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THE CLIMAX OF THE COVENANT

Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology

by

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T&T CLARK
EDINBURGH

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Chapter Four

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD: PHILIPPIANS 2.5-11

(i) Introduction

Philippians 2.5-11 is, by any showing, one of the most remarkable passages in all of the New Testament. Since its quasi-poetic structure is not immediately apparent in all printings, whether Greek or English, we may set it out as follows:¹

- (5) Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ἑμῖν
δ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,
(6) ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ υπήρχων
οὐχ ἀπαγμιόν ἠγήσατο
τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,
(7) ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν
μορφῆν δούλου λαβών,
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος·
(8) καὶ σχήματι εἰρηθεῖς ὡς ἀνθρώπος
ἐταπεινώσεν ἑαυτὸν
γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου,
(9) θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.
διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν
καὶ ἐχρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα
τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα,
(10) ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ
πάντων γόνη κάμψη
ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων
(11) καὶ πάντα γλώσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι
κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

¹There are of course many possible ways of addressing this task, discussed adequately in the commentaries; and see Hooker 1990, 6. I follow the line-divisions of the Nestle-Aland 26th edition, grouping them according to the connecting words (compare Col. 1.15-20, discussed in ch. 5).

Philippians 2.5-11 has been the subject of innumerable articles and studies, several monographs, and of course much discussion in commentaries. It has several aspects which, though they are important, cannot be examined here.² The features I propose to look at are the occurrence of 'Adam-christology' in the passage, and its implications (section (ii) below), and the meaning of the troublesome word *ἁπαγμιός* in v.6 (iii). This will clear the way for some specific considerations of the underlying christology of the passage (iv), and some more general conclusions (v).³

To begin with, it must be stressed that my concern here is with the christology of Paul, not that of his hypothetical predecessors. They are no doubt of considerable interest for our (equally hypothetical) reconstruction of that shadowy phenomenon called pre-Pauline Christianity; but I am not nearly as certain as some of my colleagues in the field that we are in a position to say very much that is useful about them.⁴ The close links, both in language and thought, between 2.5-11 and the context in which it now stands⁵ show that, whether or not the poem had a pre-history (and there has always been a significant number of scholars who have questioned this) it now says what Paul wanted it to.⁶ This will have certain implications as we proceed.

(ii) Adam in Philippians 2

Romans 5.12-21 and Philippians 2.5-11 contain one obvious parallel: the common theme of Christ's obedience unto death. This provides sufficient initial justification for postulating a close link in thought between the two passages. There are, however, several other good reasons for asserting that

²I shall discuss these in my forthcoming commentary on Philippians, in the I.C.C. series.

³The first and fourth parts of this chapter originally formed part (pp. 373-84) of the 1983 article on Adam-christology (= Wright 1983). It was while writing that article that I became dissatisfied with the current state of discussion on v.6, and from that there grew the 1986 *JTS* article (Wright 1986a) which is here printed, with a certain amount of revision to take account of subsequent debate, as part (iii) of the present chapter.

⁴I am thus starting out in a very different way from many writers on this passage, particularly Murphy-O'Connor 1976, 26 and Schenk 1984, 185-213 (185: 2.6-11 is 'Ein Zeugnis philippischer Christologie und Frömmigkeit'). The indispensable work on this passage is still Martin 1983 <1967>, hereafter cited by author's name only; see too Hofius 1976. Among recent commentaries we may note that of Hawthorne (1983) in the *Word* series.

⁵See the evidence presented by Hooker 1975, 152 f.; and see further below. The whole question is extremely important, but we cannot go into it in detail within the scope of this present chapter.

⁶See Hooker, loc. cit.; Kim 1981, 147; Johnston 1957, 30; Caird 1976, 100-104, and 1968, 66. The once-usual deletion of θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ as a Pauline addition is now widely questioned: see Stuhlmacher 1986 <1981>, 172. It has even been questioned whether the passage is a poem at all (G.D. Fee, in an unpublished paper, 1990).

the Philippians passage is a further example of Paul's Adam-christology. Although most scholars are now happy to read it in this way, doubts are still sometimes expressed on the subject, and there is certainly no agreement among those who do see Adam here as to what conclusions should be drawn from this supposition.

To begin with, we may establish the virtual certainty of a reference to Adam. In addition to the obvious link, already noted, with Romans 5.12-21, there is also a link with 1 Corinthians 15.20-28 in the statement of Christ's exaltation (Philippians 2.10 f.), especially as in 1 Corinthians 15.27—reference is echoed in Philippians 3.20 f., where—as in 1 Corinthians 15.27—reference is made to the exalted position of humanity in Psalm 8.7. Again, the theme of exaltation and lordship (2.9 f.), with its overtones of Genesis 1.27 f., confirms a reference to the creation story, or at least to ideas which developed from it. What we have here, in fact, is another example of the phenomenon of multiple 'intertextual echo'. A reader alert for such echoes will find, without difficulty, Psalm 8, Genesis 1, and especially—since it is quoted directly in vv.10 f.—Isaiah 45.23. We might suggest, in addition, that the theme of a humiliated and then exalted figure who is given great authority and power alongside the one God of Jewish monotheism reminds us irresistibly of Daniel 7. These passages no doubt have several ramifications which would be worth pursuing further. For our present purposes I simply note that they all point towards the nexus of thought which we have seen in ch. 2 above: the obedience of Israel, the obedience of Adam, the exaltation of the human figure and/or the Israel-figure to a position of pre-eminence in virtue of that obedience. This is precisely that Adam-christology, and that Israel-christology, for which I argued earlier.

A more subtle, but no less persuasive, argument was advanced by G. B. Caird. He suggested (a) that each possible meaning of Philippians 2.6 is open to the objection that the idea could have been expressed more simply, (b) that the complexity is probably due to an implied contrast between Christ and someone else, and (c) that of the possible candidates for the contrasting figure only Adam will do, and he does very well.⁷ When we add to this the close apparent contrast with Adam made at point after point in the poem (see Martin 163 f.), a good *prima facie* case can once again be made for seeing Adam implicit in the hymn as a whole.

Nor are the possible objections to this view as strong as they are sometimes supposed to be. For a start, the fact that the passage may be Pauline does not mean that it cannot be aligned with Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. Even if there were agreement about the origin of these verses, there can be no doubt that they are well anchored in their present

⁷Caird 1976, 120 f.

context in Philippians, and that this context—particularly 3.2-21—contains many passages which show that the author of the letter had the material and language of 2.5-11 in his bloodstream.⁸ Nor is it the case that finding Adam-christology in Philippians 2 depends on accepting the *res rapienda* view of ἀποκρυμῶς in 2.6 (see below).⁹ Dunn has briefly but adequately answered the objection of Vincent and Glasson, that there is no real parallel between the sin of Adam in Genesis 3 and the grasping at equality with God implied in Philippians 2,¹⁰ and the final possible objection, that the contrast would seem to make the true man *become* man, and that it is difficult to see what this might mean, is partly answered by Hooker,¹¹ and will be further resolved below. We may therefore proceed on the assumption that Philippians 2.5-11 is another example of Adam-christology, and hence of Israel-christology.

Since, however, this is already quite widely agreed, the real question is: so what? Three conclusions have at different times and in different ways been held to follow from the presence of Adam-christology here: a lack of reference to the Isaianic Servant of the Lord, the *res rapienda* view of ἀποκρυμῶς, and the absence of incarnational theology. I suggest, however, that none of these conclusions is necessary, and that Adam-christology in fact (a) provides a context within which a reference to the Servant of the Lord is quite possible, and may even be held to be likely, (b) strengthens a quite different view of ἀποκρυμῶς, and (c) actually entails, rather than ruling out, incarnational christology. The first of these can be dealt with comparatively quickly, and the second and third will form parts (ii) and (iv) of this paper.

First, then, the question of Adam and the Servant. The nature of Christ's obedience—in particular, the explanation of *why* the shameful death on the cross was in fact the perfect expression of the love of God—is opened up in a new way if we set the hymn's Adam-christology, i.e. its complex parallel and contrast between Adam and Christ, against the Jewish background we outlined earlier and its outworking in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5. I suggested in ch. 2 that, for Paul, Christ as last Adam takes on the role of Israel in the purposes of God, and moreover that the cross, shown by the resurrection to be the crucifixion of the Messiah, forced Paul to re-evaluate the way in which that role should be understood. If Paul's Jewish background contained the idea that Abraham's family was to be the means of solving the problem posed by Adam's sin, the resurrection showed Paul that this purpose had now been accomplished not by the nation as a whole but by

⁸Contra e.g. Scroggs 1966; see, for instance, the links with 3.2 ff. as noted by Bultmann, and by Käsemann 1967, 1.51-95. See also Hooker 1971, 356 f. (= 1990, 20 f.); and further, below, p.88.

⁹Contra Scroggs, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰Dunn 1980, 311 n. 73, against Glasson 1974; see too Dunn 1989, 11-1971, 162 f.

one person (since, as is clear from 1 Corinthians 15, the resurrection of Jesus is to be seen as the beginning of the Age to Come). In this light, the cross indicated to Paul that God's purpose had been accomplished not in the way one might have expected but by the shameful and penal crucifixion of the Messiah. It is within this context, not that of a hunt for miscellaneous proof-texts or mere verbal allusions, that we may suggest that Paul's description of Jesus' self-humiliation and death in vv. 7-8 owes more than a little to the picture of *Israel*, the obedient Servant of the Lord, in Isaiah 40-55.¹²

The strength of this suggestion is twofold. First, the echoes of Isaiah 40-55 are clear in the passage, as we have already seen. When we find in a passage with such echoes a figure whose obedience undoes the disobedience of Adam, and who is then exalted to glory and honour, we are looking straight at the pattern of Israel's humiliation and exaltation in Isaiah 40-55, a pattern focussed on and worked out in the strange figure of the Servant, not only in Isaiah 53 but in the whole 'servant'-theme as it is worked out both in the 'songs' commonly recognized and in ancillary passages. Second, finding a clear allusion to the 'servant' theme here provides a strong theological structure, which coheres completely with the one we located in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. That Jesus, as last Adam, should take on a role apparently marked out for Israel in the Old Testament fits excellently with the overall understanding we have seen elsewhere. It is well known that Jewish exegesis of Isaiah 53 is hard to pin down when it comes to the precise identity of the Servant of Yahweh.¹³ It seems very unlikely (here I differ from, say, Jeremias) that there was a well-known pre-Christian Jewish belief, based on Isaiah 53, in a coming redeemer who would die for the sins of Israel and/or the world, such that Paul could simply slot Jesus into a ready-made framework. On the contrary, it seems to me far more likely that it was the cross itself, which Paul's Damascus Road vision compelled him to recognize as the paradoxical climax of God's saving plan, that forced him to rethink the *nature* of that plan. And when, in the book of Isaiah which he knew so well,¹⁴ he found a description of Israel which nevertheless fitted remarkably well with the events of Jesus' cross, and which lent to those events a significance in the realm of soteriology, we should not be surprised if he made use, albeit allusively, of this description. Within that context the verbal echoes make

¹²See the debate in Martin, 211-13; Hofius 1976, 70 ff.; and Feuillet 1972, 92-100.

¹³See e.g. Driver and Neubaer 1876-7; Zimmerli; and Jeremias 1968. It seems likely that some Jewish interpreters at least, prior to the rise of Christianity, understood the passage in relation to the Messiah, but that this reference was, understandably, rejected in later times. It is, incidentally, misleading to say, as is frequently done, that all 'servant' passages in the LXX use τῷς, not δούλος, to translate תַּיָּד; compare Isa. 42.19; 48.20; and 49.3,5.

¹⁴See Hickling 1980, Hays 1989.

their own point (as they do in the parallel passage of Romans 5.12-21).¹⁵ The theological structure I have proposed shows that Servant-christology and Adam-christology belong well together, and cannot be played off against each other. Both, in the last analysis, are *Israel*-christologies.

Objections have, of course, been raised to the 'discovery' of references to Isaiah 53 in Philippians 2.5-11. Of these, most are in fact objections not to the view we have suggested, but to the idea that 'the Servant' was a well-known title in contemporary Judaism, now applied to Jesus.¹⁶ This view is, however, not only not necessary for my case but actually made less likely by it. The meaning of the cross was not, according to Paul, something for which Judaism was well prepared; quite the contrary.¹⁷ Professor Hooker—herself no enthusiast, to say the least, for discovering references to Isaiah 53 in the New Testament—states my position well:

...the proper question to ask in this case is whether Jesus is understood to be exercising the role which is described in Isaiah 53—not whether he is 'identified' with some imaginary figure.¹⁸

I suggest that the answer to this question is an emphatic affirmative. What Hooker herself says two pages earlier, with reference to Jesus', and Israel's *sonship*, applies equally well if not better here: 'Israel should have been obedient to God; this obedience has now been fulfilled, so Paul argues, in the person of Jesus Christ.'

This understanding of the nature of Christ's obedience shows, again, that the argument from the order of clauses is not compelling, i.e. that the mention of *μωϋση δούλου* before the mention of Christ's becoming 'in the form of men' does not rule out a reference to the task of the servant, Israel, as described in Isaiah 40-55.¹⁹ It is not the case that Christ first became human and then adopted the role of the servant. His fundamental mission—the reason for his coming into the world—was to accomplish the task which was marked out for Israel, namely, to undo the sin of Adam. In order to achieve this goal, he became human. It is quite true that in

¹⁵See too Rom. 4.24 f., etc. On this theme in Paul see now Hays 1989, 62 f., and also his 37, 215 n.92, 225 f. n.48; and other passages in Hays' index s.v. 'Isaiah'. Hays' careful reading seems to me not only to help establish beyond doubt a frequent and deliberate Pauline reference to Isa. 40-55 but also to demonstrate the multi-layered theological intention of this reference.

¹⁶As expounded by Jeremias (e.g. 1968).

¹⁷Cf. 1 Cor. 1.23 ff., etc. The real scandal is not simply the death of the Messiah but the shameful and penal mode of that death, particularly in relation to the corporate significance of the Messiah.

¹⁸Hooker 1979, 68 n.

¹⁹Against Caird 1976, 121, and with (e.g.) Furness 1967-8.

becoming human he became subject to the powers that govern human existence in general, and in particular to death itself. It is also important not to miss the point that crucifixion was the form of penal death reserved particularly for δούλοι—and this could be one reason why Paul has chosen this word rather than παῖς, which, though one regular LXX rendering of נַפְשׁ, could carry also quite different connotations to do with Jesus' sonship. If this is correct, the weight of Paul's soteriology here lies neither on incarnation nor on exaltation per se, but on the cross, understood as the climax and completion of the divine plan of salvation. The task marked out for Israel has been accomplished by her representative.

It is clear, however, that the poem does a great deal more than simply speak of one who undertakes the task and role of the servant of Yahweh in order to undo the sin of Adam. But what precisely this extra meaning is has been the subject of long and tortuous debate. The problem has focussed particularly on the meaning of v.6, and by looking at that verse in considerable detail we will be able to gain a perspective both on the problems and on their potential solution.

(iii) ἀπραγμὸς and the meaning of Philippians 2.5–11

The troublesome word ἀπραγμὸς continues to play an obviously crucial, but often baffling, role in the second half of v.6:

ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπέσχετο, οὐχ ἀπραγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ.

The word is troublesome for more than one reason. Occurring only here in the New Testament, never in the LXX, and only rarely in extra-biblical Greek (with most of the instances being Patristic quotations of, or allusions to, Philippians 2.6 itself), it has proved a sore trial to philologists and lexicographers, and to those who rely on their work.²⁰ It has been credited with a wide range of meanings and nuances, each of which has given a subtly different twist not only to the clause, but also to the whole passage in which the word stands. These shades of meaning have become so complex, and the shorthand ways of referring to them so involved, that even the task of describing the different senses on offer has become problematic.

It is with this last headache that we must begin, if we are to introduce some order, perhaps even some peace, into the scholarly battlefield. In the first part of this section, therefore, I shall suggest that two of the classical descriptions of the problem—those of J.B. Lightfoot in the last century and

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R.P. Martin in this—have been in certain respects quite seriously misleading. This will clear the ground for the second part, in which I shall attempt to line up the problem in a less unsatisfactory way, and to criticize some of the various senses that thus appear. Finally, in the third part, I shall state my own case, building on the work of R.W. Hoover (one of the problems with recent accounts of the state of the question has been that his work, though often cited, has not so often been understood or taken seriously), and showing that, while his arguments tell against the central philological argument advanced by C.F.D. Moule, several of Moule's ancillary points, particularly the theological emphasis he gives to the hymn as a whole, can and should be salvaged, and that the arguments which have been advanced against his theological position can be satisfactorily met.²¹

(a) Lightfoot and Martin

J.B. Lightfoot set out two, and only two, major options for the interpretation of ἀπραγμὸς, ascribing the first to the Latin Fathers and the second—which he himself espoused—to the Greek.²² The first, followed in the Authorized Version (Christ 'thought it not robbery to be equal with God'), takes ἀπραγμὸς in the abstract sense of 'an act of aggression'.²³ The result of this meaning for the sentence as a whole is that Christ, knowing himself to be equal with God, knew also that this equality did not constitute—or, perhaps, was not the result of—an act of aggression; i.e. he knew that it was his by right. This has immediate implications for the force of v.7: even though he knew that equality with God was his by right, he nevertheless emptied himself... In other words, Christ was under no necessity to relinquish his place of divine splendour (v.6b), but nevertheless did so voluntarily (v.7a).

Lightfoot argues against this position, and prefers his second category, that of the Greek Fathers. Noting that ἀπραγμὸν τι ἠγείσθαι conforms to a standard Hellenistic idiom (of ἀπραγμὸς and similar words used in a double accusative phrase with a verb of thinking, reckoning, etc.), he suggested the meaning of 'a treasure to be greedily clutched and ostentatiously displayed' (132, my italics). This alters the flow of thought from v.6 through to v.7. On the Latin view, Christ's being in the form of God and his unchallengeable right to equality with God are two ways of saying the same, or almost the same, thing, and it is in the ὁλλὰ-phrase that the new idea ('nevertheless...') is introduced. For the Greeks—according to Lightfoot—the contrast begins

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already with οὐχ ἀπαργμῶν ἠγήσατο, which is seen as in itself 'a statement of his (i.e. Christ's) condescension' (p. 133). This condescension is expressed, according to this view, in the negative form in v.6b and in the positive in v.7a. Christ did not do *x*, but he did *y*, its apparent opposite, instead.²⁴ Lightfoot then understands this in the sense that Christ did not regard the rank and privilege of his equality with God as something to be clung on to greedily, but instead gave them up;²⁵ and this, he argues, is the correct way to read the verse. Both meanings, he points out, take for granted the divinity of Christ. It is no credit not to cling on to something that does not belong to you. Lightfoot dismisses briefly two other interpretations, those of Chrysostom among the Fathers and Meyer and Alford among his own contemporaries.²⁶ To these other options we shall return.

If we try to categorize the two senses discussed by Lightfoot, it comes as a shock to realize that, perhaps despite his intention, both of them fall within the meaning that subsequent debates have attached to the Latin tag *res rapta*. In recent times, as we shall be seeing presently, that phrase has come to designate the view in which Christ possessed equality with God antecedent to the action described in v.6. But, when the Latin Fathers advocated *res rapta*, Paul was understood to be denying that Christ regarded his equality with God as something he had obtained by snatching; if we are to give *res rapta* its proper force ('a thing having-been-snatched'), this must be it. Confusion easily arises here, however, because it is the second meaning, that of the Greek Fathers, which is usually today referred to as *res rapta*. In fact, as Moule has pointed out, it should really be *res retinenda*:²⁷ the point being made is not so much that equality with God had (or had not) been obtained by snatching, but that it was (or was not) *clung on to* in a grasping fashion. This meaning, as both Moule and Hoover have pointed out, is simply a philosophical impossibility. Part of the trouble, as we shall see, is that the phrase *res rapta* has itself become an idiomatic phrase in scholarly jargon. Leaving behind its proper sense of 'something obtained by snatching', it has come to be used, in the debate as to whether or not (in this passage) Christ is said to have possessed equality with God before his human birth, as a shorthand way of indicating the answer that he did. This, as we shall see, has led to further confusions in the modern debate. To summarize, therefore: Lightfoot distinguished two senses of the key clause, that of the Latin Fathers (properly called *res rapta*, in which Christ is said not to have regarded his divine equality as something obtained by snatching, i.e. to have regarded it as

²⁴See Lightfoot 134.

²⁵Lightfoot distinguishes carefully between ἴσος θεῷ and ἴσα θεῷ: 'the former refers rather to the *person*, the latter to the *attributes*' (110, Lightfoot's italics).

²⁶Lightfoot, 134-6.

²⁷Moule 267.

being his by eternal right) and that of the Greek Fathers (properly, though not usually, called *res retinenda*, in which Christ is said not to have regarded his divine equality, already possessed, as something greedily to cling on to). Finding the emphasis of the passage to rule out the former, he opted for the latter as the only viable alternative.

R. P. Martin's account of the clause, written nearly a century after Lightfoot's, groups the rival theories under four headings. He begins with (what he calls) the active sense, which he indicates by the translation 'an act of robbery or usurpation'. His three other senses are variations on the passive meaning. The first two he labels, respectively, *res rapta*²⁸ and *res rapienda*. The latter view, which grew up chiefly in the post-Lightfoot era, holds that ἀπαργμῶς must refer to something *not* already possessed, an equality with God which Christ could have grasped but did not. This view has often been linked with the supposition of an implicit contrast with Adam.²⁹ Martin claims that his final view—the third of the passive senses—combines the *res rapta* and *res rapienda* positions into one.³⁰ Christ existed eternally in the form of God, but refused to snatch at the further honour of world sovereignty ('being equal with God'), choosing instead to receive it as the result of obedient suffering and death. Martin's classification, then, is as follows:

(a) active sense, i.e. *raptus* ('an act of robbery');

(b) passive sense (i), i.e. *res retinenda* ('something to be clung on to', misleadingly classified as *res rapta* because the *res* in question is already possessed);

(c) passive sense (ii), i.e. *res rapienda* ('something to be grasped *de novo*, something, that is, not already possessed');

(d) passive sense (iii), i.e. Martin's supposed blend of *res rapta* and *res rapienda*.

There are, however, several signs of confusion in this analysis. We may begin with (a). Martin has placed together in this first category, the 'active' sense, at least three quite different solutions, namely those of Ross and Hooke, of Feuillet, and of the Latin Fathers, and has used criticisms proper only to the last as though they applied equally to all three. As we have seen, the active sense of the Latin Fathers is (theologically) identical with *res rapta* properly understood; even though their sense, strictly, is passive, it makes the same theological point, i.e. a comment on the nature of Christ's divine

²⁸By which he really means *res retinenda*: on 138 he describes *res rapta* as 'a shorthand expression for the sense of ἀπαργμῶς as a prize which, already in the possession of the owner, is held on to'.

²⁹See Martin 139-43.

³⁰148-53. He describes this as the 'more popular sense' (144).

equality.³¹ It is against this Latin view, rather than that of Ross, that the criticisms of Lightfoot which Martin echoes make a strong point (see below).³² Ross's interpretation looks at the *implications* which *Christ might have drawn* (but did not) from his equality with God: the Latins, at *the means* by which *Christ might have obtained* that equality. The difference between the two is particularly apparent in the relation of the clause to its neighbours on either side.³³

Martin's description of the 'passive' meanings is equally confused. Thus: Under (b), we have noted that by *res rapta* he really means *res retinenda*. He is right to cite Lightfoot as a leading representative of this view, but it is odd that he does not mention Lightfoot's reasons for taking this position, namely, the (supposed) meaning of the idiomatic phrase ἀπραγμὸν τι ἦνεῖσθαι (which Martin associates rather with his final view, the one he himself champions) and the impossibility of the classic Latin position which Lightfoot regarded as the only serious alternative.³⁴

Under (c), his account of the *res rapienda* view is similarly problematic. J. A. Beet, whom he cites here, did indeed attack Lightfoot, but did so in order to put forward a view very close to that of Ross in 1910 or Moule in 1970.³⁵ Some others cited here by Martin belong properly in his third category (e.g. E. Stauffer).³⁶ For definite examples of *res rapienda* we must look elsewhere.³⁷

Under (d): Martin's 'third possibility' (pp. 143 ff.) fares no better at this initial level, i.e. in the analysis of differing views. He has again collected several quite distinct positions as though they were more or less identical. Starting from the idiom mentioned above, and failing to see that Lightfoot and his followers have used this to support *their* sense, he draws in Bonnard, Käsemann, Cerfaux, and Lohmeyer as 'representatives' of this option. But,

³¹It is in this category, not that of Ross and Hooke, that we should place the comment of Barclay 1958, here at 42 (cited by Martin 136 n.1).

³²Though the other criticism urged by Martin 136, citing Lightfoot and Gifford (1911), is odd: in what way is this position 'incompatible with the validity of the Lord's claim to be on an equality with God'? No objection like this appears in Lightfoot or Gifford. Martin does not mention Lightfoot's first, and major, objection, which concerns the *non sequitur* between the Latin view and the exhortation to humility.

³³So already Furness 1957-8, 93 f.; Griffiths 1957-8, 237-9. For Feuillet's view see below (Moule 271 already saw that Feuillet did not belong with the others in Martin's first category); Martin has, perhaps, been misled by Feuillet's note (1942, 62) that he is treating ἀπραγμὸς as 'substantif actif'.

³⁴This confusion was pointed out by Glasson 1974-5, 135 ff.

³⁵See J. A. Beet, in *Expositor* (3rd series, vol. 5, 1887), pp. 115-25, *Expository Times* iii (1891-2), 307-8, and *Exp.T.* vi (1894), 526-8. Beet was followed by F.G. Cholmondeley, *Exp.T.* vii (1895-6), 47-8.

³⁶See Stauffer 1955, 117 ff., 283 f.

³⁷See, for instance, Kennedy 1912, 436 f.; Bengel 1862, 723; Badham 1907-8; Scott 1935, 192; Beare 1959, 79-81.

while Bonnard does, broadly speaking, follow Lohmeyer by taking the phrase to mean that Christ, possessing divine equality, refused to exploit the privileges of this position,³⁸ Käsemann (followed by Bornkamm) understands it to mean that Christ actually gave them up altogether (Bornkamm goes so far as to refer to Christ's 'giving up of his divinity' or of his 'divine mode of existence').³⁹ Käsemann's article is in fact a sustained critique of Lohmeyer, whose view is the real basis for Martin's solution (oddly, since Martin agrees with Käsemann in rejecting Lohmeyer's ethicizing interpretation of the hymn as a whole).⁴⁰ Cerfaux and Henry, lumped together as taking 'a somewhat similar line' to Käsemann,⁴¹ in fact neither agree with each other nor come anywhere close to Käsemann. Henry⁴² ends up supporting Lightfoot's position, using the phrase *res retinenda*. He too sees the possibility of Lohmeyer's line of thought, but rejects it. It is in Lightfoot's sense, not Cerfaux's, that he writes that equality with God 'est le bien, possédé, que le Christ rénonce à exploiter': i.e. he means by this that Christ *did not cling on to* this status, not that he retained it but did not use it for his own advantage. We have to do with 'une chose possédée à laquelle il ne s'accroche pas'. Cerfaux, for his part,⁴³ understands the verse to refer to a prize already possessed, *not* given up, but not to be used 'orgeuilleusement et comme par bravade', referring to Christ's conduct of his earthly life. In fact, the only link between Cerfaux's view and Martin's is that both claim (Cerfaux in fact with more justice than Martin) to avoid the dichotomy between *res rapta* and *res rapienda*. All that Martin means by this is that there is (a) a sense in which Christ already possesses 'equality with God' (this is not in fact, as we have seen, the true meaning of *res rapta*) and (b) a sense in which he does not snatch at this equality: see below.

None of these writers, then, is making the point to which Martin is leading up, for which Lohmeyer is the real source: that 'the motif of the hymn is the determination of the path Christ chose as the way to his lordship'.⁴⁴ His view is that Christ was always in the form of God, but that he did not yet possess equality with God. Refusing to snatch at this higher state, he attained it instead by the path of humble suffering and death. This view, which has found other supporters since Martin wrote,⁴⁵ is in fact a new version of the

³⁸Bonnard 1950, 43.

³⁹Bornkamm 1969, 113, 114.

⁴⁰Käsemann 1968. The reason why Martin draws Käsemann into this category is simply that he wants to use his 'functional', as opposed to 'ontological', reading of τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ (151 f.).

⁴¹Martin 146.

⁴²Henry 1950, here at col. 27.

⁴³Cerfaux 1951, 290.

⁴⁴Martin, 147.

⁴⁵E.g. Houlden 1970, 74 f.; Gibbs 1971, 83.

res rapienda meaning of ἀπραγμός.⁴⁶ Martin, however, suggests that it includes *res rapta* as well: 'His installation as Kyrios betokens that "equality with God" which He refused to aspire to in His own right. Yet it properly belonged to Him; hence *res rapta* is true equally with *res rapienda*.'⁴⁷

There are, then, several confusions of analysis present here:

First while it is true that Lohmeyer's meaning does indeed take ἀπραγμός as *res rapienda*, it cannot be said to mean *res rapta* either in the sense intended by the Latin Fathers (whose question concerned how Christ came by his status of equality with God in the past) or in the sense Martin himself uses, which we have characterized as *res retinenda*. Martin's use of *res rapta* as a shorthand expression referring to Christ's pre-existence leads him into further confusion, for instance on p. 152, where he refers to μορφή Θεοῦ, rather than τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, as *res rapta*. This is misleading, to say the least, since μορφή Θεοῦ is certainly not the object of οὐχ ἀπραγμῶν ἠγήσατο.⁴⁸

Secondly, Martin seems to take the idea of 'equality with God' in two different senses, first a bad one and then a good one. Christ did not try to acquire a cosmic sovereignty independent of God, but attained at last to a *valid* 'equality' after his suffering and death. It is at this point, rather than in his category of *res rapta*, that Martin introduces the tag *res retinenda*,⁴⁹ but by it he means: 'He had the equality with God as His Image, but refused to exploit it to His personal gain.'⁵⁰ But this appears to say that Christ was after

⁴⁶So, rightly, Hoover 1971, 101. Hoover accuses Martin of 'philological obfuscation' on the grounds (*inter alia*) that he makes the word carry both active and passive senses at the same time. But this may not be strictly the case. By *res rapta* Martin does not really mean to refer to the active sense (even if, strictly speaking, he should). What he is advocating is actually a combination of *res retinenda* and *res rapienda*.

⁴⁷The final example of a combination of *res rapta* and *res rapienda* is that of Barrett 1962, 69 ff. (see Martin 149 n.3). Barrett is the only writer, in fact, who actually achieves this combination without collapsing *res rapta* into *res rapienda*: but he does so at the cost of an extremely split christology, in which, as Man, Christ did not possess the equality with God which he *did* possess as God's eternal Son. Barrett may well be right in seeing that some of the confusion in the passage is caused by Paul's squeezing a contrast between Christ and Adam into the argument: but (a) describing how he does this as combining *res rapta* and *res rapienda*, though ingenious, may not be the most helpful analysis (see below); and (b) Barrett is not at all making the same point as Lohmeyer or Martin.

⁴⁸That this is indeed Martin's view is confirmed by the preface to the new edition, where he says (xxiii) that the 'soteriological drama moves forward from the station the pre-existent one held as ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων to His decision not to use such a platform as a means of snatching a prize (τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ), but chose rather to divest Himself of that advantage and take the μορφή δούλου as an act of voluntary humiliation. This (a) makes the mistake noted, of regarding 'being in the form of God' as the object of the verb, and (b) thus misuses Hoover's analysis of the key term, with which he professes to agree—although Hoover in fact pointed out the impossibility of the position Martin still advocates. See too Martin 1959, 98 f. A similar confusion appears in Schillebeeckx 1980, 170.

⁴⁹Leading Marshall 1968, 109 to think that this was Martin's own preferred label for his view.

⁵⁰Martin, 149.

all equal with God, which cuts against Martin's subsequent exposition of τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ,⁵¹ and to refuse to exploit something is not the same thing as not to retain it; in fact, it may be held to entail retaining it, since that which one has given up one is no longer in a position to exploit.

Finally, Martin tries to hold his (and Lohmeyer's) view together with the proverbial sense of ἀπραγμῶν ἠγεῖσθαι. But the proverbial sense, properly understood, points (as we shall see) in a quite different direction.

There have, of course, been many other analyses of the different possible meanings, within this passage, of ἀπραγμός.⁵² I have concentrated thus far on Lightfoot and Martin because they have been taken by so many others as standard reference- and starting-points for future work. That work has, however, moved in a wide variety of different directions, and it is necessary to take some account of other interpretations before offering my own conclusions.

(b) Other Analyses

The clearest method of describing the different options for the interpretation of Philippians 2.6b would seem to be to look at the wider unit of meaning as a whole. Strict concentration on grammar can, as we have seen, lead one to hold together things dissimilar, or to put asunder things that should be joined. The key points to ascertain, in order to differentiate between distinct opinions, are therefore not merely the analysis of ἀπραγμός itself, but also (a) the rough meaning assigned to ὅς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων; (b) the meaning of τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ; and (c) the result of the action referred to by οὐχ... ἠγήσατο, in terms of its effect on its grammatical object, τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ. Using these together, we can distinguish at least ten significantly different analyses.⁵³ In exposition of these points of view, we will allot most space proportionately to those of Moule and Hoover, since they form the basis of the proposal to be advanced in the concluding section. At the same time, it is important to realize that, though Hoover's philological argument is vital to the whole case, the other views are not ruled out because of that alone. Most of them contain internal weaknesses of their own, and it will be helpful to point out some of these as we go along, lest it be thought that the argument hangs by a single thread.

1. Lightfoot, as we saw, began with the observation of the idiomatic phrase ἀπραγμῶν τι ἠγεῖσθαι, aligned it with other similar phrases employing words like εὐρημα, discovered that the Greek Fathers, using this phrase, seemed to regard οὐχ ἀπραγμῶν ἠγήσατο as a statement not of

⁵¹Martin 1983, 151 f.; see Martin 1959, 96 f.

⁵²See, e.g., Feuillet 1972, 113 ff.; Caird 1976, 120 f.

⁵³For ease of reference, these are set out in tabular form on p.81 below.

Christ's proper majesty but of his condescension, and concluded that it referred to that abandonment of the privileges of equality with God which took place at the incarnation. Lightfoot was careful to point out that this view in no way undermined a belief in Christ's divinity. On the contrary, it presupposed it, discovering it in the phrase ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων, and suggesting that ἴσα θεῷ, as opposed to ἴσος θεῷ,⁵⁴ meant not divinity itself but the privileges of divinity. This view is undeniably attractive, particularly in its smooth transition from v.6 to v.7, and can claim considerable support.⁵⁵ It is the one Martin calls *res rapta*, though as we have seen it is really *res retinenda*.

2. Despite Lightfoot's carefully nuanced orthodox reading of the clause, the kenotic understanding of Philipians 2 comes very close to his, needing only to make an adjustment in its view of τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ. Once make that phrase mean, more or less, 'divinity', the apparent meaning of vv.6-7 is that the pre-existent, divine Christ abandoned that divinity in becoming human (to receive it back again, presumably, in his exaltation (vv.9-11)). The former popularity of this view, and the arguments which have led most scholars to avoid it, are well known,⁵⁶ though the idea recurs in almost casual phrases from time to time.⁵⁷

3(a). The solution offered by such German writers as Käsemann and Bornkamm is more or less a variant on the kenotic version of the *res retinenda* view.⁵⁸ Understanding Christ's pre-existent state to be that of an equality with God held in virtue of his identity as the divine *Urmensch*, they see this status as being abandoned.⁵⁹ This line of thought avoids kenoticism proper at the cost of importing into the hymn the quite alien idea of gnostic speculation.⁶⁰

⁵⁴See n. 25 above.

⁵⁵E.g. Henry 1950; Prat 1926, 1.319; Caird 1976, 120 f.; Beasley-Murray 1962, 986 f.; Hofius 1976, 103 (his translation of the hymn); and perhaps Vincent 1897, 57ff.; though Vincent is not entirely clear on the matter. L. Bouyer (1951-2, 281-8) takes a similar view, emphasizing the parallel with Adam. Recently Demarest (1980) has supported Lightfoot's position with the claim that it is 'dynamic and ontological' whereas Moule's scheme is 'purely static or ethical' (141 n.54).

⁵⁶See Martin 1983, 169; Henry 1950; Prat 1926-7, 1.319 f.; Barth *Church Dogmatics* 4.1.182 f.; Fairweather 1959.

⁵⁷E.g. Bornkamm 1969, 113 f.; Martin 1983, 138f n. 4. Gibbs (1970, 1971) attempts to revive the kenotic view. But the strong point of his argument (the 'dynamic movement of God in Christ', 1970, 279) does not, in fact, support 'kenosis' proper, but can be seen equally well in several other solutions, including our own (see below).

⁵⁸Though Gnlika 1980b < 1968 > 117 classifies it as *res rapta*.

⁵⁹So too Jervell 1960, 229 f.; Gnlika 1980b (1968), 116 f.

⁶⁰So, rightly, Georgi 1964, 263-93; Hurtado 1984, 116 ff.; and others listed in Martin 1983, xix f.

3(b). The position of Oscar Cullmann is really a variant on 3(a), though the similarity is obscured because he labels it (rightly) *res rapienda*.⁶¹ He too believes that Paul refers to a heavenly *Urmensch* who becomes man, but instead of seeing his heavenly existence as equality with God (as Käsemann and Bornkamm), he regards that equality as a further stage at which the *Urmensch* refused to grasp, choosing instead to become man.

4. The next solution is the most complicated in its subdivisions. Classifying ἀπταρυμός as *res rapienda*, this view has to address the question: what is it that Christ did not already possess, and at which he refused to snatch? The answers on offer are (a) divinity (the classic *res rapienda*);⁶² (b) the status of 'cosmocrator' (Lohmeyer, Martin: see below); (c) divine honours to be enjoyed during the time of incarnation (Feuillet).⁶³ This is not too different in meaning from Lightfoot's sense, but is clearly reached by a different route. Feuillet has, however, drawn back from this position in his most recent writing on the subject,⁶⁴ and offers it only as an alternative to Cerfaux's view, which, as he rightly sees, is supported by Hoover's argument (see his summary, pp. 130-2).

A fourth variation (d) on *res rapienda* is offered by M. D. Hooker, though she does not label it thus. Emphasizing the implicit contrast between Christ and Adam, she suggests that Christ did not need to snatch (like Adam) at divine equality because he already possessed it.⁶⁵ There are problems with this view at the level of classification. Hooker follows Carmignac's central point (see below) that the negative οὐκ apparently modifies ἀπταρυμός rather than ἡγήσαστο (though this does not seem to affect her translation of the passage). And, whereas for Carmignac Christ considered his divine equality a non-usurpation in the sense that he enjoyed divine honour during his earthly life, for Hooker Christ did not regard his divine equality as something he now needed to grasp, because he already possessed it. Carmignac has Christ looking back at an honour he did not grasp in the past; Hooker has him looking forward, realizing he does not need to grasp it in the future. Thus, while this view is classified as *res rapta* by Martin,⁶⁶ it is more properly, as we have seen, *res rapienda*. Hooker's view thus straddles different categories.

⁶¹Cullmann 1963, 177 f.

⁶²See Martin 1983, 139 ff.; Hawthorne 1983, 84, and above n. 35. Prat 1926-7, 1.317 f. regards this view as Arian and therefore impossible. See further the revival of this position—almost as if it were a new thing!—by Harvey 1964-5, 337 ff. Harvey is answered by Hudson 1965-6, 29. See now also Wanamaker 1987, 188 f.

⁶³Feuillet 1965, 366 f.

⁶⁴Feuillet 1972, 112-32.

⁶⁵Hooker 1975, 151-64 (= 1990, 88-100, here at 97 f.).

⁶⁶1983, 138 n. 2: he gives no examples of scholars who hold it.

This of itself is, of course, not an objection. One might say, so much the worse for the categories. But at the part of her argument crucial for our discussion (her analysis of the poem, and her defence of its subtle and rich paraenetic thrust in its present context, are extremely valuable) the argument becomes awkward. To begin with, it is not the case that only with some sort of *res rapienda* view can the contrast between Christ and Adam be maintained, as she suggests (p. 160); Caird, for instance, fits it nicely into his revival of Lightfoot's position. More importantly, I am not convinced by her suggestion that τὸ εἶναι Ἰῶα θεῶν can be read as a direct reference to Genesis 1.26 (pp. 160 f.): the asserted equivalence of μορφή and εἰκὼν in the LXX, upon which this suggestion partly rests, seems to me illusory.⁶⁷ Nor do I think it necessary for her main points of interpretation to be sustained (that Paul is deliberately contrasting Christ and Adam, and that 'his very action in becoming what we are is a demonstration of what he eternally is' (p. 164)) that one should rely, as she seems to on p. 161, on the Rabbinic tradition that saw Adam as already possessing the thing at which, in Genesis 3.5, 22, he grasped. This is scarcely the most natural way to read the combination of Genesis 1.26 and 3.5 ff. Finally, although Hooker's point (pp. 162 f.) about the irony of ὁμοιωμα and σχημα is well taken, it seems odd to describe the pre-incarnate Christ as 'the true Man' (p. 163), 'the one who is truly what Man is meant to be', unless one wishes, as Hooker does not, to join Käsemann and Cullmann. Hooker's main points, as I shall show, may be retained in a scheme which eliminates these problems.

Since Martin's own view has gained considerable currency,⁶⁸ it is important to point out its inherent weaknesses, in addition to those of its categorization which we noted earlier. First, it cannot (as Martin thinks) claim support from the idiom as analysed by Hoover.⁶⁹ Secondly, it drives a sharp wedge between ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων and τὸ εἶναι Ἰῶα θεῶν, which does violence both to the regular usage of the articular infinitive (see below) and to the sense of the passage, as is apparent from Martin's confusion as to whether the μορφή θεοῦ is given up or not. Thirdly, the idea of Christ's equality with God meaning the status of 'cosmocrator' is

⁶⁷Hooker 160 n. 14. Only once, in Dan (LXX) 3.19, does μορφή translate εἰκὼν, which the LXX translates with εἰκὼν in Gen. 1.26 and in several other instances.

⁶⁸See Houlden 1970, Gibbs 1971; and cf. Grelot 1973, 41 f. Glasson 1974-5, noting Martin's appeal to the idiomatic sense, wrongly assumes that he is thereby following Lightfoot. See too Coppens 1967, 199. Compare Coppens's earlier article (1965) against the kenotic theory. See too Gewiss 1963; Gewiss's view is summarized, and criticized on the basis of the idiomatic sense, by Gnlika 1980b (1968), 115 ff.

⁶⁹See above. If μορφή θεοῦ really were the object of οὐχ ἄπραγματὸν ἡγήσασθαι, as Martin seems to think, a new sort of kenoticism would result, and it is clear that Martin does not want that either. The ambiguity still remains in Martin 1976, 98: 'what he might have seized, he relinquished.' That which one might seize, one does not already possess: that which one does not possess, one cannot relinquish. See Marshall 1968, 126.

inherently unclear. (a) What does this status consist in if it is so different from his being in the form of God (in the fully divine sense Martin intends)? (b) Why should τὸ εἶναι Ἰῶα θεῶν mean 'cosmocrator' in this different sense? (c) Why should world lordship be a thing to which Christ should not aspire? and (d) Why is he then entitled to it because of suffering and death? Fourthly, in what way is this view 'soteriological' rather than 'ontological'? Martin, claiming this, nevertheless indicates that the point of the status Ἰῶα θεῶν would be that it *was* in a particular relation—specifically, independence—to God the Father (p. 152). Fifthly, the parallel between Adam and Christ is obscured: at no point is the contrast clear between what Adam did and what Christ refused to do.⁷⁰ Finally, the emphasis of the hymn is thrown in what, as we will argue, is quite the wrong direction. (a) It fits (as Martin recognizes) very badly in the paraenetic context; (b) the second member of the contrast (οὐχ ἄπραγματὸν ἡγήσασθαι... being the first) is delayed for an intolerably long time, only appearing in v.8. It is much more natural to see the second member in ἄλλὰ ἐαυτὸν ἐκέλευσεν.

5. The next view is that of the Latin Fathers.⁷¹ They (with exceptions, of course) understood our clause as a statement not of condescension, but of majesty: Christ did not regard his equality with God as a usurpation. Though this view is quite clear in itself, its categorization (is the sense active or passive?) is not: some have seen it as giving ἀπραγματὸς an active and abstract sense ('an act of aggression'), but others have taken it as *res rapta* (passive and concrete: Christ did not regard his equality with God as *having been obtained by usurpation*).⁷² This view falls, either way, by its own weight: Lightfoot's critique remains very damaging. The natural phrase to follow v.6, if taken in the Latin sense, is ἄλλὰ φύσει (he considered his equality with God to be not a matter of usurpation but something he had by nature).⁷³ If Paul had wanted to say that Christ's divine equality was his by right, there would surely have been simpler ways of doing so than our present sentence.

A variation on the Latin view is provided by J. Carmignac, who argues that the position of the negative (with the noun, not the verb) indicates that the sentence refers to the *earthly* Christ regarding his divine glory as being his by right.⁷⁴ This, however, places an impossible strain on the rest of the

⁷⁰Pace Houlden 1970, 75. Was Adam grasping at world sovereignty?

⁷¹See the very full details in Henry 1950. Other examples of this view are Barclay 1958 and Schumacher 1914-1921.

⁷²So Moule 1970, 271 n.1. Moule suggests *res rapienda*, something 'requiring to be snatched', as another possibility; but this view (listed above as no. 4 (d)) is surely not that of the Latin Fathers.

⁷³See the *sed natura* of Augustine and Anselm of Canterbury, noted in Carmignac 1971-2, 146, 147, etc.

⁷⁴Carmignac 1971-2. Carmignac's view was anticipated in its essentials by Chamberlain 1892-3, who, beginning from J.A. Beet's articles, argued, without apparently realizing that this is what he was doing, for this variant on the Latin view. Carmignac has been subjected to damaging criticism from Grelot 1973 and Feuillet 1972.

sentence, which then has to read: 'who, during his earthly life, regarded equality with God as being his by right; nevertheless, he *had* emptied himself, and *had* taken on the form of a servant, and *had* been born in the likeness of men....' (Then back to the ordinary aorist again) 'and he humbled himself....' Carmignac's interesting point, that the negative appears to modify the noun (*ἀπραγμόν*) rather than the verb (*ἠγήσατο*), as one might have expected on grammatical grounds, is fully taken into account once we recognise that the whole phrase is a composite idiom, and that the negative must therefore modify it as a whole, coming before its first word (see below, solution 10).

6. The account of our passage given by K. Barth in the *Church Dogmatics* cannot be fitted into any other category.⁷⁵ In one sense it looks like the *res rapta* of the Latin Fathers, in another like Lightfoot's *res retinenda*. Even if it combined those two, that would make it a new variant; but in each part it is subtly different. The crucial passage reads:

The *kenosis* consists in a renunciation of His being in the form of God alone... He did not treat His form in the likeness of God... as a robber does his booty. He was not bound by it like someone bound by his possessions... He did not treat it as His one and only and exclusive possibility... It was not to him an inalienable necessity to exist only in that form of God... only to be the eternal Word and not flesh...

Strictly speaking, this treats ἀπραγμός as *res rapta*, something that has been seized, emphasizing (unlike the Latin Fathers' version of *res rapta*) the attitude towards one's booty rather than the question of whether or not it actually is booty at all, i.e. whether it is something that has been obtained by snatching. Christ, according to Barth, does not regard his equality with God in the manner of a robber gloating greedily over his hoard. Then, whereas the Latin Fathers took the clause as a second assertion (after ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπόχων) of Christ's divine status, Barth interprets the *res rapta* idea in the sense of *res retinenda*, with the help of the word 'only': Christ's existence only in the form of God was 'given up' in favour of the new state of being both in the form of God and in the form of a servant. But, while Barth's insistence on the continuing divinity of the man Christ Jesus is (I believe) healthy, his ingenious interpretation seems over-subtle; and it hardly does justice to ἐκένωσεν to see it as not so much (within the image being used) as Christ emptying himself of anything but rather as adding to himself something new.

7(a). Several scholars have attempted to read v.6 as a reference not to Christ's pre-existence but to his (perfect) human life. Thus, for instance,

⁷⁵Church Dogmatics 4.1.180: see too Barth 1947, 59 f. (English translation, 60 ff.).

J. Murphy-O'Connor sees τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ not as the possession of divine nature, but as the 'right to be treated as if he were god', and says that the force of this clause is that Christ did not regard this right 'as something to be used to his own advantage'.⁷⁶ It was a right 'of which he was free to dispose'. He had this right not because he actually was God but because he was a sinless human being (an idea also invoked by Dunn at this point in the argument).⁷⁷ This kind of view has become popular recently, and it is therefore necessary to point out some of its inherent weaknesses.⁷⁸ Murphy-O'Connor seems unclear as to just what the phrase in question means: he leans towards Hoover in the idea of 'using something to one's own advantage', but asserts—in the teeth of Hoover's conclusions—that 'linguistic evidence unclouded by presuppositions weighs the balance of probability decisively in favour of *res retinenda*' [sic] (pp. 38 f.). The idea that Christ, as a mere man, could ever have had the 'right to be treated as if he were god' is hardly a notion which a Jew could grasp without asking at once whether, in that case, this man had in some sense *always* been God.⁷⁹ Again, this interpretation reads a great deal into the phrase τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ: it has to mean not only 'being treated as if he were God' but also *the right to be treated thus*; and it is never clear whether this right is simply not made use of, or whether it is not claimed at all, or whether it is possessed originally and then given up. Finally, Murphy-O'Connor's view in effect omits v.7, the stage of Christ's becoming human. His own summary of his position (p. 40) jumps, revealingly, straight from v.6 to v.8.⁸⁰

Two other variations on this theme may be noted more briefly.

7(b). J.A.T. Robinson attempted to use Moule's arguments (see below) to support the idea that τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ referred to the exalted state of the truly human man, given up when Jesus embraced the vocation of suffering and death. This appears to combine the grammatical analysis of ἀπραγμός as *raptus* (active and abstract, meaning 'self-assertion') with the theological understanding of the clause as *res retinenda*, a thing to be retained.⁸¹

7(c). P. Trudinger and D.W.B. Robinson both attempted to use the arguments of L.L. Hammerich (see below) to suggest the meaning that Jesus

⁷⁶Murphy-O'Connor 1976, 39 (his italics).

⁷⁷Murphy-O'Connor 40; Dunn 1980, 120 f.

⁷⁸See, for example, the criticisms of Howard 1978, 371 f., Hurst 1986, and Wanmaker 1987. Dunn's reply (1989, xxxiv ff.) does not seem to me to have grasped the point that the Adamic reference does not preclude the presence of a pre-existence theology such as the one I am advocating.

⁷⁹See, on this point, Bauckham 1980-1, 333 ff., and France 1982.

⁸⁰His exposition of vv.7-8 (pp. 42-5) is very unsatisfactory, leaning heavily on the hypothesis (criticized by Howard) of a derivation from wisdom speculation. Howard's own position, however (1976, 377), fares little better: like Murphy-O'Connor he quotes Hoover approvingly while in fact tacitly disagreeing with one of his main conclusions.

⁸¹Robinson 1973, 162 ff.

refused to use his equality with God as a way of escape from his vocation to suffering.⁸² None of these views has received subsequent support. There are, it appears, several different ways of making the subject of ἡγήσατο the human Jesus, some of which imply his pre-existent divinity⁸³ and some of which do not; but all raise more problems than they solve. The late G.B. Caird, in commenting on a draft of the article underlying the present chapter, wrote that the real difficulty with any 'human Jesus' view of the phrase 'is that it abandons any attempt to take the clauses in chronological, or even logical, order'. This is similar to my point made above in relation to Carmignac.

8. A quite different twist was given to the modern debate when C.F.D. Moule published his article in the first F.F. Bruce *Festschrift*.⁸⁴ He argued strongly that ὀραταῖος is not to be confused with ὀραταῖα: the -ιος ending signifies the action of the verb, the -ια ending its results.⁸⁵ This forces him to set on one side the solution of Lightfoot and (since he apparently accepts Lightfoot's understanding of them) the Greek Fathers also, and to support the active, abstract sense of 'snatching', 'grasping': 'he did not regard equality with God as *consisting in* snatching' (266, Moule's italics).

There are more writers on Moule's side than one might realize at first sight. At the beginning of the century not only J. Ross, but also J. A. Beet and, following Ross, W. Warren⁸⁶ took this position, for substantially similar reasons to Moule. They had been preceded by the great commentators Meyer and Alford, and have been followed recently not only by Moule but also by J. M. Furness, S. H. Hooke and G.F. Hawthorne.⁸⁷ It is harder to assess the position of B. Reicke,⁸⁸ since he seems to combine three separate and perhaps ultimately incompatible views. His main emphasis is close to Moule's:

⁸²Trudinger 1967-8, 279; D.W.B. Robinson 1968-9, 253 ff. These senses thus take ὀραταῖος as *raptus*, abstract and passive: 'a being snatched away'. The word *raptus* is of course ambiguous, admitting of both active (= *rapina*) and passive senses.

⁸³E.g. Carmignac, Feuillet (at least in his earlier view). As Howard points out (1978, 378 n. 29), Feuillet took this position in order to avoid apparent kenoticism.

⁸⁴Moule 1970.

⁸⁵But what would the 'result' be in this case? See Vokes 1964, 673.

⁸⁶Ross 1909; Beet 1887, 1891-2, 1894; Warren 1911.

⁸⁷Meyer 1885, 68 ff.; Alford 1865, 3.166 f.; Furness 1957-8 (simply a restatement of the position of Ross and Warren); Hooke 1961; Hawthorne 1983, 84 f. See too the theological position of Hooker 1975, 164, though she does not analyse the phrase grammatically in the same way as these writers. Griffiths (1957-8), writing after Furness, misunderstands the position, and aligns it with the *res rapienda* view of Kennedy, Michael 1928, 88 f., and Hunter 1961, 45-51. Hudson 1965-6, referring (presumably) to Furness's article, also adopts the same view as Moule, in opposition to the *res rapienda* view of Harvey 1964-5.

⁸⁸Reicke 1962.

Ἰἔςους-Χριστῆ, ...ne considèrait pas son égalitè avec Dieu comme une occasion de commettre rapine, de tirer des choses à soi avec violence. (209)

But he then⁸⁹ regards this as a description of the *human* Christ, and proceeds (p. 210) to move towards a position somewhat like Lohmeyer's. Finally, F.E. Vokes⁹⁰ argues strongly, like Moule, for the strictly abstract meaning of ὀραταῖος. He acknowledges (672) that, according to the grammarians, the word can, in fact, 'take on a concrete sense', but still follows Ross (and F.C. Baur) in understanding the passage to mean that 'Jesus did not make his being on an equality with God a means for self-aggrandisement, for seizing wealth or booty for himself'.⁹¹

Some recent writers have referred approvingly to Moule's argument without seeming to know what to do with it, leaving it in the end on one side.⁹² Others have argued against it, but few of the arguments are cogent; I shall reply to the major ones when expounding my own position shortly, since several of Moule's points are contained within my own.

9. The Danish philologist L.L. Hammerich proposed a distinct sense which has frequently been confused with Moule's.⁹³ He agreed with Moule that the word is abstract ('raptus'), referring to the action of the verb, but then took it in a passive sense, meaning 'rapture' in the sense of being caught up to heaven, as in a vision. For an ordinary mortal, experiencing such a thing *would* be a 'rapture', but for the pre-existent Christ it was not; it was his normal state. This gives the meaning that, for Jesus (who was in the form of God), 'the being equal with God was no *rapture*, no ὀραταῖος; it was his by nature'. Hammerich then says that, in the incarnation, Christ voluntarily 'gave up his nature, his being with God, and debased himself'. He is thus close theologically to the Latin Fathers, while at the same time seeming almost kenotic: Christ gave up his nature. This view has not commended itself to subsequent scholars.

10. Like Lightfoot and Jaeger, R.W. Hoover begins from a study of the Greek idiom which appears to be employed in our clause.⁹⁴ Unlike them, he

⁸⁹Like Chamberlain 1892-3.

⁹⁰Vokes 1964.

⁹¹Moule 1970, 275 objects that Vokes then slips back into regarding ὀραταῖος as a concrete noun (a 'means of self-aggrandisement', Vokes 674 f. (not 624 as in Moule)); but this is surely a linguistic optical illusion. There is hardly any distinction in meaning between 'he did not think that his status meant "snatching"' and 'he did not regard his status as an occasion for "snatching"'. The parallel phrases offered by Reicke 1962, 209 (eg. Jas. 1.2), show that his sort of meaning is quite possible.

⁹²E.g. Dunn 1980, 116, 313 n. 93; Caird 1976, *ad loc.*

⁹³Hammerich 1966. Hammerich's views are summarized in English (and his name misspelt) in *Expository Times* lxxviii (1967), 193-4.

⁹⁴Hoover 1971. See the seminal article of Jaeger 1915; and Foerster 1964 (1933); and cf. Gnlika 1980b (1968) 116.

argues not for the sense of 'regard something as a prize (sc. to be clutched on to)', i.e. *res retinenda*, but for the sense of 'regard something as a thing to be taken advantage of'. Though the idiom is parallel in *form* to that which employs ἔργον and εὐρημα, it is not identical in *meaning*. Whereas ἔργον/εὐρημα ἡγεῖσθαι τι means 'to prize something as an unexpected windfall', ἀπταγμὸν ἡγεῖσθαι τι means 'to regard as something to be taken advantage of' or 'to regard as something to be used for one's own advantage'.⁹⁵ However, ἀπταγμός and ἀπταγμα do both appear in virtually interchangeable contexts *within this idiom*, both taking on a special sense not identical to their usual one.⁹⁶ Despite the impression given by many scholars who have referred to his work, Hoover argues specifically that, *within the context of this idiom*, ἀπταγμός cannot mean either *res rapienda* or *res retinenda*: the former is ruled out because the object under consideration is always something already possessed, the latter because that meaning would make no sense in the non-biblical examples Hoover has collected. *Res rapta* is likewise ruled out by the idiomatic sense; and, though Hoover does not refer to the line of thought now represented by Moule, an insistence on the abstract (and, for Moule, active) sense of ἀπταγμός is not warranted. The idiom refers, Hoover argues, not to the act of acquiring something (whether before the time envisaged, i.e. *res rapta*, or after, i.e. *res rapienda*), nor to the act of clinging on to it in a grasping way. It refers to *the attitude one will take towards something which one already has and holds and will continue to have and hold*, specifically, to the question of whether that attitude will or will not consist in taking advantage of this possessed object.

If Hoover is right (and, though his conclusions have often been misunderstood, he has not been conclusively challenged on philological grounds⁹⁷), the views of all the other scholars we have reviewed for the sake of clarity in the current debate are undercut at a stroke. This apparently sweeping judgment may be reinforced by two considerations. First, most of the theories discussed already possess, as we have seen, serious internal weaknesses of their own, which prompt us in any case to look elsewhere. Secondly, Hoover's theory is capable of making excellent theological sense, as we will presently show, and of including within itself many of the strong points of the other theories.

Although Hoover's analysis of the idiom clashes at a formal and philological level with Moule's, the overall sense achieved by both is similar. For both, the action or attitude envisaged is not the grasping of, or clinging

⁹⁵Hoover 102–6, including a discussion of an apparent exception in Isodore of Pelusium, Ep. iv.22. Hoover's evidence runs counter to Lightfoot's interpretation of the same passages (Hoover 108 f. n. 20), and to Arndt and Gingrich col. 108.

⁹⁶Details in Hoover 102 ff.

⁹⁷The sole challenge has come from O'Neill 1988: see below, 85 f.

on to, equality with God, but the attitude—of advantage-taking, of 'getting', of behaving like an oriental despot—based on that equality. For both, ultimately, the word is abstract and active with a *future* connotation (what one will, or might, do on the basis of something), as opposed to the Latin Fathers' *rapienda*, which was abstract and active with a *past* connotation (what one might be supposed to have done). The Latin understanding could, as we saw, equally well be presented as concrete (*res rapta*) and passive, since the thing one might be supposed to have grasped was the τι in question, in this case τὸ εἶναι ἰσα θεῷ. But for Moule and Hoover the 'grasping' or 'advantage-taking' does not *aim at* τὸ εἶναι ἰσα θεῷ: it *begins from* it. Nevertheless, in English at least it is just as easy, and not damaging to the meaning, to turn the phrase around and express the same idea in concrete and passive terms: 'he did not regard his equality with God as *something to be used for his own advantage*'.⁹⁸ If Hoover is right, a native speaker of Hellenistic Greek, faced with that English sentence, would very likely, and quite correctly, render it into idiomatic Greek in the very words of Philipians 2.6. And because of this closeness of actual significance, it is not difficult to see how in fact ἀπταγμός and ἀπταγμα could, *precisely within this idiom*, be so nearly interchangeable in meaning.⁹⁹ The word, within the same sentence, could, depending on how one might look at it, be *either* abstract or concrete without a change in the actual meaning of the total sense-unit. And that meaning, combining Moule's theology and Hoover's philology, is 'Christ did not consider his equality with God as something to take advantage of...'

This theory has a further incidental advantage. The proposal of J. Carmignac, discussed earlier, hinged on the fact that in Greek the negative adverb οὐ/οὐχ normally comes immediately before the verb it modifies, so that for it to precede a noun instead, as here, suggests that it is the noun rather than the verb which is negated. But if, as Hoover has so strongly argued, the phrase ἀπταγμὸν ἡγεῖσθαι τι as a *whole* forms a recognizable idiom, then the natural place for the οὐ(χ) to come is before the phrase as a whole: which is exactly what we find. It is as though, in English, the phrase were hyphenated: 'he did not consider-it-something-to-take-advantage-of'.

It is probably in this category that W. Foerster should be placed.¹⁰⁰ The proverbial meaning—a contrast between what one might expect someone to do and what Christ actually did—is in fact quite close to Hoover's sense:

⁹⁸See the comment of Vokes 1964, 672, referring to some similar abstract nouns which take on a concrete sense.

⁹⁹For other similar pairs which come to be more or less interchangeable, see e.g. Lightfoot 1868, 109, etc.

¹⁰⁰Foerster 1964 <1933> (= *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, i.472 ff.); see also the discussion in Gnlika 1980b <1968>, 116. Foerster is not to be dismissed, as he is by Martin 153, as though he were 'taking the phrase as a complete proverb which has no Christological value, except perhaps an incidental one'.

'Jesus did not regard equality with God as a gain to be utilized.'¹⁰¹ Foerster is, however, quite vague in his exposition of this idea and its alternatives, only giving three possible senses and dismissing the active sense¹⁰² with the objection, noted already, about the lack of an object.

Hoover has also been supported by L. Cerfaux and, in his most recent comments, A. Feuillet. The latter leaves his previous view and Hoover's as alternatives: 'Le Christ...n'avait pas regardé comme un bien précieux à saisir d'être traité sur la terre à l'égal de Dieu' (i.e. *res rapienda*), 'ou encore comme un avantage à exploiter d'être par nature égal à Dieu.'¹⁰³ Despite the formal differences occasioned by Cerfaux's reading of ὀφραμύος in a passive sense ('Le butin...c'est plutôt un objet possédé'), his overall understanding corresponds closely to Hoover's. Christ did not regard his equality with God as something to be exploited for his own gain.¹⁰⁴

This position has considerable strength, more than its proponents have usually realized. Before proceeding to demonstrate this, it may be helpful to display the ten senses now outlined.¹⁰⁵ The columns show, respectively, the meaning assigned to μωφῆ,¹⁰⁶ τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, the result of the action of ἡγήσατο, and the grammatical description, and sense, of ὀφραμύος itself. The final column lists representative holders of the view in question, or a label by which it is well known.

¹⁰¹Foerster 474.

¹⁰²For which he cites (474 n. 7) Ewald, Schmidt, and G. Kittel.

¹⁰³Feuillet 1972, 132. This latter idea, as he rightly sees, is not far from that of Cerfaux (1951, 290), who (after only a brief review of the debate, and with no reference to others who take this view) writes that Christ's equality with God is 'un objet possédé sans doute justement mais dont il ne faut pas user orgueilleusement et comme par bravade'.

¹⁰⁴Collange 1973, 90, comes close to this without seeing that it is substantially the same theological position as that of Furness and Vokes, which he had earlier rejected. Ridderbos 1975, 74 f., expounds a position apparently similar to Hoover's: 'Christ did not regard this equality, in which he already shared, as a privilege that had come to him for his own advantage, on the ground of which he could have refused the way of self-emptying and humiliation.' But Ridderbos misleadingly classifies this view as *res rapta*. See too Gnlika 1980b <1968>, 116 f. Schenk 1984, 212 translates: '... hielt er diese Würdegleichheit wirklich nicht für einen auszunutzenden Vorteil...'; but he reaches this on very different grounds to those I have used. See too Ernst 1974, 67 ('nicht egoistisch für sich ausnutzen'), though he seems to think there is no difficulty in arriving at this meaning, and offers no argument for it except the good sense it makes of the passage—with which, of course, I agree.

¹⁰⁵I have not attempted to show on this table the further position of O'Neill 1988, who proposes to substitute μῆ for τὸ: οὐχ ὀφραμύων ἡγήσατο μὴ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, invoking an old friend of textual critics, the pious scribe, as the culprit who gave a more apparently 'orthodox' reading of a text which originally described the humility of Christ, who 'thought it not robbery not to be equal with God'. If texts can have negatives inserted at will, they can be made to mean literally anything. O'Neill's description of his proposal as 'modest' is a fine example of Swiftian irony.

¹⁰⁶There is no space here to go into the details of debate about this word. For our purposes it is sufficient to note (a) whether or not it is taken as in some sense a preindication of divinity and (b) whether or not it is more or less parallel in meaning to τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ.

| μωφῆ | τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ | Meaning of οὐχ...ἡγήσατο | Analysis of ὀφραμύος | Representative or label |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. divine | divine prerogatives | abandoned | idiom: understood as 'prize', i.e. <i>res retinenda</i> | Lightfoot |
| 2. divine | divinity itself | abandoned | passive and concrete: <i>res retinenda</i> , though often called <i>res rapta</i> | Kenotic |
| 3. pre-existent / <i>imensch</i> | (a) divine state already possessed | abandoned | passive and concrete: <i>res retinenda</i> , often called <i>res rapta</i> | Käsemann |
| | (b) divine state <i>not</i> already possessed | not snatched at | passive, concrete: <i>res rapienda</i> | Cullmann |
| 4.(a) not yet divine | divine equality | not snatched at | passive, concrete: <i>res rapienda</i> | Kennedy |
| (b) divine, but not yet cosmocrator | cosmocrator, independent of the Father | not snatched at | passive, concrete: <i>res rapienda</i> (wrongly described as idiomatic and as combining <i>res rapta</i> and <i>res rapienda</i>) | Lohmeyer, Martin |
| (c) divine | divine honours enjoyed during incarnation | not snatched at | passive, concrete: <i>res rapienda</i> | Feuillet |
| (d) divine | divine likeness (like Adam's) | not needing to be snatched at (because already possessed) | passive, concrete: <i>res rapienda</i> | Hooker |
| 5. divine | divine equality | not obtained by snatching | passive, concrete: <i>res rapta</i> | Latin Fathers |
| | | (b) not equivalent to robbery | active, abstract: <i>raptus</i> | Latin Fathers, understood differently |
| | (c) divine equality <i>during</i> incarnation | regarded as not being an act of usurpation | active, abstract: <i>rapus/rapina</i> | Carmignac |
| 6. divine | divine equality (and that alone) | not regarded as having been stolen and therefore as something to cling on to | passive, concrete: <i>res rapta/res rapienda</i> | Barth |
| 7. human | (a) the right to be treated as divine | not claimed/clung to | passive, concrete: <i>res retinenda</i> , but some hints of <i>rapienda</i> too | Murphy-O'Connor |
| | (b) divine equality <i>qua</i> truly human being | not meaning self-assertion | active, abstract: <i>rapus</i> , but hints of <i>retinenda</i> too | J.A.T. Robinson |
| | (c) divine equality | not regarded as entitling Jesus to Ascension/last-minute deliverance | passive, abstract: <i>rapus</i> | Trudinger, D.W.B. Robinson |
| 8. divine | divine equality | not regarded as meaning 'snatching' | active, abstract: <i>rapus</i> | Moule |
| 9. divine | divine equality | 'rapture', i.e. it was his by right (yet given up) | passive, abstract: <i>rapus</i> with hints of <i>retinenda</i> too | Hammerich |
| 10. divine | divine equality, already possessed | not regarded as something to be taken advantage of | idiomatic usage, with sense determined by whole phrase | Hoover |

It is interesting to note at this point the way in which the modern English translations have tried to come to terms with the problem. Most opt for ambiguity between *res retinenda* and *res rapienda*: thus RSV 'did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped', and similarly NASV, NIV. The Authorized Version adopted the Latin view ('thought it not robbery to be equal with God'), and the Good News Bible, equally clearly, opted for Martin's, confusions and all ('did not think that by force he should try to become equal with God. Instead, of his own free will he gave it all up'). The NEB and JB retain ambiguity with the help of marginal alternatives. Thus NEB text has *res rapienda* ('did not think to snatch at equality with God'), while the margin suggests *res retinenda* ('did not prize his equality with God'). The Jerusalem Bible glosses its text ('did not cling to his equality with God'—clearly *res retinenda*) with a note explaining that Christ did not regard this equality (further explained as divine honours and prerogatives) as something to grasp (*rapienda*?) or hold on to. Until 1990 none, so far as I have seen, had attempted to express either Moule's or Hoover's understanding; now, however, we have the new RSV: Christ 'did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited'. This may not be perfect, but comes a lot closer than the others. The last part of this section of the chapter will suggest some reasons why this line of thought is emphatically to be preferred.

(c) On Not Taking Advantage

We may begin with Hoover's strongest point. The idiom here used clearly assumes that the object in question—in this case equality with God—is already possessed. One cannot decide to take advantage of something one does not already have. If, therefore, there is to be any ultimate distinction of meaning between Christ's being in the form of God and Christ possessing τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῶ, such a distinction does not, at least, involve seeing either phrase as referring to something less than divinity and/or the honours pertaining to that state. Both expressions mark out Christ Jesus, in his pre-existent state, as one who is indeed, and fully, *capax humanitatis*, but at the same time different from all other human beings in his nature and origin.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷Hoover's study does not of itself rule out the possibility that τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῶ (and, a fortiori, ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων) could be taken in a strictly humanitarian sense; it only affirms that this equality is already possessed. But we have already argued, on other grounds, against the humanitarian interpretation. The true humanity of Christ, in its differences—precisely in being the genuine, uncorrupted article—from all other examples of humanity, is perhaps the point of the irony (noted by Hooker 1975, 163 f.) in the words ἰσοπέμοιρα and σὺχῆμα.

A further reason, not usually noticed, for taking τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῶ in close connection with ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων is the regular usage of the articular infinitive (here, τὸ εἶναι) to refer 'to something previously mentioned or otherwise well known'.¹⁰⁸ Among over a dozen possible examples are Romans 7.18 (τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειραί μοι, τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐ, where both infinitives refer to the immediately preceding discussion) and 2 Corinthians 7.11 (τὸ κατὰ θεὸν λυπηθῆναι, 'this (just mentioned) godly grief'). We should therefore expect that τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῶ in our present passage would refer back, exegetically, to ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων, and might even suggest the stronger translation 'this divine equality'. Among other corollaries, this clearly indicates the impossibility of any *res rapienda* view which begins from the assumption that Christ, although in the form of God, did not yet possess divine equality.¹⁰⁹

The sense of οὐχ ἄπταγμὸν ἠγήσατο will then be that Christ, in contrast to what one might have expected (this is the force of Foerster's point), refused to take advantage of his position. This is not (as, for instance, in Feuillet's view) a matter of not adopting, in his incarnate existence, a life-style of divine splendour, whatever that might mean in practice. The emphasis of v.7 shows that the refusal described by the phrase was a refusal to use for his own advantage the glory which he had from the beginning. The all-important difference in meaning between this view and the standard *retinenda* approaches is that *nothing described by either ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων or by τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῶ is given up*; rather, it is reinterpreted, understood in a manner in striking contrast to what one might have expected. Over against the standard picture of oriental despots, who understood their position as something to be used for their own advantage, Jesus understood his position to *mean* self-negation, the vocation described in vv.7-8. In Moule's phrase, divine equality does not mean 'getting' but 'giving'. It is properly expressed in self-giving love. We could then translate v.6 f.: 'who, being in the form of God, did not regard this divine equality as something to be used for his own advantage, but rather emptied himself...'¹¹⁰

If we apply this understanding of vv.6 f. to the passage as a whole, a new coherence results. The pre-existent son regarded equality with God not as

¹⁰⁸Blass-Debrunner-Funk 1973, 205; rightly seen by Hawthorne 1983, 84.

¹⁰⁹E.g. Wanamaker 1987, 188 f.

¹¹⁰Professor Moule points out to me that ὑπάρχων can then be understood not as concessive but as causative—'precisely because he was... he recognized what it meant'. This potential ambiguity is not without parallel in Paul: see, e.g., Rom. 9.22 (θέλω). If my whole argument is correct, the causative sense is clearly the one required. G.B. Caird, commenting on a draft of this part of this chapter, suggested the following: 'he was in the form of God, and did not regard his equality with God... but rather...'. Some biblical and historical examples of the sort of behaviour contrasted here, by implication, with that of Jesus are suggested by Cholmondeley 1895-6, 47-8. Perhaps the most suggestive passage would be 1 Kgs. 3.4-15, 28 (not mentioned by Cholmondeley).

excusing him from the task of (redemptive) suffering and death, but actually as uniquely qualifying him for that vocation. It is here, not in the views of Käsemann or Martin, that the real underlying soteriology of the 'hymn' is to be found.¹¹¹ As in Romans 5.6 ff., the death of Jesus is understood as the appropriate revelation, in action, of the love of God himself (compare too 2 Corinthians 5.19). ἐκένωσεν does not refer to the loss of divine attributes, but—in good Pauline fashion¹¹²—to making something powerless, emptying it of apparent significance. The real humiliation of the incarnation and the cross is that one who was himself God, and who never during the whole process stopped being God, could embrace such a vocation. The real theological emphasis of the hymn, therefore, is not simply a new view of Jesus. It is a new understanding of God. Against the age-old attempts of human beings to make God in their own (arrogant, self-glorifying) image, Calvary reveals the truth about what it meant to be God. Underneath this is the conclusion, all-important in present christological debate: incarnation and even crucifixion are to be seen as appropriate vehicles for the dynamic self-revelation of God.

This view is strengthened by five considerations. First, it makes sense of the relevant extra-biblical Greek evidence. Though the majority of the Patristic references to Philipians 2 do not help very much in elucidating our phrase, there are one or two passages which, it may be claimed, fit very well into the case for which I have argued. Most of the Latin Fathers, as we saw, and among the Greeks Chrysostom in particular, were so concerned to combat Arianism that they read the clause not as a statement of condescension but as an affirmation of rightful divinity.¹¹³ To this extent Lightfoot's analysis is correct: the earlier, and linguistically closer, Patristic evidence is in favour of reading the clause as (part of) a statement of Christ's humility. But beyond that most of the references pose the same problem as our text itself. Lightfoot is right in what he denies—that the Greek Fathers supported the Latin view—but wrong in what he affirms (the *retinenda* view). This does not mean, as Moule suggests (p. 268), that the Greek Fathers have led us up the garden path; merely that we have read them wrongly, which is all too easy to do since, with most of the references being themselves allusions to our passage, we have no external standard from which to get our bearings.

There are, however, just a few passages which lend support to my argument. In Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiae* 5.2.2 the writer quotes from the

¹¹¹See the valid criticism of Martin by Marshall 1968, 124 f., and the warning of Hurtado 1984, 123 f. against trying to force soteriology on to a passage which is about something else.

¹¹²See Hooker 1975, citing, e.g. Rom. 4.14; 1 Cor. 1.17; 9.15; 2 Cor. 9.3.

¹¹³See the surveys, already noted, by Henry 1950; Feuillet 1972, 113 ff.; Grelot 1971, 897–922, 1009–26; Gwiess 1963, 75–81. Compare also Lightfoot's account (134 f.) of Chrysostom's position.

letter circulated by the churches in Lyons and Vienne, and describes how the martyrs, despite their sufferings, would neither proclaim themselves as martyrs nor allow others to address them as such. This, says the document, is evidence of their imitation of Christ, with a reference to Philipians 2.6. It is easy to see how Hoover's sense will work here: the martyrs did not regard their sufferings as something to take advantage of. Eusebius clearly regards them as martyrs anyway; there is no question of their refusing to grasp at a glory they did not possess, or of actually giving up one they did. They continued to be Christlike martyrs, and as evidence of that (in Eusebius' eyes) they did not use the fact as something to take advantage of.¹¹⁴ In a subsequent passage (8.12.1 f.), in which Philipians 2.6 is not quoted but may well be in mind, Eusebius describes the martyrs of Antioch who, to avoid torture, committed suicide, τὸν θάνατον ἄποταγμα θέμενοι τῆς τῶν δυσσεφῶν μοχθηρίας. This *could* be read as *res rapienda*. O'Neill tries to get from the text a sense which, he claims, is different to Hoover's: 'this death was regarded as an actual piece of good fortune, stolen from cruel men...'¹¹⁵ But Hoover's understanding seems to me more probable.¹¹⁶ The martyrs knew that they were going to die anyway. But, instead of regarding that death as something to be feared or shunned, they regarded it as something to be taken advantage of, to the extent that they were prepared to anticipate their execution by committing suicide, thus using the death they were going to die anyway as an opportunity for stealing a march on their persecutors. The other relevant texts from Eusebius are adequately discussed by Hoover. The disputed passage from Cyril of Alexandria's comment on the angel's visit to Lot also supports his view,¹¹⁷ and actually makes Moule's philological position very difficult. In the vital passage οὐχ ἄποταγμα τὴν παράτησιν ὡς ἐξ ἀδρανοῦς καὶ ὑδαρσετέρος ἐπιείκτο φρονός, the meaning cannot be—as it would have to be if Moule were correct—that Lot did not regard the angels' refusal¹¹⁸ as *meaning* advantage-taking, as though it (i.e. the refusal) had come from a feeble and vacillating mind. The sense must be that Lot renewed his invitation because, unlike someone with a feeble and vacillating mind, he did not regard their refusal as something to take advantage of.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴So Foerster 1930; Hoover 1971, 108 f.; Martin 1983, 146; Feuillet 1972, 130.

¹¹⁵O'Neill 1988, 446.

¹¹⁶Hoover, 109: 'There can be no suggestion of robbery or of violent self-assertion in this remark, nor can a self-inflicted death under such circumstances be considered an unanticipated windfall. [This last is the point which tells against O'Neill.] What is said is that, given the alternative, death seemed an advantage to be seized.' I find this altogether clearer than O'Neill's alternative.

¹¹⁷De Ador. 1. 25 (PG 68.172c); see Hoover 110 f.

¹¹⁸Martin 144 understands ἄποταγος here as 'demand'; this seems clearly wrong.

¹¹⁹O'Neill 1988, 446 f., has objected to Hoover's reading here. He takes παρατήριος as 'entreaty', and suggests 'revocable' as a translation for ἀποταγόν: 'Lot considered his entreaty as not to be revoked'. This seems to me very strained, both in general and in its treatment of

Second, this view explains the relation of vv.9-11 and vv.6-8 in a much more satisfying way than the other views. The logic which underlies the $\delta\acute{o}\nu$ in v.9—the turning-point in the hymn—is best understood as follows:¹²⁰ and *that* is why... The exaltation of the crucified one is not to a nature or rank which only then became appropriate for him. The honor given to Christ in vv.9-11 includes the title $\kappa\upsilon\pi\iota\omicron\varsigma$, and the adoration which, according to Isaiah 45:23 (quoted in Philippians 2:10), belongs to the one God and to him alone. But this is not a mere apotheosis of a hero as a reward for a difficult job well done. Nor is it the climax merely of a passage *per ardua ad astra*. It is organically related to what has gone before. It is the affirmation, by God the Father, that the incarnation and death of Jesus really was the revelation of the divine love in action.¹²¹ In giving to Jesus the title $\kappa\upsilon\pi\iota\omicron\varsigma$,¹²² and in granting him to share that glory which, according to Isaiah, no one other than Israel's God is allowed to share, God the Father is as it were endorsing that interpretation of divine equality which, according to v.6, the Son adopted. Christ's exaltation and divine honor are the public recognition that what was accomplished in his obedience and death was the outworking of the very character of God, the revelation of divine love. There is then no sense of an arbitrary reward in v.9, nor is an exaltation to a divine rank or nature not already possessed (both before and during his human life). The connection between the two parts of the hymn works better, it may be claimed, on this

$\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\alpha\gamma\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$ in particular. Sensing its weakness, perhaps, O'Neill says that even if we take $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\rho\iota\tau\eta\rho\iota\varsigma$ as 'refusal' we must read the line as 'Lot did not consider the angels' refusal as an occasion for reaping an advantage'—which, although it differs technically in grammar from Hoover's understanding, makes in fact exactly the same point. O'Neill's objection, Hoover has to add 'his invitation' as the object of the main verb, is not telling: the positioning of $\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega\tau\epsilon\tau\omicron$ in the sentence makes it clear that the $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ -phrase goes with the idiomatic clause. The meaning must be, in other words, that Lot did not regard the angels' refusal as something to take advantage of, as he would have had he been faint-hearted. This is, incidentally, supported by the Latin translation of Cyril given in PG 68.171: *neque tanquam frigidè parvumque ex animo illos invitaret, illorum excusationem pro occasione rapuit*. O'Neill's objection to Hoover's reading of another Eusebius text, from the commentary on Luke (PG 24.537c: see Hoover 109, O'Neill 446), seems to me to amount to no more than a rewording of the same reading (Hoover: 'crucifixion was not an honour to be shunned, but an advantage to be seized'; O'Neill, 'the thought of it as... the act of reaping an advantage'). The difference between seizing and reaping an advantage does not seem to me great enough to warrant O'Neill's claim to have successfully challenged Hoover's reading of the idiom.

¹²⁰See, on this point, Caird 1976, 123, and Moule 1972a, 97. My argument in this section includes by implication a critique of other proponents of a non-incarnational reading of Phil. 2, e.g. J.A.T. Robinson 1973, 162 ff.

¹²¹See Hurtado 1984, 124 f.

¹²²Against e.g. Moule 1970, 270.

view than on any other.¹²³

Third, the whole hymn as I have interpreted it, and not merely vv.6-8, fits very well into the paraenetic context both of vv.1-5 and (though this is not so often discussed) of vv.12 ff. Käsemann may have been right to reject Lohmeyer's comparatively shallow ethicizing of the passage. But this should not prevent a very thorough integration of the hymn into its context in Philippians. The verbal links (e.g. $\tau\alpha\pi\epsilon\iota\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\theta\omicron\sigma\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\eta\eta$, $\eta\gamma\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\upsilon$ in v.3: $\eta\eta\rho\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\tau\epsilon$, v.12; see too $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\chi\rho\iota$ $\theta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon$, v.30) are undergirded by a common theme. 'If you are really in Christ, indwelt by the Spirit, inspired by the divine love, prove it by acting this way, the way of divine self-abnegation' (vv.1-4); 'be obedient, don't grumble—God is at work in you, so behave as his children in the world' (vv.12-16). If we read the hymn as I have suggested the paraenetic significance does not stop with v.8, as Martin suggests,¹²⁴ but continues all through. God himself recognizes and endorses self-abnegation as the proper expression of divine character. This removes any doubt in the Philippians' mind as to the nature of the behaviour to which they are urged in vv.1-5. It is not merely the imitation of Christ: it is the outworking of the life of the Spirit of God. Though the word $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\eta$ is not used in the hymn itself (as it is in vv.1-2), vv.6-8 might almost serve as a definition of what it means in practice—and vv.9-11 would then affirm that this love is none other than the love of God himself, at work supremely in Christ and now also, by his Spirit, in his people. The implication is clear: as God endorsed Jesus' interpretation of what equality with God meant in practice, so he will recognize self-giving love in his people as the true mark of the life of the Spirit. Christ's own example is held up for the church to imitate; not that his incarnation, death and exaltation are merely exemplary, but they are at least that.¹²⁵

This point, too, meshes with the underlying Adam-christology of the poem. As Caird pointed out, for the passage to work in its paraenetic context (2.3-5,

¹²³There is certainly no need to split the hymn up as does Jervell (1960). My view of the passage does not necessarily require that the prefix $\eta\eta\rho\epsilon\pi-$ in the verb $\eta\eta\rho\epsilon\pi\omicron\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\upsilon$ (v.9) should be taken to indicate Jesus' exaltation to a higher glory than that which he possessed at the beginning, and it is quite likely that the prefix should not, in fact, be pressed in this way. Nevertheless, this view does make available a possible sense of further exaltation, which is not the same as that suggested by Martin (1983, 240 ff.) and others. In his exaltation Christ does not merely return to a state of glory corresponding to that of his pre-existence, but is now exalted as *man*, God's intended ruler of the world. Here again the *appropriateness* of the incarnation is underlined. See ch. 2 above, in relation to 1 Cor. 15.

¹²⁴See Marshall's criticisms (1968, 117 ff.), and similarly Stanton 1974, 101 f.; Larsson 1962, 230 ff. Larsson (234) rightly compares Rom. 15.1-7, see also Hoover 1971, 118.

¹²⁵The objections of Käsemann 1968 to an ethical interpretation of the hymn are really objections, on quite non-exegetical grounds, to a soteriology that focuses exclusively on *Imitatio Christi*—which I am certainly not advocating. Käsemann is adequately answered at this point by e.g. Hooker 1975.

12 ff.), the point being made must be that, in contrast to Adam's grasping at a status to which he had no right, Christ voluntarily renounced a status to which he had every right.¹²⁶ In fact, this is supported not only by the immediate paraenetic context, but also by the further application of the same point in 3.4 ff., where Paul describes the glories of his position as a Jew and tells how, for the sake of gaining Christ, he had turned his back on them. The christological pattern worked out in the doctrine of justification is one of privilege renounced, leading to death and to new life the other side of death (3.7-11; see below). In other words, the undoubted presence of Adam-christology here does not mean that Adam and Christ *must* be parallel in every way, that Christ must have 'faced the same archetypal choice that confronted Adam.'¹²⁷ On the contrary, we have already seen that in fact the task of the second Adam was more than merely succeeding where the first Adam failed, and we can now see that the logic of Philippians 2 and 3 requires that Christ and Adam should *not* be set in exact parallel.

Fourth, the frequently observed parallel between 2.6 ff. and 3.4 ff.¹²⁸ works very well on this understanding. Moule (247 f.) is anxious that the parallel would only hold if, as Paul had flung away what formerly seemed precious to him, receiving in exchange something else, so Christ had 'deemed equality with God sheer loss' and had abandoned it. I suggest, however, that in 3.4 ff. Paul is first outlining the privileged status he enjoyed (and continued, in some senses to enjoy) as a member of Israel, the people of God, and then showing that, because of Christ, this membership had to be regarded as something not to be taken advantage of. He did not give up his membership: he understood it in a new way, avoiding all possibility of taking advantage of it for self-aggrandisement. This clearly fits into the context of 3.2-3, in which Paul transfers attributes of Israel to the church in Christ. Belonging to God's people did not, he now realized, mean a privileged status, outward symbols of superiority, an elevated moral stature in the world. It meant dying and rising with the Messiah. In hoping for vindication at the resurrection (3.11) Paul is claiming that the thing which, for him as an erstwhile Pharisee, had always been the hope of God's people, was now to be his because, and only because, he was 'in Christ'. So, in 2.5-11, Christ, as himself the true Jew, had led the way for this reinterpretation of what it meant to be the people of God.

Various elements in the position I am advocating have been subject to criticisms, and these must now be answered by way of conclusion. Lightfoot regarded the view of Meyer and Alford, which is similar to that of Moule, as

¹²⁶Caird 1976, 121. The link with the paraenetic context is clearly made by the repetition of the verb ἡγέσθω; see Hooker 1975, 152 f.

¹²⁷Dunn 1980, 117.

¹²⁸See Hooker 1990, 7 f.; and above, n.8.

'somewhat strained', but this subjective judgment was really part of his overall view of the meaning of the idiomatic phrase—which, as we have seen, has to be modified in the light of Hoover's arguments. Foerster and Martin¹²⁹ argue that Moule's meaning is impossible on the grounds that, if the word has an active sense, it should have an object. But, as Moule replies, this simply misses the point. An abstract noun like 'snatching', 'grasping', or 'getting' does not need an object; it refers, intransitively, to a particular way of life, namely, that which characterized pagan rulers, and indeed pagan gods and goddesses such as the Philippians might have worshipped in their pre-Christian days.¹³⁰ Martin's more recent objection¹³¹ confirms the impression that he has not understood Moule's point, but is merely treating his view as if it were (a) dependent on that of Hammerich and (b) subject to the weaknesses of the old Latin view (with which he confused Ross's position in *Carmen Christi*: see above). Moule's interpretation—and, *mutatis mutandis*, mine—does not lose the mutual tension between vv.6 and 7, as Martin claims. V.6 says that Christ did not regard his status in one way; v.7 says that he took the opposite way instead. It is of course true that to say 'he did not regard x as y' could be stated in the form 'he regarded x as not-y', and *not-y* would then become an anticipation, albeit in negative terms, of the next clause, which states how he acted on that basis. But this is a mere verbal trick, which does not alter the tension or the sequential progress of the hymn. The fact that v.6 states a *thought*, and v.7 an *action*, is itself evidence of this. Martin's restatement of his own position ('v.6b...states what Christ might have done, i.e. seized equality with God; only in v.7 does it say what he chose to do, i.e. give himself') is in fact an overstatement. V.6b does not simply 'state what Christ might have done': it says that he did not do it. Allowing for this, Martin's way of formulating the passage to demonstrate its tension and movement could very easily be reworded into Moule's view, or mine, with the tension perfectly well maintained: Christ might have regarded his equality with God as meaning snatching (or, as something to take advantage of), but on the contrary he chose (to regard it as meaning) the way of self-giving, and, further, to act on that understanding.¹³²

Moule disarmingly suggests some potential weaknesses in his view, but they are not in fact as damaging as they might seem. We have already seen that the Greek Fathers' use may not be as far from his as it would appear from Lightfoot's reading of them. Nor, as we have seen, is the parallel between 2.5-11 and 3.2-11 lost (Moule, 274); it is in fact enhanced. Finally,

¹²⁹Following Kennedy 1912, 436 f. For Foerster see above, pp. 79 f.

¹³⁰See an alternative counter-argument in Beet 1887, 122.

¹³¹In his New Century Commentary (1976), pp. 96 f., and his new introduction to *Carmen Christi* (1983), xxiii f.

¹³²See Moule's parody, 1970, 269.

Moule feels as a weakness the fact that vv.7-8 appear now to indicate not a descent from 'equality with God', but the true expression of that equality—which looks odd in that it destroys the apparent pattern of 'descent and ascent' (273).¹³³ Moule's own answer to this is that we are in the presence of irony: 'essentially, that humiliation was itself exaltation' (274, Moule's italics). But this is surely unnecessary. To read *ἀπταλμός* as he has done does not *identify* the humiliation of Bethlehem and Calvary with the exaltation either of the pre-existent glory or the post-Easter triumph. There is still a real 'humiliation' followed by a real 'exaltation', and to use the latter word to describe the former event, while obliquely making an important theological point, may in fact obscure the real issue. Better, perhaps, to say that the *via crucis* of 2.6-8, consisting as it does in a real change of state, a real humiliation, for the pre-existent one, is—admittedly only to the hindsight of faith—the full revelation of what it meant, in practice, to be equal with God. The one who was eternally 'equal with God' expressed that equality precisely in the sequence of events referred to in vv.6-8.¹³⁴

(iv) Adam and the Incarnate Lord

But perhaps the strongest argument for the solution I have proposed is that it is able to integrate three elements within the poem which are sometimes held to be mutually exclusive. Christ as Adam, Christ as Servant, and Christ as the pre-existent one—these are not usually combined, and are in fact sometimes played off against each other. I have already argued that, since both Adam-christology and Servant-christology are really Israel-christologies, they belong well together, here and elsewhere. It is now possible and necessary to show, against the run of much current discussion, that Adam-christology coheres extremely well with the incarnational theology I am proposing for the poem as a whole. The parallel between Christ and Adam in the poem has often been thought to necessitate the *res rapinda* view, in which Christ does not yet possess equality with God; Dunn uses it as the basis of his particular interpretation, in which the hymn simply refers to Jesus as a human being; so that opponents of either of these ideas have often felt compelled to deny the presence of Adam-imagery here.¹³⁵ But this is

¹³³This point is seized on by Nagata 1981, quoted by Martin 1983, loc.cit., who contrasts the 'static' nature of Moule's scheme with the 'sequential' progress of the hymn. But this, as we have seen, is to misunderstand the real nature of Moule's view.

¹³⁴Martin 1983, xxii, follows Nagata in claiming that the *ὄψις... ἄλλὰ...* sequence 'imitates against seeing two sides to Christ's being equal with God as if they were complementary'. But this is nothing like what Moule is saying.

¹³⁵See e.g. Wanamaker 1987. Wanamaker has demonstrated, I think, the probability of 'Son of God' imagery here as well, but this should not be taken to exclude the (to me quite clear) Adamic reference.

unnecessary.¹³⁶ The contrast between Adam and Christ works perfectly within my view: Adam, in arrogance, thought to become like God; Christ, in humility, became human.

Adam-christology has been used, in particular, as the basis of an argument against seeing any reference to Christ's pre-existence in the poem. Until recently it was an automatic assumption that in this passage above all others Paul attributed to the one whom he now knew as Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord Christ, an existence prior to his human birth. Moreover, during this existence this figure made a conscious choice, described in the two verbs *οὐκ ἠθέλησεν... ἄλλὰ ἐκένωσεν*. This traditional view has found it easy to read v.6 as the Pauline equivalent of, say, John 1.1-14, and to align it with such other passages as 2 Corinthians 8.9, in which a similar choice appears to be attributed to the pre-existent Christ, and with passages like 1 Corinthians 8.6; Colossians 1.15-20, which have usually been taken to refer to the activity of this same figure in mediating the creation of the world. The majority of scholars this century have agreed that this view of Jesus stems from pre-Christian speculation about a heavenly redeemer figure, though the precise origin of such speculation has remained a matter of considerable debate. This view has, however, come under strong attack in the last few years, notably from Professor J.D.G. Dunn, who may be regarded as the leading proponent of the view that, since the poem likens Christ to Adam, no reference to 'incarnation' can be intended.

It will be clear that I agree with Dunn in his assertion that Adam-christology is central to the passage, and, more particularly, in his seeing Philippians 2.6-8 as setting up a contrast between Christ's obedience and Adam's sin, and 2.9-11 as placing Christ in the role designed for man, namely Lord of the world (in obedience to God). I also find completely convincing his arguments against a gnostic background for the hymn and in favor of a Jewish one, and agree totally when he rejects the idea of a pre-existent *man* as the controlling concept in 2.6 ff.¹³⁷ Dunn's underlying polemic against the incarnational soteriology that he sees as a corollary of the 'pre-existence' view of 2.6 f. is likewise in order up to a point. It is quite true that an over-emphasis on incarnation, i.e. to the exclusion or at least the downplaying of the cross and resurrection, pulls Paul's theology badly out of shape. But his central contention is subject to certain very damaging objections.

(a) The hymn, both in outline and in detail, makes much more sense if we see Christ and Adam as contrasted but not in strict parallelism—exactly, of course, as we saw in Romans 5.12-21.¹³⁸ Christ's obedience is not simply the

¹³⁶ See above, pp.57-62; and Martin 1983, xxi.

¹³⁷ Against Cullmann 1963, 174 ff.

¹³⁸ Above, ch. 2. Cf. Hooker 1990, 98 f.

replacement of Adam's disobedience. It does not involve merely the substitution of one sort of humanity for another, but the solution of the problem now inherent in the first sort, namely, sin. The temptation of Christ was not to snatch at a forbidden equality with God, but to cling to his rights and thereby opt out of the task allotted to him, that he should undo the results of Adam's snatching.¹³⁹ As Lohmeyer pointed out, only of a divine being can it be said that he was *obedient* unto death, since for all other human beings since Adam's death comes as a mere necessity. (Murphy-O'Connor's objection to this causes more problems than it solves, since it postulates the sudden appearance of a sinless human being, whose sinlessness was a known fact that became the basis of a good deal of theological speculation, without anyone raising the question as to *how* such total obedience was possible, or what it implied about the person concerned.)¹⁴⁰ And, as Marshall has argued, vv.6-7 are very odd if the person referred to had never been anything other than a human being.¹⁴¹ The contrast between Christ and Adam, which Dunn is correct to claim as the context within which the terms of the hymn must have their sense determined,¹⁴² is thus made most effectively if Christ is understood to have renounced the rank and privileges to which he had—and continued to have—every right. The presence of Adam-christology, then, says nothing of itself against pre-existence. It may actually require it, and when we set such a christology alongside the meaning of v.6 for which we have argued it coheres with it very well indeed.¹⁴³

¹³⁹Cf. above, ch. 2, on Rom. 5.15 ff.

¹⁴⁰Lohmeyer 1961, 41; see Murphy-O'Connor 1976, 42.

¹⁴¹See Marshall 1982, 6; also Wanamaker 1987, 182 f.

¹⁴²Dunn 1980, 119.

¹⁴³It is, therefore, not to the point to demonstrate that Adam was not thought of as pre-existent (Dunn 1980, 119). It is not surprising that Dunn has considerable difficulty in showing *how* in some sense Christ faced the same choice as Adam; the parallel he draws with Rom. 7.7 ff. proves, if anything, my point, not his, and he never explains why Christ's freely embracing, within his ministry, the fallen lot of humankind should constitute the archetypal choice by which Adam's sin is undone—nor why, if this choice is the all-important moment in the drama of salvation, Paul does not say so more clearly (120 f.). Rom. 7.7 ff., arguably, picks up the thought of 5.13-14, 20, that the arrival of the Torah effects a new stage in Israel's position. Dunn's paragraph from pp. 120-21 is full of problems. He can hardly claim that 'to press this question' (i.e. the question of when or in what sense the earthly Jesus faced the same sort of choice as Adam) 'is probably...to misunderstand what the hymn is trying to do' when he has been arguing very strongly that Adam-christology is *the* context of meaning within which individual words and ideas must be understood. His alternative ('Quite possibly the author assumed Christ's sinlessness and was in effect trading on its corollary—viz. that he who did not sin need not have died'...Christ's 'whole life constituted his willing acceptance of the sinner's lot'...every stage of Christ's life and ministry had the character of a fallen lot freely embraced') raises the questions (among others): how could Paul have accounted for Jesus' astonishing sinlessness, and why, if this was so important as the foundation of the train of thought, is it mentioned so rarely? What soteriological value is there in the 'free embracing of a fallen lot' per se—and what precisely does that phrase mean? And, again, *in what way* were these

(b) Turning to the second half of the poem, Dunn is again right to see Adam-christology here, but wrong, I think, in the conclusions he draws from this. Jesus is indeed exalted to the place designed for humanity, according to Psalm 8 (and for the Messiah, according to Psalm 110: see the discussion of 1 Corinthians 15 above). But¹⁴⁴ Paul expresses this in language drawn directly and obviously from Isaiah 45.23, which is not merely taken from a passage whose basic theme is monotheism (see the repeated affirmations of Isaiah 45.5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22) but is actually the climax of that passage, the fullest statement of the belief that Israel's God, Yahweh, is the only God of all the earth:

(22) Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. (23) By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.' (24) Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed, all who were incensed against him. (25) In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory.¹⁴⁵

Whatever value is to be given to κύριος in v.11—whether, that is, it would be recognized as the equivalent of the Tetragrammaton¹⁴⁶—this use of Isaiah 45 does incomparably more than merely 'add a new dimension to the christological claim.'¹⁴⁷ If we are indeed to 'attune our twentieth-century ears to the concepts and overtones of the 50's and 60's of the first century A.D. in the eastern Mediterranean,' to 'read these texts with a sympathetic sensitivity to the presuppositions of the first readers' (Dunn, 125)—as surely we must—then we can hardly allow ourselves not to notice what would have been glaringly obvious to any even moderately educated Jew, let alone a

choices of the human Christ antithetical to Adam's—as they must be for Dunn's whole argument to work?

¹⁴⁴Moule, in his review of Dunn (*Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1982) 259 f.), questions whether 2.9-11 can be 'squeezed into a purely Adamic pattern'. My argument suggests that, while part of the point of 2.9-11 is that this is the place of the true Man, those verses in fact go beyond anything that could be said of any man other than Jesus.

¹⁴⁵The question of which text Paul intended to refer to here is vexed. The LXX departs in various ways from the Hebrew of Isa. 45, not least at the end of v.23 and the start of v.24. The Hebrew, which unlike the LXX has 'the Lord' at the start of v.24, may have given Paul the clue for his use of the previous verse (the LXX has 'every tongue shall confess to God' at the end of v.23); but the LXX, which puts κύριος and θεός side by side in v.25, could be read by Paul as anticipating the distinction which he makes here and in 1 Cor. 8.6 (see ch. 6 below). Manns 1977 points out that the text corresponds to that in the Targum of Ps-Jonathan.

¹⁴⁶See Hengel 1976, 77-83; the straightforward equivalence is questioned by e.g. Howard 1977.

¹⁴⁷Dunn 1980, 118; see too Murphy-O'Connor 1976, 47.

Pharisee of the Pharisees. In Philippians 2.10 f. Paul credits Jesus with a rank and honour which is not only in one sense appropriate for the true Man, the Lord of the world, but is also the rank and honor explicitly reserved, according to scripture, for Israel's God and him alone.

But, if this is so, we can scarcely suppose that Paul did not reflect—indeed, had not already reflected before committing such an enormous claim to writing—on the implications of this identification. And when, within the same passage (specifically, in v.6) we find what, *prima facie*, appears to be precisely the result of such reflection (Christ's 'equality with God'), we are justified in concluding that he had indeed done so. For consider: if the God who will not share his glory with another has now shared it with Jesus (the position asserted in 2.9 ff.), then there are only three possible conclusions that can be drawn. It might be the case that there are now two Gods. Or Jesus—who up until then had been a man and nothing but a man—might now have been totally absorbed into the one God, without (so to speak) remainder. Or there might be a sense—requiring fuller investigation, exploration and clarification, no doubt—in which Jesus, in being exalted to the rank described in 2.9 ff., is receiving no more than that which was always, from before the beginning of time, his by right. As Moule says in his review:

A polytheist can accommodate the apotheosis of a Heracles. Can a monotheist rank Jesus in a transcendent category (very different from that of a translated Moses or Elijah) and still manage not to perceive that this must imply eternal existence?¹⁴⁸

It should be clear that Paul remained a monotheist, and never sold out this position to any sort of hellenistic ditheism or polytheism.¹⁴⁹ It is also clear from dozens of passages that he regarded Jesus Christ as still Jesus Christ, not simply absorbed into God the Father. There is obviously the closest of unions between Son and Father, as the last phrase of the hymn indicates: honour to Jesus glorifies the Father. But if Jesus is not one-for-one identical with the Father, and if Paul is still a monotheist, then the assertions of 2.9–11 must mean that Jesus—or, more accurately, the one who *became* Jesus—must have been from all eternity 'equal with God' in the sense of being himself fully divine. When, therefore, we find in this same passage a statement which both appears to assert this on other grounds (see above) and *must* mean this if the logic of the passage is to work, we have every reason to conclude that the statement in question—Philippians 2.6–7—refers to the choice made by the pre-existent one (whom we now know by his human

¹⁴⁸Moule's review of Dunn (above, n. 144) 262.

¹⁴⁹Against e.g. Schoeps 1961, 160 ff. See chs. 5, 6 below.

name, Jesus) to be obedient to the saving purposes of the Father by becoming human and dying on a cross.¹⁵⁰

At the same time, the whole context of Adam-christology enables Paul to hint that this incarnation of a pre-existent divine being, and the subsequent glorification to divine splendour of a crucified man, are not in fact incongruous, but on the contrary appropriate. The task of the man who would represent Israel and so save the world is a task which, in Old Testament language, is (however paradoxically) reserved for God himself. The final position of the obedient man—set in glorious authority over the world, in fulfillment of Genesis 1.26 ff., Psalm 8.4 ff., and Daniel 7.14—is one which (according to Isaiah 45) is thoroughly appropriate for God himself. And, to look at the question from the other side, the nature of a human being, that is, the fact that humans are made in the image of God, means that becoming human is thoroughly appropriate for one who from the beginning was *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ*. It may be that, after all, *μορφῇ* here is Paul's way of describing the pre-existent Christ as being, so to speak, a *potential* man. *Εἰκὼν* might have implied (as it has, probably rightly, been taken to imply in Colossians 1.15; see below, ch. 5) that the one so described was already a man; the same might be true of *ὁμοῶμα*. *Μορφῇ* does not need to carry these implications, and is thus able to indicate the appropriateness of the becoming human of the pre-existent one without implying that this incarnation has already happened.¹⁵¹

From this argument it follows, in relation to the whole debate about incarnational theology in this passage, that much of the usual view of 'pre-existence' is not in line with Paul's conception.

(a) It is not a hellenistic idea, pulling early christology away from its Jewish roots; it has no necessary connection with any gnostic, or Philonic, speculations about an *Ur-mensch* or Primal Man. Dunn's speculation that the development of christology moved from a non-incarnational Philippians 2 to a gnostic view of the passage (and/or other passages), and thence to the 'orthodox' view of pre-existence, is not nearly so likely as the following alternative: that an incarnational Philippians 2 was taken up (i) by a Greek

¹⁵⁰See ch. 2 above on 1 Cor. 15, and 'son' there. From this perspective it is straightforward to understand 2 Cor 8.9, with almost all scholars, as referring to the choice of the pre-existent one (against Dunn, 121 ff.). It is scarcely 'manichean' (Dunn, 122) to contrast the glory of his pre-existence with the whole story of his human life and death; the contrast being made is not between divinity and humanity *per se* (though such a contrast surely still exists!) but between Christ's pre-existent state and the humble humanity, and its consequence, that he actually took.

¹⁵¹See the discussion in Kim 1981, 195–200. The objections of Talbert 1967 can be quite easily overcome: to his summary (141 n.2) it may be answered (a) that kenosis is, as we have seen, not required, (b) that 2 Cor. 8.9 provides a good parallel, and (c) that several options are still open to the exegete without his being forced to say that the pre-existent one abandoned his divinity.

theology which, being unwilling to posit apparent 'changes' in God, understood that pre-existence as the pre-existence of a *man* and (ii) by gnostic speculations.

(b) This position is not to be conceived as a departure from Jewish monotheism. Paul, at least, intends to keep it firmly within this framework (see chs. 5 and 6 below).

(c) It does not involve the abandonment of Paul's eschatological perspective.¹⁵² On the contrary, it depends on it and indeed fills it out (we might compare Galatians 4.4, 'when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son,' though of course the precise meaning of the formula-like second clause is itself disputed).

(d) It has nothing to do with the idea of a pre-existent *man* (hence, a *fortiori*, it does not refer either to a pre-existent *Messiah*). One of the weaknesses of Dunn's account is that he tends to assume that 'pre-existence' must mean the pre-existence of a human being. But the *πρόϋμενος* of Philipians 2.7, which of course (taken in this sense) is not far from the cognate verb's meaning in John 1.14, positively rules this out. This naturally raises the question as to what language it is possible for us to use in referring to this pre-existent being. To call him either 'Jesus' or 'Christ' appears anachronistic. Perhaps Dunn's own illustration in a different context, where it may after all not belong,¹⁵³ will work here: when we say 'the Prime Minister studied economics at Oxford' (or perhaps, *mutatis mutandis*, 'the President acted in cowboy movies'), we are not saying that Mrs. Thatcher was Prime Minister while at Oxford, or that Mr. Reagan was President while riding bareback into the sunset.¹⁵⁴ We are using an easily comprehensible shorthand in order to say 'the person who became Prime Minister, or President, and to whom we can most easily refer by that title, did these things in her, or his, earlier days.'¹⁵⁵ The best parallel to this sort of shorthand in Paul's writings is clearly 2 Corinthians 8.9: '...our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor.' Paul's use of the words 'Jesus Christ' cannot be taken to indicate that only his human existence is in view, since there would still then be the anachronism of the word *κύριος*. The fact that this phrase ('our Lord Jesus Christ') is the easiest

¹⁵²As Dunn suggests (1980, 124).

¹⁵³1980, 334 n.121; see Moule's sharp criticism in *JTS* 33, p. 260.

¹⁵⁴It is remarkable how quickly times can change. At the time of going to press (March 1991) these examples already feel astonishingly dated.

¹⁵⁵A parallel from Paul's own century may be provided in Josephus' references to Titus as *Καίσαρ* at the time of the Jerusalem siege (*War* 5.63, 94, 97, etc.). Though the title could be used for the heir apparent, Vespasian himself had at that stage only just been hailed as Emperor, and it seems to me more likely (not least because the passage in question is so flattering to Titus) that Josephus was writing or at least revising during Titus' brief principate (79-81). See Hengel 1989 <1961> 11; and, on the date of the *Jewish War*, Altridade 1984, 192 f.

way for Paul, or for us, to refer to *the person who became Jesus Christ* should alert us to the fact that it was in this sense, rather than in that of a pre-existent humanity, that he was speaking.

(e) The fact that the nearest antecedents to this christology are apparently *personifications* (of, e.g., Wisdom or the Torah) in the relevant Jewish literature does not mean that Paul's talk about Jesus' pre-existence is equally to be taken as a mere figure of speech. As Caird points out, Philipians 2.6 f. and 2 Corinthians 8.9 attribute a conscious choice—a choice which can be used, in each case, as an ethical example—to this pre-existent one. No mere personification, then, but a person, a conscious individual entity, is envisaged.¹⁵⁶ Equally, the line of thought explored above (in relation to the corollaries of Paul's ascription of Isaiah 45.23 to Jesus) shows that the one thus exalted is to be identified as an individual entity existing, equal to God the Father, prior to his human birth. We shall follow this up more fully in the next two chapters.

(v) Conclusion

These considerations strengthen further the already impressive argument for the underlying theological emphasis of Moule's view of Philipians 2.5-11. When that view has undergone the adjustments necessitated by the arguments of Hoover, these strengths remain in the view I have advocated. The thrust of the passage in itself is that the one who, before becoming human, possessed divine equality did not regard that status as something to take advantage of, something to exploit, but instead interpreted it as a vocation to obedient humiliation and death; and that God the Father acknowledged the truth of this interpretation by exalting him to share his own divine glory. In its wider context, this means that the passage is well able to fulfil the role which, *prima facie*, it has in Paul's developing argument, namely, that of the example which Christians are to imitate.¹⁵⁷ God acknowledged Christ's self-emptying as the true expression of divine equality; he will acknowledge Christian self-abnegation (2.1-4, 12-18) in the same way (3.2 ff., especially 3.11, 21).

I have said little about the much discussed question of the hypothetical pre-Pauline context in which this poem came to birth. But if, finally, there is a conclusion to be drawn from this study in the realm of the linguistic background of the hymn, it is that whoever wrote v.6 was using a precisely

¹⁵⁶We cannot here go into the complexities of the word 'person' except to express the wish that a word with less potential for creating theological and philosophical red herrings were available for the task.

¹⁵⁷See Hurtado 1984.

nuanced idiom in a characteristically Hellenistic way. This does not *prove* that the passage was originally composed in Greek, but it makes it very easy to imagine that it was.¹⁵⁸ In addition, the passage fits its present context so well that it is very hard to see it in any way as a detached, or even detachable, hymn about Christ.¹⁵⁹ It belongs exactly where it is. It is of course possible that Paul, realizing that it was going to be appropriate to quote the hymn (assuming that there was one) worded 2.1–5 accordingly, and then continued to echo the same themes later on in the letter. But if someone were to take it upon themselves to argue, on the basis of my conclusions, that the 'hymn' was originally written by Paul himself precisely in order to give christological and above all theological underpinning to the rest of Philippians, especially chs. 2 and 3, I for one should find it hard to produce convincing counter-arguments.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸See Deichgräber 1967, 129. Of course, a hymn's being composed in Greek does not necessarily indicate that it expresses a 'Hellenistic' theology—whatever that might mean—as opposed to any other sort.

¹⁵⁹It is not, despite the common assumption to the contrary, a hymn to Christ (see, e.g. Martin 1983, 1 ff.: so, rightly, Deichgräber 1967, 118 f.).

¹⁶⁰Among many writers who have stood against the tide on this question see Furness 1959–60 and 1967–8; Caird 1968, 66 f.

POETRY AND THEOLOGY IN COLOSSIANS 1.15–20

We now proceed from one giant of a passage to another. There are many things that could be said about Colossians 1.15–20, but in this chapter I want to argue simply for three points. (i) Colossians 1.15–20 exhibits, without the deletion of any of its parts, a clear structure which can, in some meaningful senses, be called 'poetic'. (ii) The passage, *read as a poem* in the way I shall suggest, fits very well against the background of Jewish wisdom-traditions. (iii) The passage, understood in this way, exhibits a characteristically Pauline form of what we may call christological monotheism, not dissimilar to that which we have found in Philippians 2. This will point on to some further suggestions regarding the place of the passage within Colossians as a whole.¹

(i) The Poem

Suggesting that Colossians 1.15–20 exhibits a poetic structure is, of course, nothing new. Several recent writers have offered competing analyses of the passage, and in view of the abundance of secondary literature there is no need to traverse this part of the ground again.² Two features of these regular treatments, however, suggest that it is worthwhile to reconsider the problem from new angles. First, there is no agreement as to the actual structure of the supposed poem. Second, and related to this, there is an abundance of theories as to possible 'insertions' by the author of Colossians into the poem, which is presumed to predate the writing of the letter.³ Further ways of approaching this nest of problems seem called for.

¹This chapter (substantially the same as the article which first appeared in *New Testament Studies* 36, 1990, 444–468, with a few small alterations largely occasioned by the kind comments of Prof. C.F.D. Moule, Fr. Benedict Green, and the Revd. Michael F. Lloyd), thus provides groundwork for the treatment of the passage in my commentary (Wright 1986c), to which reference may be made for some of the details of exegesis. I am grateful to the editor of *NTS* for permission to reprint the substance of the article.

²For recent treatments, see Gabathuler 1965; Kehl 1967; Schweizer 1970, 1982; Lohse 1971; Benoit 1975; Gnilka 1980a; Aleotti 1981; O'Brien 1982; Bruce 1984; Balchin 1985; Baugh 1985. Full bibliography and listing of options can be found in Balchin, Schweizer 1982, 55 n.1, Bruce 55 n.73, Benoit 260–3, Lohse 41 n. 64, and Aleotti *passim*.

³I have argued in my commentary for Pauline authorship of the letter. Nothing in the present chapter necessarily presupposes this, although some of my arguments may help to strengthen the case. Those who take an alternative view may substitute 'the author' for 'Paul'