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## OUR LORD'S STATE OF HUMILIATION.

BY THE REV. JOHN R. PALMER, LITT.D.

## II.

WITH regard to the truth of our Lord's Humiliation, the actual language in which it is taught in Holy Scripture, appears to us conclusive. We may now briefly examine certain passages in which we believe the reality of our Lord's Humiliation is set forth. Such examination will be made with special though not exclusive reference to the able and scholarly expositions of Bishops Christopher Wordsworth and Lightfoot and Deans Alford, Payne Smith, and Vaughan. But perhaps it may be well to add that here and there a remark or statement may be made for which the present writer cannot claim such high authority, but which it is hoped may serve to throw a little light on the force or importance of a point which is often either overlooked or only partially treated.

(i) *St. Luke* ii. 52 (cf. ver. 40; *St. John* iii. 30). With Alford it seems preferable to translate ἡλικία by "age" rather than by "stature," not only because it "comprehends the other," but also because of the presumptive evidence in its favour derived from the circumstance of its *more frequent use in this sense*. The following short table of its uses may illustrate this point:—

## ἡλικία.

<i>Age.</i>	<i>Age and Stature.</i>
St. Matt. vi. 27, cf. St. Luke xii. 26.	Eph. iv. 13, cf. 16= <i>spiritual</i> growth imaged forth by the symbolism of "age" and "stature." Thus ver. 13, "age" (cf. "faith," "knowledge"); ver. 16, "stature" (Alf.); [ver. 13, R.V., "full-grown man." A.V., " <i>perfect</i> man." Greek, ἀνδρα τέλειον].
St. Luke ii. 52 (Alf.).	
St. John ix. 21, 23.	
Gal. i. 14.	
Heb. xi. 11.	
1 { Job xxix. 18.	
{ Ezek. xiii. 18=men of every age.	
<i>Stature.</i>	
St. Luke ii. 52 (Wordsw.).	
St. Luke xix. 3.	

On the use of such terms in Scripture in reference to "age," cf. also Ps. xxxix. 5; Job ix. 25; 2 Tim. iv. 7. Moreover, we more reasonably regard "*wisdom*" as a concomitant of "age"

than of "stature." In this respect, the dwarf may be a Socrates, the giant something else. But, further, our blessed Lord not only gave *promise* of "wisdom," He manifested wisdom itself at the age of *twelve*, when His physical growth had not as yet attained its full development (St. Luke ii. 42, 49, 50). And Bishop Pearson attributes this "wisdom" to our Lord's Human Soul (cf. Nichols' Ed. of *Pearson on the Creed*, 1878, Art. iii, p. 234).

We, therefore, believe this passage (St. Luke ii. 52) points to an *actual increase* in wisdom and not merely to any "progressive *manifestation*" of it. Hence, we conclude with Alford, that our blessed Lord "*advanced towards the fulness of divine approval* which was indicated at His baptism by ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα (St. Luke iii. 22). . . . The Divine personality was in Him carried through (these) states of weakness and inexperience, and gathered round itself *the ordinary accessions and experiences of the sons of men*. All the time the consciousness of His mission on earth was *ripening*; 'the things heard of the Father' (St. John xv. 15) were *continually* imparted to Him; the Spirit, which was not given by measure to Him, was abiding *more and more* upon Him; till the day when He was *fully* ripe for His official manifestation." So much for our Lord's capacity for increasing in "wisdom." We shall see a little later that there was a *limitation* of knowledge in Him in *one particular* even when He had arrived at man's estate, and during at least His pre-resurrection life and the exercise of His earthly ministry.

(ii) St. John x. 29—"My Father . . . is *greater* than *all*." Such is our Lord's own statement. Now, while we would not overlook the very significant point, that here and elsewhere (e.g. xiv. 28) our blessed Lord says, "My Father," not "Our Father," we believe that what is implied by His use of "My" is a reference to His Divine Generation, and yet no less that His "*My Father*" does not by any means exclude the view that the ἐγὼ of the passage, "My Father is greater than *I*" (xiv. 28), is included in the πᾶς of the passage, "My Father is greater than *all*," that is, so far as our Lord's dependence on the Father is concerned (cf. also St. Mark xiii. 32). In St. John x. 29, our Lord is not speaking only of "all" under the Father,<sup>1</sup> but of "all" beside the Father. And in chapter xiv. 28, He passes from the *general* to the *particular*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By the "*is greater than I*," we may understand a reference to His Incarnate "*state of Humiliation*." Cf. "The Creed of St. Athanasius"

Alford commenting on the words, "My Father is greater than I," says, "the going of Jesus to the Father is an *advancement*," and the words "indicate *that particular subordination to the Father in which the Lord Jesus then was*—and the cessation of the state of humiliation . . . there is a *sense* in which the Father is greater than even the *glorified* Son, is beyond doubt (see especially 1 Cor. xv. 27 f.); cf. "to the glory of GOD the *Father*" (Phil. ii. 11); "in the glory of *His Father*" (St. Matt. xvi. 27).

(iii) *St. John* xv. 15. Here our blessed Lord represents Himself as the Medium through whom men receive a "knowledge" of the "things" of the Father, and as being Himself, in a sense, "dependent upon the Father" (cf. *St. John* xi. 41, 42; vi. 57).

(iv) *St. Mark* xiii. 32. Alford's exposition of this passage leaves little to be desired. He says no more than the truth demands when he observes that the οὐδὲ ὁ υἱὸς is included [in the εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ μου μόνος of *St. Matthew* xxiv. 36. And equally true is his comment on the latter passage: "All attempts to soften or explain away this weighty truth must be resisted; it will not do to say with some commentators 'nescit ea nobis,' which, however well meant, is a mere evasion:—in the course of humiliation undertaken by the Son, in which He increased in wisdom (*St. Luke* ii. 52), learned obedience (*Heb.* v. 8), uttered desires in prayer (*St. Luke* vi. 12)—*this matter was hidden from Him.*" It seems to us to fall far short of the real significance of this passage to say "Christ does not know it *as man*," or to observe: "The times and seasons are in the Father's own power, and they are not therefore for the Son to reveal. It is in this sense *only* that He says that they are not known by Him." Such an interpretation is at least quite inadequate. It is, however, true that "He (Christ) instructs us by *concealing* certain things as well as by *revealing* others," but there is no hint in the passage, or in its context, that we have *here* an instance of this method of instruction. What we have is a plain and positive statement in which our Lord attributes the knowledge of a certain future event to the Father "*only*" (*St. Matt.* xxiv. 36).

—"inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood." Also the careful and well-balanced statement of Bishop H. C. G. Moule on *Philip* ii. 7, that our Lord was, during "the days of His flesh" (*Heb.* v. 7), "*significantly dependent indeed on the Father*, and on the Spirit, but always speaking to man in the manner of One able to deal sovereignly with all man's needs" (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*).

In St. Matthew xi. 27, our Lord is speaking of Himself in His relationship to the Father, and without any apparent reference to His "state of Humiliation." In Colossians ii. 3, the Apostle's meaning appears to be, if not exactly as it is represented by the Vulgate, "Of GOD the Father of Christ" (ver. 2), yet what approaches to it very nearly indeed, namely, that "all the treasures of wisdom and *knowledge*" are contained in the Godhead of the Father and of the Son *considered apart from "the state of Humiliation"* undertaken by the latter. Cf. St. John xvii. 5—"the glory which I had with Thee *before* the world was."

Again, Alford remarks, with great force: "We must not deal unfaithfully with a plain and solemn assertion of our Lord; and what can be more so than *οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός*, in which by the *οὐδὲ* He is *not below* but *above* the angels?" Cf. Ps. viii. 4-6; Heb. ii. 9.

Without doubt we have in this passage (St. Mark xiii. 32) one of the most difficult problems concerning our blessed Lord in Holy Scripture. But, surely, that does not justify the employment of any species of *evasion* in considering it. Such a method can never serve the sacred cause of Truth, but only weakens the influence of other arguments with thinkers who do not receive what we believe is the full measure of revealed truth respecting the Divinity of our blessed Lord.

Our Lord's words in this passage involve, in the language of Bishop Conybeare *On the Mysteries of the Christian Religion*, "a doctrine, which is attended with difficulties: and which being above our reason, we receive purely on the authority of the *Revealer*." And what higher authority can we have than that vouchsafed by *our Lord's own words concerning Himself*?

Moreover, His personal testimony (St. Mark xiii. 32) to the *limitation* of His knowledge, in this particular matter, must be received in a sense exactly parallel with His testimony to the genuineness and authenticity of e.g. the Pentateuch. We must remember that we are not considering the words even of an Apostle or Evangelist of our Lord, but a statement of "*the Word*, full of grace and *truth*" (St. John i. 14), in short, of "*Him Who was Himself the highest Revelation which man can be conceived capable of receiving in the flesh.*"

(v) *Acts* i. 7. Alford says, "This is a *general* reproof and assertion, spoken with reference to *men*," but he also adds, "it is remark-

able that not *Θεός* but *ὁ πατήρ* is here used ; and this cannot fail to remind us of the saying in St. Mark xiii. 32." He prefers to take *ἔθετο* as = " kept " ; *ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ*, cf. v. 4 (Alford). Here *ἐξουσία* is translated in A.V. " power," in R.V. (more correctly) " authority." In the next verse (Acts i. 8), the word " power " of A.V. and R.V. is the translation of a different Greek word, *δύναμις*. As Canon Norris remarks, " not till after the fall of Jerusalem were the disciples taught (in St. John's Apocalypse) how remote was the Second Advent." Cf. 2 Thessalonians i. 7 ; ii. 2, 3.

It is noteworthy, too, that our Lord here uses *ὁ πατήρ* instead of *θεός* (as Alford points out) *αἰτεῖ* His Resurrection (cf. Acts i. 3, 7). And, observe, that while here it is *ὁ πατήρ*, in St. John x. 29, xiv. 28, He uses *ὁ πατήρ μου*. Cf. (ii) above.

Cf. St. Matthew xx. 23.

(vi) *Philippians* ii. 6-8. Here (Phil. ii. 1-18) " St. Paul is exhorting the Philippians to mutual condescension, self-abasement, and self-sacrifice, in regard to and for the sake of others," and he inserts, in something of the form of a parenthesis, this difficult but profoundly interesting analysis of our blessed Lord's Humiliation and *consequent* (*διὸ καὶ*, ver. 9, Lightfoot) Exaltation (verses 6-11) and all this is set forth by way of *example* (cf. ver. 5).

*Ver.* 6. In His Pre-Incarnate state He was *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* which He at no point of time assumed or received, but in which He had ever subsisted (*ὑπάρχων*). But in entering upon His " state of Humiliation," He " emptied " Himself of the *μορφῇ θεοῦ* and took the *μορφῇ δουλοῦ* : as really as He originally and rightfully " subsisted " in the *former*, so really did He " take " the *latter*. The *μορφῇ δουλοῦ* of His state of Humiliation must be understood to be as real as the *μορφῇ θεοῦ* of His Pre-Incarnate state. If *μορφῇ* " has the sense, not of external appearance, but of essential quality " (Vaughan), has it not this sense in *both* cases ? If we affirm the one to have been a great reality, is it open to us to practically treat the other as a mere *semblance* ? Besides, by treating the *μορφῇ δουλοῦ* as if it were less real than the *μορφῇ θεοῦ*, we destroy the true significance and reality of our blessed Lord's *κένωσις*. And this is especially so, if we hold that, as Lightfoot says, " the action of *λαβών* was coincident in time with the action of *ἐκένωσεν*."

Moreover, His *μορφῆν δούλου λαβών* is expressed in Hebrews

ii. 16 as *σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ ἐπιλαμβάνεται*, and so His Incarnation and *κένωσις* were coincident, and the reality of the one involves the reality of the other.

*Ver.* 8. But, further, we read of His "being found in *σχημα* as a man." And does not the *μορφῇ* in *μορφῇ δουλοῦ—μορφῇ* "having the sense, not of external appearance, but of *essential* quality" (Vaughan, see above)—point to the *σχημα* in *σχήματι ὡς ἄνθρωπος* as "denoting appearance with underlying reality" (cf. Bp. H. C. G. Moule, *in loco. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*). His Humanity then was nothing less than a profound reality, and constituted the sphere in which His *κένωσις* was affected. He not only "was made in the likeness of *men*" (*ver.* 7)—of the human race in its concrete aspect, not in the likeness of some exalted type of Humanity—but came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (*Rom.* viii. 3). And here, as Alford remarks, "the *likeness* must be referred not only to *σάρξ*, but also to the epithet *τῆς αμαρτίας*."

JOHN R. PALMER.

(*To be concluded.*)

## STUDIES IN TEXTS.

Suggestions for Sermons from Current Literature.

BY THE REV. HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A.

### V. SEEING HIS FACE.

*Text.*—"The Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6).

[Book of the Month: FROM EGYPTIAN RUBBISH-HEAPS <sup>1</sup>=M.  
Other reff. Burkitt's GOSPEL HISTORY = B. Rendall on Galatians in Expositor's Greek Test. = R. Westcott's REVELATIONS OF RISEN LORD = W.]

<sup>1</sup> By Dr. J. Hope Moulton, published by C. H. Kelly. A fascinating little popular book on the papyri, full of suggestive sidelights on the New Testament.