids. He does not talk about seamanship in the storm" (p.266). Christ we remember was reticent about his Messiahship. There was much more need for reserve on so grave a matter as his pre-existence. To have made himself explicit on the subject of his pre-existent life would have been to invite death from a Jewish crowd. Forsyth therefore accepts the Lightfoot interpretation of the Phillipians passage.

But no less significant for Forsyth than the divine pre-existent Christ is the fact of His real humanity! But could a pre-existent Christ become a real man? he asks. The problem therefore is the relation between the Godhead of the Eternal Son and the man Jesus Christ and how that relation was effected. It cannot be expected that all will agree on the question of how it happened. There was a variety of opinion in the early centuries, and there may always be. (P.283). Difficulties will be raised against any view, "but a Kenotic theory" Forsyth maintains "has less than some" (p.273).

Forsyth prefaces his own Kenotic theory with a demand for the

moralising of dogma. The Church must always have dogma but it must be revisable from time to time to keep pace with the Church's growth in a changing world. The study of theology must advance and keep pace with the growth of thought. The Chalcedonian form of the Church's Christology requires re-interpretation, and especially so since it served for its day the purpose of repelling errors rather than adjusting truths. Like Gore he believes that Chalcedon was a mere juxtaposition Christology: "The truths were not really and inwardly adjusted". It was beyond the power of the Greek metaphysic, which was but "a crude science of personality", to shew how divinity and humanity could cohere in a personal unity (p.217). The purpose of the Incarnation was moral, and its nature must be moral and not metaphysical. In the old dogma the union of the two natures in Christ was conceived in a too natural and non-moral way. Its categories were too physical. The two natures were united miraculously rather than morally. The union began in the miraculous conception, "which was not an ethical act, rather in the grace of the Eternal Son who, for our sakes, from rich became poor" (p.223). Even the word 'union' is ethically misleading, it is too physical, and illustrates the cardinal weakness of the old dogma. "It works upon a spiritual subject with physical instead of moral categories. Its incarnation takes place not by spiritual power but by natural power, however vastly magnified and deified" (p.224). Such a charge at least cannot be made against Kenosis which makes

the Christ on earth the result of "a grand moral act" in heaven. Because the two-nature theory of Chalcedon is unethical and expressed in metaphysical categories which are "more or less archaic for the modern mind" it is better to begin the study of Christology from the scriptural doctrine, though in untheological form, since the New Testament "remoralises the whole issue by restoring it to personal religion" (p.218).

Forsyth further illustrates his principle of the moralisation of dogma in relation to the metaphysical attributes. Omnipotence in the sense of physical, arbitrary, natural power is a crude conception of the divine attribute. The supreme category of Godhead is holy love and this principle regulates His physical power. "God is God not physically but morally, not by power but by love. That is the Christian revelation. The nature of Godhead is Holy Love. There lies the region, the nature and the norm of its omnipotence. It is no arbitrary or casual omnipotence, which puts out power just for the sake of doing it or shewing it. It can do, not everything conceivable to freakish fancy, but everything that is prescribed by Holy Love. To a physical omnipotence it is indifferent." (p.313). God's concern with humanity is a kingdom of holy love. This is effected by the Son of God incarnate, by redemption, by reason of man's sinful state. The Son of God renounces the glory of His heavenly state and accomplishes our redemption by the way of holy love, "and not by a tour de force." It is an exercise of

sanctity, and not an exertion of strength. That is his satisfaction to God. He presents God with a perfectly holy Humanity. He does it because He is holy infinite love: he can do it because he is almighty for that love. It is not a love which might itself be finite, only with a miraculous physical omnipresence; but it is an almighty love in the sense that it is capable of limiting itself, and, while an end, becoming also a means, to an extent adequate to all love's infinite ends" (p.313).

The divine Self-limitation involved in the Incarnation of the Son is continuous with, and represents the summit of, that divine Self-restriction which is implied in all His creative work. "In love we were created and endowed with freedom by an act of God wherein he limited his own freedom by the area of ours. His omnipotence received a restriction - but it was from an exercise of His own loving power and freedom; and an exercise of it greater than could be rivalled by all the freedom man received. The freedom that limits itself to create freedom is true omnipotence, as the love that can humble itself to save is truly almighty. God in His vast act of creative love laid a limit upon himself to give room to the freeborn to live. He drew in his universal energy and causation to that extent. But any limit laid upon power by such love is an exercise of omnipotence. And when God in his creative love gave man freedom, it was a mightier exercise of His own free power than could be matched by all the power man might exert or fancy in the

use of his freedom. So it was also with the new Creation. There was more omnipotence concentrated in the person of Christ than was spread in all creation. To appear and act as Redeemer, to be born, suffer and die, was a mightier act of Godhead than lay in all the creation, preservation and blessing of the world. It was only in the exercise of a perfect divine fulness (and therefore power) that Christ could empty and humble himself to the servant he became" (pp.314-5).

So far there is much in Forsyth's exposition that is reminiscent of both Fairbairn and Gore. The thoughts of Fairbairn: 'omnipotence has no meaning apart from character', 'that which marks the whole life of Deity is the regulation of His physical by His ethical attributes', 'the preparation for such an act as the Incarnation in creation' are all present in Fairbairn. The last thought is forcibly expressed by Bishop Gore and all three claim to re-interpret the dogma of Chalcedon. Yet the differences are no less marked. In the mind of Fairbairn the Incarnation would have taken place apart from 'the accident of sin' whereas for Forsyth the Incarnation is but the means to Atonement. The latter is more positive; whereas in both Fairbairn and Gore the Kenosis is somewhat negatively conceived as the withdrawal or abandonment of the physical attributes for Forsyth Kenosis is an act of holy love's omnipotence, which brings him closer to Weston. But it is in the treatment of the process of Kenosis that Forsyth chiefly differs from, and improves

upon, his great predecessors.

He states the problem as that of "the retraction, concentration or occultation" of self-consciousness "in one constituent of the Godhead", the problem of how the eternal Son while retaining His consciousness can renounce "the conditions of infinity and its precreate form". He cites hypothetical analogies in human experience where personal resolution may, in response to love or duty or some other moral dynamic, effectually extinguish various native powers of personality and infers that "just because he was holy God the Son would be morally capable of a self-dispowering more complete than anything that could be described by human analogy". Again as the creator of human souls it may be assumed that Christ would have the power to experience the growth of a human soul.

Approaching the question of what Christ actually renounced Forsyth prefers to speak of particular attributes not as entities which can be renounced, after the manner of Fairbairn, but as modes of being which can be modified. "An attribute cannot be laid down for it is only the Being himself in a certain angle and relation. But there are accidental relations, relations, for instance, contingent on human freedom, which determine the form in which the attribute exists. They determine its mode of being, according to the particular position in which the subject finds himself. Thus omniscience and the rest are not so much attributes as functions of attributes, or their modifications" (p.309). Omniscience, for

example, in the eternal realm is an intuitive and simultaneous knowledge of all things; in time it takes on a discursive and successive form with only a potential power to know all things, which actualises gradually under the conditions of human growth and acquisition of human knowledge. Thus the attribute is not renounced, nor consciously possessed and concealed, but retracted in its mode of being from actual to potential.

"The attributes of God, like omniscience, are not destroyed when they are reduced to a potentiality. They are only concentrated. The self-reduction, or self-retraction, of God might be a better phrase than the self-emptying. And it is only thus, indeed, that growth is made possible, and evolution started on its career. No evolution is possible on other terms, none unless the goal is in the start.....The conditions of time must lie within the possibilities of Eternity, the growth of man within the infinite mobility of the changeless God. "Finitum non capax infiniti" is the principle of Deism; the principle of Christian theism is "infinitum capax finiti". If the finite lies beyond the infinite and outside it then the infinite is reduced to be but a larger finite; the infinite can only remain so if it has the power of the finite as well" (pp.308-9).

This conception of the Kenosis as the retraction of the divine attributes to a state of potentiality by a tremendous pre-mundane moral act is well argued and is much less exposed to criticism than the forms already considered. But Forsyth's main contribution to

Christology is still to come. The history of Christology shews the existence of two main approaches:¹ the Katagogic, which starts with the Incarnation as the descent of God, and the Anagogic, which starts with the upthrust of man. Broadly they correspond to the Monist and Dual Christologies, or at least they interpret correctly the thought pressures behind them. In Patristic Christology one element or the other is strongly emphasised and the weakness of each view lay in its inadequacy in dealing with exactly those elements which made the other a convincing, if partial, approach. Forsyth is the first Christologian to try to bring both into a single system. Corresponding to the Kenosis of the Godhead, he finds a plerosis of the manhood. The state of potentiality did not lie static but developed in the moral course of his human life history "till, culminating in the Cross and its consummatory victory, it emerged into actual consciousness and use in the Glorified, to whom all things were delivered of the Father, all power given in heaven and earth - when he was determined by the resurrection so as to be the Son of God with power.....He became what he was" (p.311). The diminuendo of the Godhead is matched by a crescendo of the manhood. In a real, though in a unique sense the Incarnate Lord died to live. What the Logos retracted in becoming Incarnate he progressively achieved through his humanity. "The form of a servant gives place again to the form of God".

Like Bishop Gore Forsyth works throughout in moral and spiritual

1 See above, p.92.

categories; and instead of the ancient 'nature' and 'person' he prefers to speak in terms of movement. Again, as we have seen, like Fairbairn and Gore he sees a continuity between creation and the Incarnation. It is in this context that he expounds his concept of Kenosis and Plerosis. In man's spiritual history, as he conceives it, the 'horizontal' movement of evolution is supplemented by a two-way 'vertical' movement: the vertical action of God's downward movement to man and man's upward movement to God. The Incarnation takes place within this racial encounter between God and humanity. By virtue of Kenosis Christ becomes a participator in this spiritual movement, and His plerosis consists in His perfect and growing reception of the outgoing love and grace of God. The result in Christ is a perfect involution of the two spiritual movements forming a perfect *περιχώρησις* "in which the two currents become mutually and crucially involved, forming a centre of perfect rest.....At his central place we have what we might call the node at which the two movements, being compressed, meet, rotate, and cast a fine column to heaven" (p.337). In the personality of Christ, otherwise expressed, there was a perfect blending of the will of man and the Will of God. This was made possible by the gradual unfolding of the divinity latent in Christ's incarnate nature throughout the course of his life's career. At the base of it was His initial kenotic assumption of the conditions of human personality. Incarnation and Redemption "lay in his active acceptance of the human and

sin-laden conditions of communion with God in such victorious and sinless way as to make that communion possible and real for every other personal soul" (p.353).

Here again, it may be objected, we meet with the problem of the relation between ethical and metaphysical.¹ Forsyth, it may be urged, speaks of the Incarnation in terms of movements rather than of 'persons' or 'natures' with the result that he does not altogether answer the question "Who or what moves in either case?" It is true he does not speak of 'person' in the ancient metaphysical sense, yet he is very much concerned with 'person' in the modern sense. Moreover if he rejects the "static" categories of the ancient ontology he nevertheless retains and elucidates other, more dynamic elements of the old terminology, e.g. *περιχώρησις* and *ἀποτέλεσμα*. In two passages Forsyth seems to anticipate this kind of criticism and both seem to carry force against the objection. He says: "The Church has worked long on the old lines which were laid down by pagan thought rather than by a final revelation in a person: perhaps, when we have worked in this new and living way as long, then we may expect results.....as great and commanding in their sphere as" those resulting from "the application of the other experimental method of induction so appropriate to natural science" (p.231); and again: "Much that may seem obscure would vanish if we could but cease to think in terms of material substance or force, however fine, and learn to think in terms of

1 See above, p.106.

personal subjects and their kind of union; if our minds gave up handling quantities in these high matters and took up kinds. It is the long and engrained habit of thinking in masses or entities that makes so unfamiliar and dark the higher habit of thinking in acts" (p.346). Forsyth's dynamic exposition has meaning; it is within both our comprehension and religious experience. Can we say this, for example, of the Tome of Leo?

The Kenotic theory of Dr. Forsyth, we have said, is an attempt to explain the evangelical facts of redemption in a modern idiom. It must also be firmly stated that he is loyal throughout to the Christ of the Church's creeds and definitions. This loyalty is illustrated in his desire to defend the *non potuit peccare* which belongs to the main ecclesiastical tradition of Christendom. One wonders, however, whether it is not a self-imposed difficulty since the assumption of our fallen nature by Christ only confirms His consubstantiality with us and is more in keeping with the Kenotic hypothesis. That Christ took upon Him our fallen nature and was yet without sin would be supported by many present-day theologians irrespective of their attitude to Kenosis. Forsyth's defence of the traditional view, while ingenious, is perhaps the least convincing element in his Christological theory. True human experience, he affirms, would involve freedom to sin and Christ was not able to sin: *non potuit peccare*. He attempts to meet the objection in several ways. His suggestion that the extent of his kenosis deprived

him of the knowledge of this capacity may seem ingenious, yet we know that Christ's knowledge was limited even about himself. He also gives human analogies which suggest that moral struggle might have still been a reality for him, e.g. "I could remind you how possible it is for you to steal some article from a shop on your way home, and yet how impossible", and there is the consideration that God cannot fail in the establishment of His Kingdom yet the Church struggles, and must struggle, for its achievement. Again, sin belongs to our human experience, but does not belong to true human nature. "Because Christ was true man he could be truly tempted; because he was true God he could not truly sin, but he was not less true man for that".

Owing to the complex interweaving of his thought a summary of Forsyth's lectures is not easy and his exhortatory, homiletic style often compels lengthy quotation, but it is hoped that the fore-going summary does justice to the author's Kenotic argument which as presented by Forsyth himself brings out the very fulness of the divine and human in Christ, while it eschews all metaphysical terms in favour of those which are ethical, personal and dynamic.

Forsyth's position is adopted by R.H. MACKINTOSH.¹ He starts from the Pauline Kenosis of Phil. 2⁶⁻⁸ which he finds corroborated throughout the historic record. Christ emptied himself; he became poor. He left the Father's throne to descent to our low level of poverty, weakness, shame and suffering in order that he might lift

1 Doctrine of the Person of Christ, pp.463-486.

us up. That God was love we knew theoretically, but it is he who demonstrates it as a finite spirit assuming all our poverty and lowliness. This revolutionary act the traditional Two-nature Christology fails to recognise insisting as it does that he did not really become poor after all, but remained rich, retaining all the fulness of deity. Now if we believe that Christ is God the possible explanations are few. To say that Christ acquired Godhead is pagan; to say that He is the eternal God unmodified by His descent into time and space is untrue to the historic facts. The only alternative is to say that in Christ we are face to face with God who by a great act of self-abnegation in the eternal sphere has chosen to dwell among us. The motive of the divine Kenosis is holy love: he quotes Forsyth's dictum that the self-renunciation of God in Christ is the ultimate assertion of His nature as love.

Mackintosh refers to the theories of Gess and Thomasius; he rejects the theory of the former who postulated the actual self-renunciation of the divine self-consciousness; and of the latter who supposed the abandonment of the so-called relative attributes of omnipotence and the like. On these premises God ceases to be God at all. But following Forsyth, he supposes all the qualities of Godhead to be present essentially in Christ but modified in the form of their existence. They are present in the form of concentrated potency rather than of full actuality, *δυναμει* rather than *ἐνεργεία*, and he gives not incredible analogies whereby we

can conceive the powers of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence reduced within human limits. The divine powers are not abandoned, but rendered latent, and they are to be resumed by the exalted Lord, so that from beginning to end there is no breach of personal continuity. The historic Portrait of the Gospels is the outcome of this great premundane act of self-limitation. He is now God self-restrained within the limits of manhood and evokes from mundane conditions the utmost they are capable of yielding to a sinless nature.

Was Christ conscious of His divinity during His earthly sojourn? he asks. Was he aware of his latent powers? The Gospel record suggests the operation in Him of abnormal powers, but these do not necessitate the fulness of deity which is already ruled out by the basic principle of Christ's true humanity. In Christ he sees the possession of the Spirit of which there are faint analogies in prophet and apostle; nor can the powers of a sinless humanity be easily limited. In the maturation of such a personality we can imagine moments of high illumination, of which we read in the Gospels, when He realised His significance for God and humanity; and there must have been some kind of progression from His human state to His full realisation of divinity at the Resurrection, when the perfection of faith passed into sight. Mackintosh thus seems to regard the Baptism with its heavenly confirmation of His Messiahship, the Transfiguration when He spoke with Elijah and Moses of the

exodus which He was shortly to accomplish at Jerusalem, high moments of exaltation such as those recorded for us in Matt. 11²⁵⁻⁷ and in the Fourth Gospel, as so many stepping-stones leading to the final apocalypse of the Resurrection. Hence he says that the principle of Kenosis requires to be supplemented by some kind of Plerosis, otherwise there would be an unreal and abrupt transition from the human state to His full realisation of divinity at His resurrection. All this is paraphrase of Forsyth's great principle of redintegration, "He became what He was".

Yet Mackintosh is much less adventurous than his great predecessor, if indeed he realises the full force of Dr. Forsyth's teaching. He is fully aware that no precise spiritual anatomy can be given of our Lord's divine-human personality and is content to offer merely a principle of elucidation. We cannot resolve the mystery of the incarnate Lord in psychological formulae. Kenosis is a great religious intuition rather than a theory. He does not feel it incumbent upon him to give a satisfactory answer to ultimate questions such as the relation of the divine Christ in carne to the Christ extra carnem, or of the incarnate Lord to the life of the Blessed Trinity, and gives no hint that both questions are much less pressing in the Kenotic theory of Dr. Forsyth.

In his "Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching" (1958) DR. VINCENT TAYLOR remarks that for a generation the doctrine of Kenosis has rested under much disfavour which he attributes to the

overboldness of its earlier advocates, particularly of Thomasius of Erlangen. But it will not do for modern Kenoticists thus 'to scorn the base degrees by which they did ascend'. Gess and Thomasius have made classic contributions to the development of Kenotic Christology, whatever their aberrations. Fairbairn's contribution to the Kenotic tradition in British theology has been immense and, as we have seen, it was built on the foundation laid by Thomasius. Yet it is of equal importance to have Dr. Taylor's own approval of Kenotic Christology. Since correct exegesis must be regarded as the final arbiter of conflicting Christologies the judgment of a New Testament scholar of such eminence as Dr. Taylor carries weight. He expresses his judgment thus: "The Christology which seems most in accord with the teaching of the New Testament is the doctrine that, in becoming man, the Son of God willed to renounce the exercise of divine prerogatives and powers, so that in the course of his earthly existence He might live within the necessary limitations which belong to human finitude. Divine attributes of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence were laid aside, not in the sense that they were abandoned or destroyed, but in such manner that they became potential or latent because no longer in exercise. The knowledge of his heavenly origin and divine nature was given to him by revelation and intuition at His baptism, Temptation and Transfiguration, and during seasons of prayer and communion with his heavenly Father. These experiences were remembered and formed the undertone of His

life and ministry, but they were not always so central in His consciousness as to preclude the frustrations, disappointments, and trials of a truly human life. It is within this human life that one must find His divinity. In the words of Emil Brunner His humanity was the 'incognito of His Deity'. While we must hesitate to say with Calvin that Christ concealed His divinity, we may agree with his submission that the splendour of His glory penetrated through the weakness and concealment of the flesh. It is better, however, to speak of His divine powers as 'latent' rather than as 'concealed', since the idea of concealment introduces a duality into His earthly life which is not reflected in the Gospels. 'Concealment' is a term better applied to the pre-existent act of surrender on the part of the Son of God rather than to the conditions of His existence upon earth, true though it is that in His association with His disciples His glory breaks through His words and deeds".¹

It must be borne in mind that Dr. Taylor is not attempting to present a Kenotic theory of his own but merely defending the Kenotic rhythm of thought as he finds it in the New Testament. This accounts for the eclectic nature of his statements and citations. He quotes from different systems of thought without apparently realising their inconsistency with each other. Even in the above quotation we might notice that the first sentence would apply to Temple and Weston as well as the Kenoticists. The second sentence refers only to external attributes (Fairbairn and Thomasius) while the dominant idea of latency

1 Op.cit., p.287f.

belongs to Forsyth. The third sentence is clearly reminiscent of Gess via Mackintosh. Taking his statements as a whole we shall conclude that Dr. Taylor is merely concerned to defend the general principle of Kenosis.

His first conviction is that the Ego of the divine-human Son of God is divine, but the divine subject is in the form and under the conditions of human existence.¹ "Only by the exercise of a self-limitation, imaged and illustrated in the self-limitation of God in the creation of the world, can the Ego of the Son be operative in the conditions of time and space".² (Here again we meet with the Fairbairn-Forsyth-Gore connexion of Incarnation with Creation). Secondly, self-limitation in a human life was made possible by a pre-temporal act of will which is clearly implied in both Pauline and Johannine teaching. (This dominant note of Kenoticism does not apply to Bishop Weston who postulates a continuous act of will throughout the entire Incarnation). Thirdly, the divine attributes of omnipotence etc. are only latent and potential, a claim which he maintains is fully borne out by the facts of the Gospel record. Evidence to the contrary from St. John is discounted "by the consideration that the controlling interest in the Fourth Gospel is doctrinal".³ The nature-miracles, if they are historical, he regards as "occasional manifestations of divine power which match

1 Ibid. p.289, cp. F. Weston, The One Christ, p.190.

2 Ibid. p.290, cp. Forsyth, p.315, Gore, pp.222-5.

3 Op.cit., p.291.

the divine revelations of Sonship made at the Baptism and Transfiguration".¹ His fourth conviction is that Kenoticism does full justice to the unity of Christ's person as both human and divine, which rather surprisingly he expresses in terms of Weston: "It hangs no iron curtain between the earthly life of Jesus and His heavenly mode of existence. A curtain there is, but through it shines a celestial glow, and there are breaks in the fabric through which the light shines. This type of Christology presupposes one Christ, who is not cut off from the life of God, and yet consents to live on earth within the bounds of human finitude. His human nature is the life He leads as a man, subject to the conditions of time and space; His divine nature is the existence which He shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The uniting bond between these two modes of existence is His divine will, which in His human life is limited and confined by the conditions appropriate to that life, but is unlimited and unconfined within the triune life of God. This hypothesis does not mean that The Son has no operative human will. The human will is the divine will restrained by conditions which are accepted fully and completely. His will is the subject of His divine life, and by self-limitation is also the subject of His human existence".²

Close as this seems to be to Weston it seems that Taylor is

1 *Op.cit.*, p.292.

2 *Ibid.*, p.294.

defending Mackintosh's claim that it is no demerit of any Christology that it is unable to solve ultimate problems. How God acts, while the Son lives on earth as man, we do not know. Neither can we describe the part of the Incarnate Son in the maintaining of the universe.....The Son is not separated from the Father by the fact that He is sent. As the Incarnate, He is still, as the Fourth Evangelist declares, 'in the bosom of the Father', because triune relationships are not temporary and local, but eternal and spiritual "In what way the divine consciousness of the Son functions while He is incarnate, is not revealed to us, but it would be idle to suppose that the Godhead is impoverished by the supreme act of love by which the Son of God is sent into the world".¹ All this argument is irrelevant to the Christology of Frank Weston.

Such then are some of the Kenotic convictions of Vincent Taylor. There seems to be no support for any one particular Kenotic theory, yet it must be considered a great gain for Kenoticism in the 1960's that the weighty support of Dr. Taylor should be given to the principle of Kenosis as that which best interprets New Testament teaching, and to the Lightfoot interpretation of the Kenotic passage in Philippians.

1 Op.cit., p.298.

4

DOCTRINAL:

Criticisms of Kenotic Christology

We have seen that Kenosis in the modern sense involves some form of diminution of the divine factor in the Incarnation and we have summarised some major Christologies based upon this hypothesis. Though some of them are less open to objection than others all have been subjected to criticism and there is, it seems, no one theory which commands the acceptance of even a minority of theologians. Yet the principle of Kenosis, firmly based as it is upon apostolic teaching, has a wide appeal, while the Kenotic Christology of P.T. Forsyth has exerted a creative influence in British theology.

In his Hulsean Lectures of 1938 Dr. Creed wrote: 'Though Kenotic doctrine is no longer so much in favour as it was, I should think it probable that a majority today of those among us who have a Christology which they are prepared to state and defend, are still Kenoticists'. Yet, as Archbishop Ramsey¹ remarks, before the date when those words were written, severe criticism of Kenotic Christology had been made. Perhaps even more severe criticism was still to come. A strong attack was made by E.L. Mascall in his "Christ, the Christian and the Church" a decade later; and in another decade, in 1958, Dr. E.R. Fairweather² of Toronto attempted to shew the indefensibility of all Kenotic speculation. But that a moderate form of Kenoticism can still hold its own is evinced by Dr. Vincent Taylor's recent defence, and it is probable that most leading British theologians of today would find themselves in considerable

1 A.M. Ramsey, From Gore to Temple, p.40.

2 Beare's Comm. Phil. Appended Note, pp.159-74.

agreement with him.

We may therefore fittingly introduce a discussion of the various criticisms of Kenotic theories by considering the very idea of Kenosis itself, and by asking whether the Kenosis of divinity is at all feasible as a theological concept. This is the fundamental question which we posed at the end of chapter 5: Is the very idea of Kenosis compatible with the ancient doctrine of the Divine Immutability?

By divine immutability we mean that God is unchangeable and invariable in all those attributes which are comprised in the classical Christian doctrine of God, both metaphysical and ethical. God is perfect, infinite, eternal, omnipotent, holy love and immutable. Now when we behold God in Christ His ethical immutability stands secure for there we plainly see God's holy and omnipotent love. But His metaphysical attributes are not so obviously apparent. Hence the theory of Kenosis. God, it is held, is in Himself perfect and immutable, but in His incarnation, for His own love's sake, He has renounced His metaphysical fulness in a voluntary Kenosis. This is the point to be argued.

It would clearly help if we could discern the principle of Kenosis at work in God's dealings with the created order prior to the Incarnation, and it would seem on the face of it that Kenosis on the part of God in the Incarnation is not an entire innovation, but that the mere fact of the existence of a created order at all implies in itself a Kenosis on the part of God. If this can be in

any way substantiated then the objection raised against Christological Kenosis on the grounds of impairing the divine immutability loses much of its force because God Himself has subjected Himself to something similar already. Kenosis in Christ might then appear as the continuation and climax of God's modus operandi in an evolutionary universe.

It will be useful in considering this question if we make use of the well-known distinction between primary and secondary causation. By primary causation we mean the activity of God as 'First Agent', by secondary causation the delegated action of second causes of whatever character, whether atom, biological organism or human will. We must, of course, maintain the primacy of primary causation. God in se is absolute and unconditioned; and God was under no necessity to create. Creation is a free act of sovereign grace, congruous with His character but not necessary to His being. The created order is contingent throughout.

In our own time we are more accustomed to systems of thought which exalt secondary causation, sometimes to the entire exclusion of primary causation. In philosophy this view is exemplified in its extreme form by Atheism and to a lesser extent by various forms of Humanism. In the 18th century this view was expressed in philosophical Deism. For the Christian theist their weakness lies in their evasion of ultimate questions.

It would likewise be possible theoretically to ascribe

everything to primary causation. In ancient thought this tendency is seen in parts of the Old Testament: 'I create evil and do good'; and in Plato who insists upon the priority of the Eternal. In modern philosophy the same tendency is seen in the Occasionalism of Malebranche and in the Idealism of Bishop Berkeley. Its classical theological form is seen in Calvinism, a massive and relentless system based on the axiom of the Absoluteness and Unconditioned Character of the Will of God.

Reference may be here made to the famous analogy of the American scholar, F.J. Hall,¹ whereby he argues that the only difference between primary and secondary causation, between the will of God in se and as seen at work in the created order, is its appearance from the point of view of creatures. His analogy is the geometrical one drawn from the centre and circumference of a circle. The centre is a point which has no dimensions, divisions or boundaries: it may therefore represent the Infinite. Not so the circumference which is a line capable of division and measurement. The circumference depends on the centre for its existence, meaning and properties: it can therefore represent the finite. The radii can stand for the relations which subsist between centre and circumference. They meet at the centre but neither divide nor modify the centre; they constitute as it were the external relationships of the centre. As such they can represent the relationships between the infinite and eternal on the one hand and the finite and

1 Creation and Man (1923) pp. 1-19.

temporal on the other. The point which Hall is concerned to make is this: the centre gives meaning and significance to both radii and circumference and yet remains unaffected by either. God is the centre whose will radiates outward to the circumference and remains unchanged throughout. God's infinite will finds a finite form of expression without losing its essentially infinite character. Thus Hall argues that the only difference between the will of God in se and the will of God quoad creaturas is one of external presentation only: the infinite will is finitely embodied or temporarily expressed: but it remains absolute. The spatio-temporal universe is but the backcloth against which the cosmic drama is played out. It must be admitted that the analogy is a skilful defence of the primacy and essential unimpairment of primary causation. The difference between the Divine Will in se and as it appears to us is merely a difference in its presentation as seen through its effects. This might be described as the principle of Krupsis extended to the whole created order.

The analogy, however, skilful though it be, is exposed to one fatal weakness. It is true that a circumference is only a circumference in relation to a centre, and that radii are radii of a circle and not merely straight lines set at angles. But is not the same thing true of the centre itself? A point is only a point and it becomes a centre only in relation to circumference and radii. In fact the reciprocity between centre, radius and circumference

might lead to the use of the analogy to imply a mutual necessity between Infinite and finite, a view which Hall would be far from accepting.

The Christian view must certainly maintain the primacy of primary causation. But as children of our own age the modern scientific world-view demands that we also do justice to the reality of secondary causation. If we seek a way between the two extremes and insist upon the reality of both primary and secondary causation we shall be led to conclude that while the Will of God per se is absolute, unconditioned and eternal, nevertheless the positing of such a Universe as that in which we find ourselves involved affects not only the forms under which the Will of God comes to us but also His very *modus operandi*. It might be possible to regard the Universe at the physical level, the *concursum generalis*, as merely the obverse of the eternal Will of God, but new factors are introduced when we consider the level of human volition; and many theologians would be prepared to recognise throughout the created order an ever-increasing measure of openness in preparation for human wills. At three levels in particular they would recognise a change in the idiom of the divine *modus operandi*. At what we may call the foundational level of the universe it expresses itself as a kind of *consensus generalis*: the universe proceeds as it were in accordance with its own laws over a vast stretch of space and time. Causes and chains of secondary causation are the chief pre-occupation of the scientist and

explanation is in terms of the mathematical equation of modern physics and the formula in chemistry. At the second stage, the biological, while the earlier phase of mechanical causation persists, a process of selection is now more clearly discernible. To begin with, of the great number of worlds few, perhaps only one, are fitted for the development of forms of sentient life. The biological organism manifests design, pattern and integration, while the biological and zoological realms as a whole shew signs of trial and error as well as hints of what is to be fulfilled at a later stage. A whole host of phenomena appear which require new concepts for their explication, such as potentiality, adaptability and response to environment. From our present point of view the created order seems to be more involved in its own creation. The universe appears altogether less static, more dynamic. At the earlier stage there was as it were greater conformity, things moved according to a plan laid down; there now seems to be a greater involvement on the part of primary causation with secondary. This stage comes to fruition with the emergence of self-conscious being with its real, though relative, freedom of will and conscious choice. There is still the same solidarity of the previous with the present; cause and effect, and response to environment persist, but in addition there is the complexity arising from autonomous human wills and their varied interaction.

It is therefore possible to argue with Ottley¹ that "in

1 R.L. Ottley, The Doctrine of the Incarnation, II, p.285 (1896).

creation God voluntarily limits Himself in that He shews Himself willing to forgo part of His absolute prerogative in admitting beings other than Himself to a relative independence over against Himself". If it proves to be true that part of the significance of creation lies in the positing of beings with a capacity for free as distinct from mechanical service, must not the corollary be an act of Kenosis on the part of God Himself to give lebensraum to His creation? Such an interpretation will appeal to many minds as much the more realistic, more adventurous and more God-worthy.

Perhaps we may venture a second analogy in illustration of the view we have just expounded. There is a sense in which before the arrival of children the will of husband and wife is absolute and unconditional. But the birth of children imposes conditions on that will, and not only on its expression but on its modus operandi. The new relation of parents to the corporate existence of children brings about a re-grouping of the family will. The parents have now to readjust themselves to the independent or relatively independent beings they have brought into existence. At first the child is a more or less passive member of the family circle. He is picked up and put down. His existence is bounded by the satisfaction of physical needs where the greater the uniformity the better for him as well as for the other members of the family. But gradually he evolves as a growing member of the family with his own will and purposes, with the capacity either to co-operate with or to resist the will of the

family. Very perceptibly now the will of the family changes its modus operandi, though not its fundamental character. The more freedom for him, the less independence for his parents, though in normal circumstances the prevailing atmosphere of love and trust is sufficient to cover the change-over. But, while there is the possibility of the rebellion of the son, the normal expectation is that the initial position of absolute dependence of the child on the parent will be succeeded by a relationship of real two-sided confidence and trust, each serving the other members of the family in love.

The analogy may not be perfectly apt at every point, it is not intended as an allegory but as a parable. The main point is the difference in the modus operandi of the will of the family from the stage of childhood through adolescence to the maturity of manhood. The first two stages together, and the last might bear some resemblance to the two levels of creation, without and with the ingredient of human will. And the status of a relative, though real, independence is safeguarded throughout. However much I may seem to be an independent being today, it still remains true that I was the son of certain parents brought up in a certain area of human life, moulded by certain contingent forces. It is a postulate of the Christian doctrine of the Fall that not even fallen Adam ever escaped for one moment the hand of God.

It is clear then that justice can only be done to both primary

and secondary causation by positing a divine Kenosis. God unconditioned in se, as Creator God is self-conditioned. By reason of a delegated independence rising from the physical level through the biological to the existence of volitional agents characterised by a freedom of will God is self-conditioned in an evolutionary universe in a variety of ways and has to adjust His modus operandi accordingly. This is the thought expressed by Bishop Gore as he seeks to defend Kenosis as the way in which God deals with the world of nature. "God realises His will in nature", Gore remarks towards the close of his second Dissertation, "by an infinite variety of distinctive forms of life. And He loves to see each form of life realise itself in its own way. He respects the nature of each thing....And this respect of God for His creatures is seen most of all in His relation to man... Within such an area as allows man to exercise a real, though limited freedom - to such a degree as at least may involve considerable disturbance in the divine order for the sake of the value of free, as distinct from mechanical, service - God stands aloof and respects that free nature which He has created, that image of His own freedom which He has, as it were, planted out in the heart of the physical creation. God respects His creature man. His power refrains itself".¹ Similarly Dr. Forsyth argues to the same purpose in a passage we have already quoted at length. "In love", he says, "we were created and endowed with freedom by an act of God wherein he limited his own freedom by the area of ours....God in his vast act of creative love

¹ Op.cit., pp.222-3.

laid a limit upon himself to give room to the freeborn to live. He drew in his universal energy and causation to that extent".¹ So, too, Dr. Fairbairn argues that in creation time overrides God's eternity, respect for freedom His omnipotence and the physical universe His ubiquity.

But if this be the principle of divine action in creation should we not expect some parallel with the Incarnation which is concerned with the restoration of creation? Is it not reasonable to expect that the increasing surrender of the divine prerogative in creation as God works out His evolutionary purpose should be carried to the utmost and deepest personal level in the work of recreation? We have spoken of the self-conscious being of man as the fruition of the evolutionary process. But it is not the full fruition. The full fruition is seen only in Christ and His work of redemption. "Our wills are ours to make them Thine". Mention was made in our second analogy of the 'normal expectation...of two-sided confidence and trust', but where in God's dealings with the human race do we see the fulfilment of such an expectation? The prophetic text² declares that God has nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Him. A new modus operandi was called for to effect the reconciliation of human wills with the Divine Will - which is seen in the Incarnation and Redemption of Christ. Apart from Redemption evolution is but process. The summit of creation is redemption: the

1 Op.cit., pp.314-5.

2 Isa. 1²

Creator is the Redeemer; and if the method of Kenosis characterises the one we should expect to find it present in the other. It is all of a piece that God's creative purpose for mankind should be effected by, and culminate in, the sublime Kenosis of the Incarnation. This again, we may note, is the conclusion reached by each of our three great Kenoticists. In the thought of Bishop Gore the Divine Kenosis in nature "prepares our mind for that supreme act of respect and love for His creatures by which the Son of God took into Himself human nature to redeem it, and in taking it limited both His power and His knowledge so that He could verily live through all the stages of a perfectly human experience and restore our nature from within by a contact so gentle that it gave life to every faculty without paralysing or destroying any".¹ According to Forsyth God's mighty act of self-restriction in creation is even greater in "the new Creation"...."To appear and act as Redeemer, to be born, suffer, and die, was a mightier act of Godhead than lay in all the creation, preservation, and blessing of the world. It was only in the exercise of a perfect divine fulness (and therefore power) that Christ could empty and humble himself to the servant he became",² while Fairbairn argues that the Divine Kenosis in nature is continued in the Incarnation and thereby raised to the level of personal union. We submit, therefore, that the partial surrender of the divine prerogative involved in creation and carried to the utmost personal level in

1 Op. cit., p.224.

2 Op. cit., p.315.

the Incarnation forms a reasonable basis for a Kenotic Christology.

But a properly constructed Kenotic theory must seek to express some clear though necessarily general specification of the divine surrender involved. We thus arrive at our second main question: Of what exactly did Christ empty Himself when He became incarnate? This is explained, as we have seen, by Thomasius and Fairbairn in terms of the metaphysical attributes: these our Lord abandoned; the immanent or ethical He retained. On the face of it such a formula fits the evangelical picture of our Lord's life. In Christ's historic life it seems that external attributes such as omnipotence are withdrawn whereas the internal attributes of truth and love remain. It is eminently feasible, argues Fairbairn, that the former but not the latter might be sacrificed; indeed in the Incarnation God may seem the more Godlike if He renounce the physical attributes. The separation of metaphysical and ethical attributes, however, presents a real difficulty; it is to treat them as mere abstractions. Nor can we accept his classification. Even the metaphysical attributes must be regarded as immanent just as much as the ethical. They are chiefly relevant to the creation, it is true, but they were ready when creation arose! And how should we classify the Eternity, or the Perfection, of God? Fairbairn does not face the question as to how the Kenosis is sustained. It cannot depend on a continuous act of omnipotence if that attribute has been abandoned. And if the Incarnation is the result of a single

pre-mundane act of renunciation the problem of resumption has to be faced. Yet the doctrine seems to be on the right lines and only technically at fault. The Incarnation does seem to involve the renunciation of omnipotence and omniscience in some way or other, but we cannot accept the idea of 'withdrawal'. It will hardly do to think of God as possessing a number of attributes any of which He may shed at will; by reason of the perfection of God's personal unity the divine attributes cannot be so separated. Yet the basic point that God in Christ voluntarily and physically disempowered Himself is already hinted at in creation and is obviously true in some way of the Incarnation. It is the particular use of attributes which is at fault, one which Forsyth rectifies by speaking of attributes not as entities which can be renounced but as modes of being which can be modified, as well as describing the powers involved.

If the separation of attributes in Thomasius and Fairbairn proves a difficulty it would seem we are in far worse case on the theory of Gess. Here we are given what is commonly described as a depotentiated God, though strictly speaking every Kenotic theory presents us with a depotentiated God. But all depends on what is considered to be depotentiated. A metaphysical depotentiation is one thing, a moral depotentiation quite another. The former may be necessary if an Incarnation is to be possible at all; indeed, it may be involved in a moral 'actualisation'. In Gess ALL the divine

attributes, moral and metaphysical, are abandoned. Archbishop Ramsey¹ describes his theory as mythological; it is difficult, he says, to see how Deity can continue as Deity without His attributes. Incarnation and Redemption are Divine acts and demand a continuity between the Divine and human Christ. The position of Gess in fact was abandoned by later Kenoticists. Forsyth asks what there is in common between the Eternal Son and the man Jesus, on such a theory. "What remains of the divine nature when we extinguish the immanent ethical and personal qualities in any absolute sense?"²

Mascall³ describes Kenoticism as an inverted Monophysitism, "one of the many heresies which arise from the failure to concede the union of Godhead and manhood in one person".... "Thus", he writes, "Eutychianism, with its teaching that the human nature of Christ was absorbed into the divine, was an attempt to destroy the gulf by annihilating the created term; a union between Godhead and manhood in which the two elements retained their character as uncreated and created respectively being too difficult to admit, the created element had to lose its identity by being fused with the uncreated. Many of the modern Kenotic theories produce the same error in an inverted form: that Christ should be, in the full sense of the words, both God and man seems ridiculous; therefore the Godhead must be compressed or amputated to bring it down to the human level. The extreme Kenoticists might be surprised to be told that their

1 Op. cit., p.32.

2 Op. cit., p.307.

3 Op. cit. pp.11-2.

views were based upon the same fundamental premises as those of their *bêtes noires*, the Eutychians, but such is nevertheless the case. Neither part can bring itself to admit that the one Christ is, without qualification, both God and man. Kenoticism is thus the counterpart of monophysitism; it is in fact monophysitism of a different kind. Whereas the monophysitism of the Eutychians absorbed the human nature into the divine, that of the Kenoticists absorbs the divine nature into the human". His point is this: while Monophysitism evacuates the manhood in the interest of the Godhead, Kenosis reverses the process.

It will be noticed that Mascall refers to "the extreme Kenoticists" and probably has in mind Thomasius, Fairbairn and Gess, the latter particularly. His criticism certainly does not apply to Gore or Forsyth. As between Mascall and the Kenoticists in general everything depends on the value of the Leonine Christology which he represents. He would undoubtedly regard it as a positive Christology. In our view, however, it appears a mere juxtaposition Christology which is an invitation to go further (though we may possibly fare worse in the process). The problem then is the organisation of the Incarnate Person into a unity. For the Kenoticist the centre of this unity is the divinity, however the Godhead may modify itself in the process. Monophysitism centres the Incarnate Person in the Divinity and 'absorbs' to varying degrees the humanity into the Divinity. But Kenoticism also starts from Divinity: how

then can it 'absorb' it in the same sense? There is an inversion of emphasis, but the real point is not whether there is an inversion or not but the elements of truth which each system attempts to convey. Mascall would probably reply that it represents a depotentiated divinity and therefore no divinity at all. But even if this were sustained his objection would not strike at Gore or Forsyth.

Mascall's objection re-appears in various forms. Professor Baillie,¹ for example, objects that according to Kenotic Christology Christ is God and man successively and that we are given not an incarnation but a temporary theophany. This would seem to be a valid criticism of Gess, but it can hardly be levelled against Forsyth or Gore. This objection again is virtually that of Ritschl which Mackintosh regarded as the most trenchant criticism of Kenoticism. He writes: "Perhaps the strongest blow aimed at the Kenotic principle came from Ritschl, when he said that by very definition it deprives us of the right to say that we find God in Jesus. For the Kenoticist, as he puts it, 'Christ, at least, in his earthly existence, has no Godhead at all'."² The reply of Mackintosh is that some reduction of Godhead is essential to the personal advent of God in time, and he aptly quotes a passage from Brierley to the effect that whenever God reveals Himself, the veiling is as real as the revelation: "Chemistry does not shew any

1 D. Baillie, *God was in Christ*, p.96.

2 *Op. cit.*, p.485.

more of Him than there is in Chemistry; the revelation will be all shut up within its laws and limitations. May we not expect that in history, on the plane of human affairs, the same law will obtain? If God does not put more of Himself into chemistry than chemistry will hold, we may expect that He will not put more of Himself into humanity than humanity will hold. And thus the self-limitation, the self-emptying of Deity which we are told is an impossible conception, becomes the first condition of any revelation at all".¹

Our third question was this: Is a Kenotic Christ, a depotentiated God, really adequate to meet the needs of man's redemption? Can a depotentiated God save fallen humanity? We have already seen that in each of the three great Christologies involved at Chalcedon the great dynamic for thought was the assurance of salvation in Christ and that it was the same soteriological interest which led to the equal insistence on the human and divine in the one Christ in the Chalcedonian formula. The question must therefore be faced as to whether a Kenotic Christology is adequate in this respect. That the Kenotic Christ safeguards the human and historical needs no arguing, but can we say that the Kenotic Christ is truly the Divine Christ, that in Him we find God mighty to save? This is clearly a variant of the charge of mutability and the reply is implicit in what has already been said in answer to that charge. A Kenotic Christ is quite consonant with the self-restraint of

1 Aspects of the Spiritual, p.35, cit. Mackintosh, p.485.

God in nature and history and does not necessarily imply a self-abandonment, but merely a self-limitation. And self-limitation is not a negation, but an act of self-determination. The holy love of God, His inmost character, is present with all its metaphysical powers voluntarily subdued to its consistent purpose, within the limits of manhood. The marvel of such condescension and humility is itself an act of omnipotence motivated by holy love. To repeat the words of Forsyth: "to appear and act as redeemer, to be born, suffer and die, was a mightier act of Godhead than lay in all the creation, preservation and blessing of the world". The depotentiation was a supreme act of power which, as Fairbairn insisted, was always under the regulation of His character of holy love. Only a Christ who did not love His metaphysical fulness of being to the uttermost could avail as Redeemer. It is the depotentiation of such a One that saves!

Can we argue pragmatically from the experience of redemption itself? To know Christ is to know His benefits. Can we analyse the experience of redemption and see if there is anything in it which is incongruous with a Kenotic Christ? For this purpose we might consider four elements in our Lord's redemptive work: the elements of heroism, sacrifice, conquest and transfiguration. To begin with the note of heroism; here Kenoticism has a firm footing. This is surely the universal ground of appeal in a Kenotic Christ. It is not confined to any single phase or occasion in the life of

Christ. His life from Bethlehem to Calvary is such as over-towers the most unvarnished tale of human heroism. When He became poor it was the riches of the life of Holy Trinity He left behind. When we were sunk in pride it was the Son of God Himself who descended in humility to abject humiliation in order to raise us up. If it is the Godlike Example of Christ that wins our hearts, where shall we find its lineaments more clearly drawn than in the Kenotic Christ?

Others are drawn by the Saviour's sacrifice. But this should not be entirely focussed on the decisive act on the cross. His was a life of sacrifice of which the cross was the crown and culmination. Jesus taught sacrifice and embodied it in His life and death. He did more: in His pre-incarnate life He did not consider equality with God something to hold on to, but emptied Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant. His earthly life of sacrifice was initiated by a pre-mundane sacrificial act indicating, it is possible to argue, that sacrifice is a timeless principle in the eternal being of God.

Scripture includes under Christ's conquest of evil a demonic and cosmological reference but we must beware lest we move out of the moral realm into a barren metaphysical region and in so doing produce little better than the crude unethical theories of some of the Fathers. We cannot safely dismiss the demons of the early Christian centuries and in any case we have modern demons of our own to contend with. In either case our Lord's conquest is assured. But how did He conquer? The synoptic accounts of the Temptations in the Wilderness shew Him deliberately rejecting both miracle and

physical force. He will triumph in ethical obedience to the Will of God and not by metaphysical re-inforcements of legions of angels. Though the forces of evil are not yet routed victory lies the way of God's holy love. It is significant that the author of Hebrews sees not yet everything put under His feet but sees 'Jesus', and St. Paul, looking forward to the ultimate triumph says: 'In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow'.

The fourth element in Christ's redeeming work, His transfiguring power, is interpreted by the Fathers and in much devotional thought in the vocabulary of deification. We are redeemed from evil that we might become in the words of 2 Peter 'partakers of the divine nature', and of John 1 that we may become like Him. But what more is this than to grow into and to be kept by and in the love of God? And because Christ is God's supreme revelation of Holy Love this is none other than to be 'in Christ'. Every aspect of Christ's redemption can be interpreted in terms of omnipotent love. Can we not, therefore, say that the moral assurance of God's omnipotent love is given us in the Kenotic Christ? At least in the Kenoticism of Gore and Forsyth, if not in that of Gess? The anti-Kenoticist would demand material safeguards in the form of divine powers and metaphysical attributes: the historic Christ regarded this as a temptation to be repulsed - "Not by power, nor by might, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord" was the dynamic of the Incarnate Life. The Incarnation was a divine moral act, not a metaphysical

tour de force.

The fourth and final question we posed in chapter 5 was the compatibility of Kenoticism with Trinitarian doctrine. All forms of Kenoticism are exposed according to Temple (with whom Baillie agrees) to the question 'What was happening to the rest of creation during the Incarnation?' Dr. Temple objects to the view that the Creative Word was so self-emptied as to have no being except in the infant Jesus which he says is as monstrous as the Lutheran dogma of the divine humanity of Jesus whereby the infant Jesus is regarded as from His cradle exercising providential care over the entire universe: it is to assert "that for a certain period the history of the world was let loose from the control of the Creative Word, and 'apart from Him' very nearly everything happened that happened at all during the thirty odd years, both on this planet and throughout the immensities of space".¹ Professor D. Baillie² repeats the criticism and says that no satisfactory answer has been given. But Dr. Mackintosh, as Vincent Taylor has reminded us, had anticipated the criticism, submitting that a Christological theory has to explain the given facts of the Incarnate Life and cannot be expected to explain the inner relations of the Blessed Trinity. The answer to the problem may legitimately wait upon an advance in Trinitarian doctrine rather than in Christological theory. This point of view has been cogently expressed by Dr. O.C. Quick:

1 W. Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p.142.

2 D. Baillie, *God was in Christ*, p.96.

"Historically the dogma of the Trinity arose out of the original necessity in which Christian thought found itself at once of distinguishing Jesus Christ from God and of identifying him with God. This necessity in its turn arose out of the Christian experience itself, that is, out of the impression which Jesus Christ in his life, death and resurrection made upon the minds of his disciples. Theologically speaking, we might almost say that it was in order to make intelligible the experience of the incarnation and the atonement that the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated. Therefore we ought to test the truth and significance of our doctrine of the Trinity by our apprehension of the truth and significance of the incarnation, and not to limit the significance of the incarnation by the supposed demands of the doctrine of the Trinity".¹

Some kind of transfer of powers within the Trinity has been suggested, but this is rejected as a mythological conception. On the other hand it might be argued that the fear of cosmic chaos has a mythological basis in the form of Tritheism. It is easy to be wise beyond what is written, but Vincent Taylor's dry statement that the resources of the Trinity would seem to be fully adequate to the conditions of the Incarnation goes some way towards meeting the case.² And two further points are relevant: passages referring to the cosmic Christ are concerned to claim for the Redeemer His appropriate place in the economy of the Creation which He redeemed;

1 O.C. Quick, *Doctrines of the Creed*, p.147.

2 *Op. cit.*, p.266f.

while all that is stated of His work in Creation is that it was performed 'through Him'. Yet not 'all forms of Kenoticism', to repeat Temple's phrase, are equally affected by this criticism. Much of it is met if we adopt Forsyth's treatment of retraction and resumption. Fairbairn merely speaks of withdrawal and resumption; Forsyth, however, speaks of the retraction of the divine attributes and their progressive resumption in and through the manhood during the Incarnate Life. If we speak about loss of attributes the objection is a formidable one: it is not easy to avoid some kind of modification in the trinitarian life of God. But the whole of Godhead is involved in Forsyth's conception of Kenosis and Plerosis. The Trinitarian being of God is not modified but rather deployed for the purpose of man's redemption.

In setting forth his own view of the Incarnation it seems that Dr. Temple himself comes very near to Kenoticism, in fact it allies itself with those kenotic theories which we have described as relative, and particularly with the Patristic interpretation of Kenosis as 'addition' - *πρόσληψις*. Temple writes: the Word of God 'without ceasing His creative and sustaining work, added this to it that He became flesh and dwelt as in a tabernacle among us'.¹ Dr. Quick² comments: 'What he added is precisely that experience in which his divine consciousness was limited and his divine state surrendered'. The difference, he adds, between Dr. Temple and the

1 Op. cit., p.140.

2 Op. cit., p.138.

Kenoticists 'concerns only events in the supramundane sphere, about which no direct revelation has been given, and man's knowledge is necessarily but guesswork'.

This failure to recognise that the cosmic powers of Christ historically flow from reflexion upon the Incarnation is relevant to those objections to a Kenotic Christology which are based upon descriptions of Christ which properly apply only to His risen and exalted state or to His pre-incarnate life - in "the form of God". They disappear when a careful distinction is made between the historic Jesus and the Exalted Lord. We must allow for a revelation in and subsequent to the Resurrection and to the work of the Holy Spirit as the first believers pondered the meaning of what they had seen and heard. After the Resurrection under the influence of the Spirit they are increasingly dominated by the thought of the Risen and Exalted Lord. We must bear in mind that many of the New Testament descriptions of Christ arise from theological reflexion upon the Exalted Lord in a spirit of veneration and worship. As Vincent Taylor remarks: "Men thought upon their knees". Even though Paul in the great Kenotic passage starts from the very bosom of Deity, he does not stay there but descends into the very depth of humanity and historicity. But to dwell upon these characterisations of the heavenly Christ and to read them naively into the Gospel record of Jesus can only be disastrous. This misapplication of texts which properly apply to the Exalted Christ are by no means

confined to popular religious thinking but have often made their way into theological science, witness the misunderstanding of Col. 2⁹ in post-Lutheran theology. We must take the necessary corrective from Luther himself when he says: "The Scriptures begin very gently and lead us on to Christ as a man, and then to one who is Lord over all creatures, and after that to one who is God...We must begin from below and after that come upwards".¹

A final criticism must now be mentioned which if maintained would rule out all Kenotic theology. Both Lawton and Mascall object to the re-statement of traditional Christology in terms of modern anthropology. They have been joined recently by Dr. Fairweather who objects to Kenotic Christology as "an account of the reduction of deity and humanity to personal unity understood as the functional unity of a temporal, human consciousness".² Mascall³ objects that no science can be adequately explained in terms of another; the ontological concepts of the 5th century form the only proper vehicle for the expression of Christological doctrine. Such a canon of Christological interpretation we entirely repudiate. Are there no other concepts? The so-called ontological concepts of the Fathers do not have the scientific precision and finality claimed for them. There is, moreover, not one ancient metaphysic, but two, the Greek and the Latin. Writing of these two metaphysics in relation to the

1 Works of Luther, cit. H.R. Mackintosh, op.cit., p.232.

2 Beare's Com. Phil. Appended Note, pp.159-74.

3 Op. cit., pp.38-42.

doctrine of the Godhead Dr. Prestige¹ remarks that each presents "a faithful picture of the revelation disclosed by God for man's practical apprehension" but each is also "quite inadequate to convey a complete account of what God is in His own perfect nature"; like the Creeds they are "accurate signposts" rather than "exhaustive charts".

We do not expect to fathom God's perfect nature but we suggest that with our clearer view of, and intense interest in, the incarnate Life, along with developing psychology, it might seem that we are better placed than the ancients as far as the study of the Incarnation is concerned. It is with psychological categories of subject and consciousness that Kenoticism operates, not with 5th century categories of hypostasis and nature. Consciousness would have had no meaning for a 5th century Christologist, and subject may be merely on the periphery of a word like hypostasis. The prospects for a psychological interpretation of the person of Christ may not be too promising, partly because psychology has not yet settled down even into an agreed idiom and partly because, as Mascall notes, we cannot tell by introspection what it meant to be God incarnate. Presumably what Fairweather really means is that there is an over-plus of meaning in the older terms which may be lost when these are replaced by 'functional' or psychological categories. But either we use 'frozen categories', which may gain in safety what they lose in

1 Op. cit., pp.235-6.

relevance, or we experiment in the translation of older categories into terms like subject or consciousness of which Kenoticism is one type of explanation. To discountenance the latter method is to maintain a deep hiatus between traditional Christology and modern thought. Other Christian doctrines are interpreted in a modern idiom without loss; why not Christology?

It is in this context that it is natural to turn to P.T. Forsyth once again who insisted upon the need for a modern Christology based upon a new metaphysic of thought. Although he did not relax his hold by one iota on the traditional Christ of the Church's creeds he insisted that ancient dogma must be revisable to keep pace with the growth of thought. For him, as for Gore, Chalcedon was a mere juxtaposition Christology. It was beyond the power of Greek metaphysics to shew how divinity and humanity could cohere in a personal unity: its categories were too static, while being archaic for the modern mind. Yet in working out his own contribution he did not presume to have produced the new Christology. That would come slowly and would be the accumulative result of many efforts. But to the shaping of this new modern Christology perhaps Kenoticism has made the greatest contribution, and of the many Kenotic theories which have been produced that of P.T. Forsyth is perhaps the most satisfactory. Based upon the Lightfoot tradition, accepted and forcefully expounded by Dr. Mackintosh, it has exercised a creative influence in British theology.

The fundamental problem for Kenoticism is the organisation of the divine and human elements into one organic personal unity. On the one hand it must do full justice to the human historic Life, and on the other it must preserve a real continuity between the human and the divine Christ. The historic Saviour must be recognisably Divine! At this point Gess, Thomasius and Fairbairn fail, each in his own measure. Martensen and Gore preserve this double truth but to the detriment of organic unity. A double life of the Word has to be postulated and this, additionally, lays them, and similar relative theories, open to the charge of Mackintosh that Christ did not become poor after all, but remained rich. That is to say, they fail to bring out the full content of Kenosis, self-emptying. Forsyth solves the problem by postulating a process of divine plerosis parallel to the human Kenosis in the organic unity of the Incarnate Life.

This double process of Kenosis and plerosis, of withdrawal and progressive resumption, can most naturally be set against the background of the views of the created order outlined in the earlier part of the chapter. Its dynamism harmonises with the more dynamic view of creation there set out and it may represent the appropriate theme of redemption in an evolutionary situation. What God does to restore humanity shews full respect for what He has done already in its evolution. The descent into our human scene may only be feasible if there is an acceptance of what we are, while He progressively

resumes what He is Himself.

We have already spoken of a change of idiom on the part of the divine modus operandi at three levels of evolutionary process. The most decisive change occurs at the dawn of man's spiritual history with the emergence of human will which has at its disposal forces it can concentrate and aim in its own interest. The 'resistance movement' of secondary causation is at its maximum. At this point, if we may legitimately dovetail Forsyth's thinking with this train of thought, the horizontal evolutionary process is supplemented by a vertical process "which gives history a far more massive interest". The process he describes as "the vertical action, so to say, in which man is constantly seeking unto a God and God is constantly passing into man". These two vertical movements are the categories by which Forsyth describes the meeting of God and man in Humanity, and their perfect union in Christ as the divine means for the enabling of the race and the establishment of the Kingdom. There is the creative and productive action on the part of God and "the seeking, receptive, appropriative action of groping, erring, growing man", a downward and upward movement which produces a tremendous friction in the personal experience of the soul. The whole twofold action is a commerce, and even conflict between the individual and the Transcendent Reality which enforces a response of the one to the other, a decision "that what we feel facing us, urging us, dominating us, is not an illusion but the presence and action of a

transcendent reality" - this is "the sure venture of faith".

Christ must be seen as the crucial moment in this vast movement between God and humanity.

Man's spiritual growth lies in his upward response by faith to God's downward movement in grace, in the perfect and growing reception by man of the absolute outgoing love of God whereby he fulfils his destiny. This was perfectly achieved by Christ. In Christ there was a perfect involution forming a perfect *Περίχλωρησις*.

Christ was able to enter this vast movement of encounter between God and man by assuming the conditions of creaturely being. This was achieved by an almighty pre-mundane act of Kenosis. He now participates personally in the spiritual movement of man's moral history. His spiritual growth is by prayer and aspiration and by perfect response to God's creative movement of grace. As He takes upon Him the sin-laden conditions of humanity and responds in perfect obedience He achieves a parallel process of spiritual growth: *pari passu* with the Kenosis and His subsequent path of humiliation there is a growth of spiritual power and dignity: each light affliction as it were works for Him its own weight of glory. But by virtue of His divine potentiality He does not merely realise the perfection of human nature but ultimately rises to Godhead: "Every step He victoriously took into the dark and hostile land was an ascending movement also of the Godhead which was His base". His human life was the unfolding of Deity. Kenosis was crowned by Plerosis.

Thus for Forsyth the Incarnation exhibits, not 'a still conjunction of two natures', but the perfect *περιχώρησις* of the two vast movements which make up the whole of man's spiritual history, "the union in one Kenotic person of God's distinctive action and man's". And the whole drama of Incarnation and Redemption is achieved within the Trinitarian life of God. This is his interpretation of Chalcedon in dynamic modern terms in place of the static Greek terms of the ancient metaphysic. It is by virtue of this solid achievement that the Kenotic theory of P.T. Forsyth must be preferred above all others; and it may fitly serve as reply to those who insist upon clinging to outworn categories.

We are now in some position to assess the standing of the Principle of Kenosis in relation to the fore-going criticisms. These are by no means negligible, but neither are they overwhelming and taken altogether they are unable to demolish the Kenotic position. Christological Kenosis stands firmly on the Kenotic action of God in creation, and it may be suspected that some of these criticisms would virtually make Creation impossible. It rightly interprets the rhythm of the Incarnation as an act of Divine irruption into human history at real cost. It is true to the Katagoric element in the theology of the Incarnation. There is a certain suspicion that some criticisms of Kenoticism are virtually echoing St. Peter's rebuke to our Lord when He spoke of His Passion: 'That be far from Thee, Lord!' There is an air of theological squeamishness about

them which makes one wonder whether the Kenoticist may not have a truer insight into the cost of the Incarnation than his opponents.

CONCLUSION

A brief review may now be made of our inquiry into the principle of Kenosis and the various forms it has assumed in the Patristic age and in the post-Reformation period, and some conclusions drawn from the evidence it has provided.

First we must notice what it is that Kenoticism intends to do. It does not seek to provide new Christological data; these are given us in the ecumenical decision of Chalcedon and the facts of the New Testament. What Kenoticism purports to do is to explicate theologically the given data in a manner that is intelligible to our modern age and in the light of our modern advances in New Testament study and scientific exegesis. The theological data consist of the personal unity, humanity and divinity of our Lord; these facts it is the aim of Kenotic Christology to synthesise. But if Kenotic theologians eschew the metaphysical categories of the 5th century as irrelevant to our modern needs and ways of thought they do not expect to resolve the mystery of the Incarnate Lord in evolutionary categories or psychological formulae. Our Lord's humiliation is a miracle of grace and we can never hope to fathom the mystery of the Divine Condescension. Nevertheless we cannot give up the Christological quest and we must ever be reflecting upon the facts and endeavouring to reach a more intelligible and more satisfying synthesis for the age in which we live.

Though no addition can be made to the saving facts themselves new advances in knowledge and new modes of thought may shed new light

on the facts and provide new concepts. One such concept is Kenosis. It is, in fact, by no means new for we have seen that the Fathers had a very lively sense of the Kenosis and their concepts of 'concealment', 'addition' and 'reduction of compass' or contraction influenced later generations of thought. It is easy, for example, to see the connexion between Dr. Temple and the patristic 'addition' and that between Bishop Weston and the Kenotic Christology of St. Cyril. But the climate of thought of the age, dominated as it was by the unbiblical and Hellenistic doctrine of divine immutability precluded a full realisation of its possibilities. Thus Patristic thought was never able to move beyond a relative form of Kenotic theory. Inevitably the concept of Kenosis came to be more carefully scrutinised in the modern Church as a result of the relaxation of the old metaphysical presuppositions under the impact of modern scientific thought and the more dynamic conception of Revelation in a scientific age. But the chief factor undoubtedly was the greater concern for history in the modern Church than in the ancient Church which concentrated chiefly upon the framework of dogmatic definition.¹ Kenotic doctrine may be said therefore to spring from the keener appreciation on the part of the modern Church of the historical, human data of our Lord's life as given in the New Testament.

But although Kenotic Christology is based upon the New Testament as a whole certain passages are of paramount importance of which the

¹ A.M. Ramsey, op. cit., p.31.

chief is the famous Philippian passage in which we are told that Christ 'emptied' Himself. Here scientific exegesis is of the first importance for the passage has been variously interpreted in both ancient and modern times. Yet of the two rival interpretations considered in the foregoing pages, what has been called the classical, Kenotic translation still continues to hold its own and may be still considered the more natural on grammatical and exegetical grounds. On this reading of the passage St. Paul's thought is of the pre-existent Son of God who, existing eternally in the form of God, at a particular point in time renounced His divine mode of being in order to live a limited human life and suffer humiliation and death.

The genesis of Kenoticism on the Continent is to be found in Lutheran theology where it was first adopted to deal with a particular theological problem, viz. the sacramental doctrine of the ubiquity of the Lord's body, and even in British theology it was first employed to deal with the question of our Lord's human knowledge. It proved very congenial to the climate of both Anglican and Free Church and was quickly adopted as a key principle of Christology. Ramsey can write "In the twenty years from 1890 to 1910 the subject had a prominence such as it has never had in English theology before or since!"¹ What ministered to its decline was, according to Vincent Taylor, the overboldness of its early advocates, though we should not forget Dr. Fairbairn's indebtedness to Thomasius whom he somewhat

1 Op. cit., p.36.

overboldly singles out for special mention. The extreme theory of Gess (followed by Godet and others) we have touched upon and found unacceptable. But a 'more restrained and imprecise'¹ form of Kenotic doctrine has continued to hold its own in the Anglican Church throughout the present century while it is hardly an exaggeration to say that in the Free Church it has become almost orthodox Christology.

Post-Giessen Christology bequeathed two Kenotic theories of enduring value to British theology, that of Thomasius followed by Fairbairn and that of Martensen which greatly influenced Bishop Gore. Both Fairbairn and Gore fastened upon the central insight into the Incarnation as a supreme moral act involving the subordination of the metaphysical attributes of Deity to His moral character. Both however posited an act of abandonment which proved untenable, while Gore's synthesis was held up by a too literalistic, tritheistic view of the Trinity. It was the achievement of Dr. Forsyth to expound a view of the Incarnation which, if it does not entirely remedy the defects of Fairbairn and Gore, is much less exposed to criticism on both points. First, in place of 'withdrawal' or 'abandonment' of attributes he conceives of them as modified in the form of their existence. In the words of Mackintosh, they are present in the form of concentrated potency rather than of full actuality, *δυναμει* rather than *ἐνεργεία*. Secondly, his theory of the parallel movements of Kenosis and Plerosis shews the whole of

1 Op. cit., p.42. (A.M. Ramsey).

Godhead involved in the Incarnation and Redemption.

Throughout the entire history of Christology no single theory has ever succeeded in measuring up to the facts, and it is not surprising therefore that no Kenotic theory is generally regarded as intellectually adequate, although it is perhaps true to say that the profoundly moving argument of Forsyth has not received the full attention it deserves. But the very persistency of Kenoticism, and the multiplicity of forms which it has assumed, bespeak a true principle of elucidation and a conviction that in our Lord's self-emptying, could we fathom it, lies the heart of the mystery of the Incarnation. For a great many theologians Kenosis must find its rightful place in any statement of the manner of the Incarnation, and of all its manifold expressions pride of place must be given to the formulation of Dr. Forsyth.

His presentation may be thus briefly set forth. The Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same throughout. He cannot cease to be essentially what He is: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and for ever".¹ He is 'in esse' always the same. That 'esse' is Holy Love. The Word, Son of God, second Person of the Blessed Trinity is the personal subject of the Incarnate Life having reduced Himself by a mighty pre-mundane act of self-restricting Holy Love to that degree whereby He becomes fully conditioned by the flesh, as we are conditioned by the flesh. It is because of this that we can think of Mary as *θεοτόκος* . By an act of loving condescension

¹ Heb. 13⁸.

Christ renounced His precreate form and infinite mode of being so as to be able to dwell among us. He let the light of His glory die down so as to become as it were a tiny flame in the dark lantern of humanity.¹ This was rendered possible by an affinity between God and man which is scripturally expressed in the words: "God made man in His own image".²

From the heavenly counsels, Himself freely concurring, He came forth on a mission to mankind. He, Himself, the Son of God, was the message, perfectly couched in human terms, and perfectly revealing the love of God and bringing mankind into onement with God. He comes to us as the Son of His love, a title which speaks to us more tellingly, if less precisely, of His divine nature than "consubstantial with the Father". Even before He comes He demonstrates His nature as Love by a supreme act of self-abnegation, by an act supernal which is beyond all finite understanding. He accepts an earthly condition of being which precludes that full knowledge of Himself in His heavenly state and the full exercise of His divine powers. He renounces His heavenly mode of being and voluntarily imprisons Himself in the fetters of sense and finitude. The message is delivered at infinite cost for the Infinite has become finite in the lowest state of finity, becoming poor, despised, calumniated, persecuted, tortured in body and spirit and finally hanged on a cross.

But this Kenosis of Divinity is matched by a Plerosis of manhood.

1 V. Taylor, op. cit., p.77.

2 Gen. 1²⁷.

The state of divine potentiality did not lie static but developed in the moral course of His human life history "till, culminating in the Cross and its consummatory victory, it emerged into actual consciousness and use in the Glorified, to whom all things were delivered of the Father, all power given in heaven and earth - when He was determined by the resurrection so as to be the Son of God with power...He became what He was"¹. The diminuendo of the Godhead is matched by a crescendo of the manhood. What the Logos retracted in becoming Incarnate He progressively achieved through His humanity. "The form of a servant gives place again to the form of God".

Yet all He achieves is achieved in mundane conditions and by human methods: meditation on the Scriptures, prayer and communion, perfect obedience, by the revelation of events and the illumination and empowering of the Spirit. His way was always human, and therefore the high peaks of His illumination alternated with the vicissitudes of His spirit. Some of these peaks of insight are recorded for us in the Gospel narratives and culminate in the final apocalypse of the Resurrection when "He became what He was". The first, recorded by St. Luke, is worthy of note. It occurs at the age of His full initiation as a son of Israel. Then He is consciously beginning to be about the things of His Father. Notice, too, the naturalness with which the event is described in the Third Gospel. The medieval scribe who adorned the St. Mary Psalter with

1 Op. cit., p.311.

this scriptural incident was inspired, not by the Lucan text, but by the current human and divine juxtaposition theory of the Person of Christ. Thus he produces a monster child quite out of keeping with Luke's picture. There sits the youthful Jesus aloft on a pedestal high above the learned doctors who sit awestruck below Him, a picture which is still being perpetuated in modern times.

Whether in medieval or in modern times the traditional juxtaposition Christology will always be found to inspire the same kind of unnatural and unwordly piety. It is present in the delightful fancy of Hilaire Belloc:

"When Jesus Christ was four years old
The angels brought Him toys of gold,
Which no man ever had bought or sold.

And yet with these He would not play.
He made Him small fowl out of clay,
And blessed them till they flew away:
Tu creasti, Domine."

But it is only fancy. Its view of Christ tends towards a practical monophysitism. Its scriptural and text-book illustrations always set forth a divine Lord with head encircled by a halo as He moves about the hills and lanes of His native land. The miraculous element in our Lord's life becomes the hall-mark of His divinity. The gulf between God and man remains even during His earthly sojourn, His true human kinship obliterated. Even at the stations of the Cross our Lord's poignant human suffering is vitiated by the mystical and unhistorical sense of an infinite load of human sins

which He bears to Calvary. The Christian's gaze is permanently fixed away from earth to heaven and God's material creation is slighted. One can hardly overmuch admire the solemnity of the Roman liturgy, the strength and confidence of Roman piety at its best; nevertheless the 'Protestant' Kenoticist cannot but be oppressed by the sense of separation between the religious and the secular, by the feeling that our Lord has not so much redeemed the world as He has renounced it and is calling His followers away from it, so that the words of Luther echo with the same force as they did when they were originally uttered:

"What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God. For what we do in our calling here on earth in accordance with His word and command He counts as if it were done in heaven for Him.

"Therefore we should accustom ourselves to think of our position and work as sacred and well-pleasing to God, not on account of the position and the work, but on account of the word and the faith from which the obedience and the work flow".¹

There is a relation between belief and life and it is a matter of history and of observation that the traditional two-nature view of our Lord's person tends to produce an unwordly piety, a depreciation of the ordinary and the secular, against which Luther contends again and again. It has been equally objected that Kenotic Christology is apt to produce a weak Christian ethic and a narrow,

1 "Luther's Primary Works", Wace and Buchheim, pp.262,276.

self-centred piety concerned chiefly with self-denial and asceticism. Certainly we see God in the Kenotic Christ, it is held, but we see Him under only one aspect, that of self-reduction and humiliation. The purpose of God in the Incarnation was surely to reveal and communicate Himself. This criticism has no force against the theory of Dr. Forsyth in which both positive and negative aspects are represented by Kenosis and its necessary counterpart, Plerosis. In this Christology we have along with the element of subjective renunciation whereby He entered our humanity, the element of objective achievement in His steadfast moral attainment throughout the whole gamut of His life's experiences culminating in the perfection of His soul and the salvation of ours, in the Resurrection and His Enthronement in glory. Christ empties Himself only to replenish Himself. By His Kenosis the Lord Jesus Christ comes to meet us in the very depth of the mundane and the secular, and by His Plerosis His divinity becomes manifest to us. But is there not a certain spiritual obtuseness in contrasting our Lord's earthly weakness and humiliation with His divine strength and glory? There is an organic connexion between the two and a law of spiritual life is exemplified. Plerosis is not a quid pro quo for Kenosis. It is not a case of no cross no crown. Both are aspects of a single moment. Plerosis only evolves through Kenosis. This is the inevitable sequence of spiritual life. Our Lord manifested His glory by Kenosis-Plerosis. The Cross of Christ is His glory. The

divinity of Christ is to be seen not alongside of, but IN, His humanity, and Kenotic Christology puts the emphasis exactly where it ought to be.

The attempt in these pages to defend a Kenotic presentation of the Person of Christ will find both favour and disfavour among its readers, but whether the one or the other, it is important to realise that the variance of opinion is not about a Christian dogma. The Definition of Chalcedon is an ecumenical decision accepted by all Christian communions, the Church's signpost pointing in the direction of all true Christology. But it is not a *de fide* doctrine in its literal form. As age succeeds to age it will require re-statement in the light of new advances in knowledge and in new modes of thought. For us today its language is too archaic, its categories too static and metaphysical. Consequently in the various non-Roman communions (and in the Eastern Orthodox Church) varying attempts have been made from time to time to re-interpret the fundamental truths of Chalcedon, that the Lord Christ is One Christ both human and Divine. Of these attempts Kenoticism forms a considerable part, and in its moderate forms, which we trust the foregoing pages have demonstrated, is in accordance with the Creed of Chalcedon, can claim a large measure of exegetical support, is of profound religious worth and more intelligible to our modern age. The Kenotic theory of P.T. Forsyth in particular is a powerful modern statement in dynamic and spiritual terms of the ancient

Christology of the Church.

"Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man".

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