

I. Survey of literature on Kenosis theory

The Rise of the Kenotic Theory

- Coincident with the rise of Enlightenment rationalism
- Main question in 1800's: How can one person have two consciousnesses?
- Conclusion: Jesus emptied Himself (cf. Phil 2:7) of at least some of His divine attributes in order to become truly human. Because it is affirmed that God is impassible, God can't suffer. Because it is affirmed that God is eternal, God can't die

“It just seemed too incredible for modern rational and ‘scientific’ people to believe that Jesus Christ could be truly human and fully, absolutely God at the same time. The kenosis theory began to sound more and more like an acceptable way to say that (in some sense) Jesus was God, but a kind of God who had for a time given up some of his Godlike qualities, those that were most difficult for people to accept in the modern world”

Wayne Grudem: Systematic Theology, 551–52

When it comes to this view finding a consensus in the early years is almost impossible, much like armpits, everyone had one and they all stink.

1. German Kenosis (1800's)

- Gottfried Thomasius – Christ surrendered “relative” attributes (e.g., omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence), but retained “essential” attributes (e.g., holiness, love).
- J. H. Ebrard – Christ retained all divine attributes, but in a “scaled-down” form consistent with humanity.
- Others – Christ possessed His attributes but wasn't conscious of them; He had only a human consciousness. The result of early 20th Century advances in psychology, particularly the influence of the Freudian ideas of the subconscious.
- W. F. Gess – Christ metamorphosed into a human soul, surrendered all of His divine attributes, relinquished all divine consciousness which He only gradually regained.

“The German kenoticists took the idea of self-emptying beyond its usual bounds of voluntary self-restraint of the divine nature by the God-man (the position of the Giessen faculty). Instead, they believed that the divine Logos limited itself in the act of incarnation. The actual theories varied. Thomassius separated the metaphysical attributes, omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience, from the moral attributes, love and holiness. The Logos gave up the former while retaining the latter. Other German kenoticists (Frank and Gess), however, took more radical positions, which stripped Jesus

of any of the attributes of divinity and called into question the use of the term 'incarnation'."¹

2. British Kenosis (1900's)

- Charles Gore, P. T. Forsyth, Hugh Ross Mackintosh, Vincent Taylor
- Some held that Christ laid aside the omni-attributes (including omniscience), and so to make room that he could be wrong on matters "proven" by historical criticism. They avoided philosophical categories.
- They held that Christ remained God, but rendered them potential rather than actual.

"The British kenoticists had a more positive orientation. Although often accused of developing kenoticism simply as a means of accommodating the results of biblical criticism by admitting the possibility of human ignorance in Jesus, it would be more true to say that British kenoticists, under the impact of a more historical reading of the Gospels, came to the conclusion that traditional Christologies did not do justice to Jesus' human life. Thus, it was the Gospel records of the human and limited consciousness of Jesus that the British kenoticists asserted over the strongly docetic dogmatic tradition. Among the individual kenoticists the actual manner in which the divine self-emptying was believed to have occurred varied, but in general the emphasis was on the gracious character of the divine condescension and not on the precise metaphysical explanation of the act."²

Louis Berkhof speaking specifically of the Kenosis as (a.) divinity lost in becoming human and (b.) divinity losing some attributes in this way. (the 1800's and 1900's view)

"The Kenoticists take ["the Word became flesh"] to mean that the Logos literally became, that is, was changed into a man by reducing (depotentiating) Himself, either wholly or in part, to the dimensions of a man, and then increased in wisdom and power until at last He again became God. ... It aimed at maintaining the reality and integrity of the manhood of Christ, and to throw into strong relief the greatness of His humiliation in that He, being rich, for our sakes became poor. It involves, however, a pantheistic obliteration of the line of demarcation between God and man"

(Systematic Theology, 310)

¹B. E. Foster "KENOTICISM" in *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*. 2nd edit. Ed: Martin Davie, Tim Grass, Stephen R. Holmes, John McDowell, T. A. Noble, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 2016) 487

² B. E. Foster "KENOTICISM" in *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*. 2nd edit. Ed: Martin Davie, Tim Grass, Stephen R. Holmes, John McDowell, T. A. Noble, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 2016) 487-488

II. Two Modern Views³

A. Ontological Kenosis⁴

- “ontological” refers to some kind of change in the Son’s divine nature as a result of the incarnation
- Stephen T. Davis, C. Stephen Evans, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O’Collins, Ronald J. Feenstra and Cornelius Plantinga Jr.
- Highly Philosophical theology and a key mark is the use of a logical division between essential and accidental categories of the attributes and a reworking of some philosophical terms.

B. Functional Kenosis⁵

- “Functional” refers to the Son retaining all of his divine attributes but choosing not to exercise them either temporarily or permanently, due to the incarnation.
 - Thus Attributes fully possessed, but not exercised (some say never, others say rarely)
 - This views rises from taking biblical theology as seriously as systematic and historical formulations.
 - Gerald Hawthorne, Klaus Issler, Garrett DeWeese, William Lane Craig, J. P. Moreland, Millard Erickson, Bruce Ware, Augusta H. Strong,
- It is a guess but it seems to me that the work of Gerald Hawthorne is likely at the heart of Pentecostal and charismatic articulations of the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- It can be argued that this it is unsure if a functional view of kenosis can even be called kenosis. For it is Kenosis without ever claiming the loose of attributes. Yet it may follow that the transgression of these views has more to do with their lack of historical articulation with respect to the creeds.
- Much of the debate seems to be rooted in the constant debate between biblical theology and systematic theology.

³ The categories come from Oliver D. Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 118–153. For a thorough summary of the history of kenoticism, see A. B. Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ* (T&T Clark, 1905). For an up-to-date overview, see Stephen Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate* (Crossway, 2017). The modern categories follow from Wellum’s work. It is never stated by Wellum if all but his view is within classical trinitarian orthodox.

⁴ We could call this the New British or Oxford Kenosis given much of the literature is published by Oxford press and authors are primarily British.

⁵ We could call this American Kenosis or Orthodox Kenosis (but ONLY for the sake of alliteration with Oxford). Aspects of this view can be found as far back as John Owens’ *Pneumatology* and more recently in *Evangelical Circles* from as far back as Augusta Strong, *Systematic theology* (Vol1-3) an influential textbooks that proved to be the backbone of Reformed Baptist theological education for several generations.

Owen on Christ and the Spirit

An example of a theological articulation of Christ relationship to the Holy Spirit without reference to Kenosis as its foundation is found in the work of John Owen. Owen never held a kenosis view yet did hold that all Christ's ministry was in and through the Spirit effectively following the idea that Christ never exercised his divine nature. As one Owen scholar put it:

One of his chief concerns was to protect the integrity of Christ's two natures (divine and human). In so doing, he made a rather bold contention that the only singular immediate act of the Son of God (the divine second person) on the human nature of Christ was the decision to take it into subsistence with himself in the incarnation. Every other act upon Christ's human nature was from the Holy Spirit. Christ performed his miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit, not immediately by his own divine power. In other words, the divine nature acted not immediately by virtue of "the hypostatic union" (the joining of two natures in Christ's singular person) but mediately by means of the Holy Spirit. The conventional way of understanding Christ's miracles has typically been to argue that Christ performs miracles by virtue of his own divine nature. But on Owen's model, the Holy Spirit is actually the immediate author of Christ's graces. This manner of understanding the relation of the Spirit to Christ's human nature preserves his true humanness and answers a host of biblical questions that arise from a close reading of various texts.⁶

This is further elaborated by Sinclair Ferguson

Except from "John Owen on the Spirit in the Life of Christ" By Sinclair Ferguson

Owen refers with some frequency to the description of the Messiah in the Royal Wedding Psalm.[Ps 45] Two questions arise here: (i) Who is the person addressed? Owen finds the biblical answer in Hebrews 1:9 (cp. Ps 45:6-7). These words are spoken 'about the Son'. (ii) What is the anointing referred to? Owen answers that it is the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit. Jesus is the one to whom the Spirit is given without measure [Jn 3:34].

What Owen focuses our attention on is that Jesus Christ, whom we often think of as the Bestower or Baptiser with the Spirit, is first of all the Recipient or Bearer of the Spirit. As Jesus' obedience to the Father grew in harmony with his developing capacities as a man and the demands of his ministry as the Messiah, so he received the power of the Spirit's anointing for each step of his way.

It is an axiom, then, for Owen: The Spirit works on the Head of the New Creation, Jesus Christ, and thus creates the source, cause, and pattern of his working throughout the new creation, in believers.....

2.The Ministry Of The Spirit In The Ministry Of Jesus Christ

⁶Why Jesus Needed the Holy Spirit by Mark Jones, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-jesus-needed-the-holy-spirit>

For John Owen, it was axiomatic that Jesus Christ 'acted grace as a man'. He did this (as men must) through the energy of the Spirit. That was evident in two ways:

(i) In his personal progress in grace. The work of the Spirit in the Messiah was prophesied in Isaiah 11:1-3 and also in 63:1ff. Owen saw great significance in the prophecy that it was by the Spirit that the Messiah would be filled with wisdom, and that this characteristic was singled out for reference in Luke's account of Jesus' growth [Lk 2:52]. In this sense, the coming of the Spirit on Jesus involved a continuous presence. In keeping with the development of his natural faculties as man, and his unique responsibilities as Messiah, he was sustained by the Spirit. The Spirit enabled Jesus to do natural things perfectly and spiritually, not to do them unnaturally. He was taught the wisdom of God from the Word of God by the Spirit of God! This is precisely the picture we are given in the third Servant Song:

The Sovereign Lord has given me the instructed tongue to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back [Isa 50:4-9].

Each step of his way, it was through the word of the Father in Scripture, illuminated by his constant companion, the Spirit, that Jesus grew in the knowledge of the Lord. So, writes Owen:

In the representation then, of things anew to the human nature of Christ, the wisdom and knowledge of [his human nature] was objectively increased and in new trials and temptations he experimentally learned the new exercise of grace. And this was the constant work of the Holy Spirit on the human nature of Christ. He dwelt in him in fulness, for he received not him by measure. And continually, upon all occasions he gave out of his unsearchable treasures grace for exercise in all duties and instances of it. From hence was he habitually holy, and from hence did he exercise holiness entirely and universally in all things. [Works, III, pp. 170-171]

But besides this personal progress, there is another aspect of Christ's life in which the presence of the Spirit is manifested:

(ii) In Jesus' exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. In the hidden years of his life, Jesus 'grew... strong' in the power of the Spirit [Lk 2:40]. What was distinctive for Owen about his later baptism was that there, in the fulness of his years, he received the fulness of the Spirit's anointing for public Messianic ministry.

Owen, however, notes that the significance of Jesus' baptism and anointing with the Spirit cannot be separated from his experience of temptation or from the 'driving' of the Spirit, by which he was thrust into the wilderness [Mk 1:12]. The same expression [ekballein] is used of both the Saviour being driven into the wilderness by the Spirit, and the disciples being driven out into the harvest by the Lord of the Harvest [Lk 10:2]. In

both cases the function of the Spirit's ministry is the advance of the kingdom of God and the defeat of the powers of darkness. The sword of the Spirit is a weapon tested and tried by our Lord so that his disciples may use it with confidence; the armour the disciple is to take is the armour which the Spirit forged for Christ in his ministry. The controlling thought here, for Owen, is that the ministry of the Spirit in the ministry of Christ is the paradigm for the ministry of the Spirit in the ministry of his disciples.

Owen further underlines a point he has already made: when Jesus returned in triumph from his testing and preached in the synagogue in Luke 4; he did not speak as a retired military colonel, barking out orders to subordinates (if the analogy may be used). What shone through the Spirit's presence in our Lord's exercise of spiritual gifts, as Luke notes, was his gracious humanity, and especially his gracious words [Lk 4:22] . Here, again, Owen sees Scripture emphasizing that the chief evidence of the power of the Spirit in ministry is true and holy humanity.⁷

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⁷ John Owen on the Spirit in the Life of Christ by Sinclair Ferguson. The article which follows, the substance of an address given at the Leicester Ministers' Conference, 1986. <https://www.monergism.com/john-owen-spirit-life-christ>

Integrative Theology, Lewis & Demarest

The Incarnate Son's Self-Limitations

To report that God's eternal Son became human is for Paul to say that he "made himself nothing" (Phil. 2:7). Theologians seem to find it easier to discover what the emptying (kenōsis) does not mean than what it did mean for the One equal with God to make himself "nothing." A spectrum of proposals deserve consideration.

1. In becoming a mere human and a servant, the Son of God gave up all of his divine attributes (Godet, Clarke, Mackintosh). But had Christ given up his divine attributes, he would have had no continuing identity and would have been a mere human. The eternal Son left his position in glory, but did not abandon his essential equality with God (v. 6). The reductive hypothesis that he became merely human does not account for the evidence that he remained essentially one with the Father. Our view of the kenōsis must account for the indications that he continued to be equal with the Father and "was God" (John 1:1) with all the divine attributes that make up that essence.

2. The eternal Son gave up some of his divine attributes—that is, the relative—while retaining the essential (Thomasius, Delitzsch). Or he gave up the natural while keeping the personal, moral, and spiritual (A. B. Bruce and D. G. Dawe). Although this understanding seems to lessen some of the problems initially, it fails to account for Jesus' continued identity as the eternal Son of God. The hypothesis fails to grasp the fact that all of the divine "attributes" are essential qualities, not accidents. By definition, attributes constitute the essence of anything. Without any attributes a thing can no longer be what it is. As essential qualities, God's attributes are not accidents that may come and go. Other evidence indicates that Christ remained the Son of God, so he must have retained all the attributes essential to his sameness of nature with God the Father. His sonship would no longer be what it was if he gave up even some of his divine characteristics.

3. In becoming a man, some suggest, the Son of God covered his divine characteristics so that to others they were completely veiled. Although he appeared as a man, his divine nature was incognito (Kierkegaard, Barth, and Brunner). Clearly there is a measure of truth in the statement that unilluminated Israelites, having a single glimpse of Jesus walking down the street, would not be likely to exclaim, "There goes God incarnate!" But people who over a period of time heard Jesus teach, came to know his spotless character, and saw his miraculous signs were responsible for concluding that Jesus was what he claimed to be. Peter by divine enablement finally overcame his natural, fleshly resistance to Jesus' authority and affirmed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). At other appropriate times the veil of Jesus Christ's human nature was lifted and people saw the progressive revelation of his divine glory. Had Jesus revealed his deity all at once, he would (speaking from the human point of view) have been put to death before completing the training of the Twelve. At Cana, where he gave the sign of turning water to wine, "he revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him" (John 2:11). The death of Lazarus was permitted "so that God's Son [would] be glorified through it" (John 11:4). When Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead he said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (v. 40). Peter, James, and John saw Jesus transfigured and heard the Father say, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (Matt. 17:2-5). So in his high priestly prayer Jesus could say, "I

have given them the glory that you gave me” (John 17:22). Had Jesus’ divine nature been totally veiled, he would not have denounced the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed. Those cities will be more accountable in the day of judgment than Tyre and Sidon and Sodom (Matt. 11:20-24). Hence they must have been able to see enough signs of his messianic authority to be justly accountable and judged for their response to them! In view of this evidence, what the Gospels portray is not a totally incognito Christ, but a human disclosing progressively visible indications of his invisible deity.

4. Some have proposed that a merely human Jesus gradually became conscious of his progressive incarnation (e.g., I. A. Dorner). To what degree does that hypothesis fit the data? The biblical evidence noted above indicates, not a progressive incarnation, but a progressive revelation by Jesus of his deity and messianic mission. It also shows the disciples’ progressive realization of the truth of that increasing revelation.

5. Although the Son did not give up his divine powers in order to experience growth as a human, he gave up all use of his divine attributes (Martensen and Gore). All of his miracles on this position were done solely by the power of the Holy Spirit, in much the same way that the prophets and apostles had performed miracles. According to that reasoning, however, the “signs” would have indicated no more than they did for the prophets or apostles. They would not have pointed to his unique divine origin and messianic mission. The view does not fit instances like the transfiguration where his inherent glory was unquestionably revealed.

6. To accentuate Jesus’ harmonious relationship to the Father, A. H. Strong emphasized that Jesus relinquished the independent exercise of his divine attributes.⁹⁷ But his use of his divine powers had always been in harmony with the Father and the Spirit. To say that Jesus gave up a contrary use of his powers seems like reporting that a husband quit beating his wife when in fact he had never beaten her. Jesus could not give up a power of contrary choice in the use of his divine capabilities if he never had acted contrary to the Father and the Spirit. And in a providential sense no human can do anything totally independent of the Father.

7. In addition to giving up his position of equality with the Father in glory (Phil. 2:6), the Son voluntarily gave up the continuous use of his divine powers and any contrary uses of his human capabilities. Humans can and do use their capabilities in ways contrary to the Father’s desires. So when the Messiah adds human capabilities, it makes sense for him to choose not to exercise his human powers contrary to the Father’s pleasure. Not only as he came to earth, but throughout his ministry, he faithfully surrendered to the Father’s will and yielded to the Spirit’s power. “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Phil. 2:8). Peter exclaimed about “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:38). Hence in agreement with Strong, but in a different way, we underline the harmony of Jesus’ acts with the Father’s pleasure and the Spirit’s enablement.

Much of the time Jesus’ unique divinity and messianic mission may not have been dramatically displayed, although it should have been evident in his wisdom, holiness, and love. But it seems probable that when he healed the sick, revealed what was in people, and raised the dead, he considered those appropriate occasions for revealing more of his divine capabilities. Each of these revelations of his divine nature was carried out in harmony with the leading of the Holy Spirit and in fulfillment of the Father’s purposes. However, in conjunction with his claims for himself, they signified more than ordinary enablement of a human by the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ signs and wonders indicated that he was more than a prophet—that he was God’s unique Son.

Progressively, then, he revealed his divine nature and messianic mission, and his followers realized progressively that he was exhibiting not merely prophetic but also divine power and authority.

We have not answered all questions and do not claim full comprehension of the incarnation by proposing a view that makes sense of the varied lines of evidence—an intermittent visible use of his divine attributes and a progressive revelation of his deity and mission in harmony with the Father and the Spirit. Exactly how Jesus could choose not to use his omniscience to know the time of his return (Mark 13:32) remains unexplained. We may suggest one possibility that much of the content of his omniscient knowledge (such as the time of his return) was stored in his unconscious, while he grew in wisdom and knowledge as humans do. Although this speculation may remove some unnecessary concern about a way in which the kenōsis could be accomplished, many questions remain (e.g., about omniscience having unconscious memories in storage).

However much Scripture reveals of the incarnation, no human mind will be able to fully comprehend it. “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16). We seek to remove only unnecessary roadblocks to understanding and assenting to the incarnation. By affirming this mighty act we highlight its awesomeness and wonder. We simply adopt the interpretive hypothesis that makes the most sense of the converging lines of data. Those include Jesus’ continuous sense of identity before and after Bethlehem, his essential deity, his growth as a human in body and spirit, the responsibility of those who heard and saw him to realize who he was, the progressively conclusive “signs,” and the disciples’ developing realization that he was indeed the eternal Logos on a messianic mission in human form.

We conclude, then, that what the eternal Word did not give up during his messianic mission was his divine essence and personal identity. What he did give up was his heavenly position or glory and the constant use of his divine attributes and consciousness in order to be able to grow in knowledge, obedience, etc. What he added was a human nature with a human consciousness that grew and became strong. Our view that Jesus limited the use of his divine attributes, except when appropriate for the accomplishment of his purposes as planned by the Father and led by the Holy Spirit, provides the most probable explanation of the givens with less severe difficulties than those faced by the other hypotheses. On our method we remain open to consider the case for any hypothesis that can account for all the relevant data with greater coherence. More on the human and divine natures of Christ will be found in the next chapter.

No illustrations of the one and only God or his unique acts are perfectly analogous at all points, but Addison Leitch suggested a useful one of the kenōsis.⁹⁸ When an athletic father plays softball with his young son, he plays on the boy’s level. The father will throw at a speed and distance the boy can manage. Dad will hit easy grounders and run just fast enough to make the play interesting for the son. For the purposes of enjoyment and teaching his son to play ball the father gives up, not his more mature abilities, but their unrestrained exercise. Although the father could throw the ball farther and harder, he chooses to suppress his abilities in order to adapt to his son’s capacities. Similarly, Jesus’ divine powers were not given up but were generally not used or purposefully restricted in their use, so that he could know the human experiences of growth, learning, temptation, suffering, and even death.

By the incarnation we mean, then, that there is a personal divine absolute in history. The transcendent second person of the Trinity actually entered history as a human. At Bethlehem

God's eternal Word humbled himself to become incarnate once-for-all, as confirmed by the irrepeatable sign of his virgin birth. Hence relativists need to understand that we have not only an Absolute beyond history, but also an Absolute in history! Humans in history are not left in a sea of relativism without an anchor! God has actually entered history and progressively made himself known in the person and teaching of Christ. God spoke in history as well as in the teaching of his prophetic and apostolic spokespeople. In the inspired Scriptures, then, we have a third absolute. Evangelicals affirm faith in the transcendent God disclosed supernaturally in the Jesus of history and the teaching of Scripture. ⁸

⁸ Integrative Theology, Gordon R. Lewis & Bruce A. Demarest (Grand rapids Zondervan 1996) Kindle # 16781-16886

Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology

B. Theory that the humiliation consisted in the surrender of the independent exercise of the divine attributes.

This theory, which we regard as the most satisfactory of all, may be more fully set forth as follows. The humiliation, as the Scriptures seem to show, consisted: (a) In that act of the preëxistent Logos by which he gave up his divine glory with the Father, in order to take a servant-form. In this act, he resigned not the possession, nor yet entirely the use, but rather the independent exercise, of the divine attributes.

John 17:5—“glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” ; Phil. 2:6, 7—“who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men” ; 2 Cor. 8:9—“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty

might become rich.” Pompilia, in Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book*: “Now I see how God is likest God in being born.”

Omniscience gives up all knowledge but that of the child, the infant, the embryo, the infinitesimal germ of humanity. Omnipotence gives up all power but that of the impregnated ovum in the womb of the Virgin. The Godhead narrows itself down to a point that is next to absolute extinction. Jesus washing his disciples' feet, in John 13:1–20, is the symbol of his coming down from his throne of glory and taking the form of a servant, in order that he may purify us, by regeneration and sanctification, for the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

(b) In the submission of the Logos to the control of the Holy Spirit and the limitations of his Messianic mission, in his communication of the divine fulness of the human nature which he had taken into union with himself.

Acts 1:2—Jesus, “after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen” ; 10:38—“Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power” ; Heb. 9:14—“the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God.” A minor may have a great estate left to him, yet may have only such use of it as his guardian permits. In Homer's *Iliad*, when Andromache brings her infant son to part with Hector, the boy is terrified by the warlike plumes of his father's helmet, and Hector puts them off to embrace him. So God lays aside “That glorious form, that light unsufferable, And that far-beaming blaze of majesty.” Arthur H. Hallam, in *John Brown's Rab and his Friends*, 282, 283—“Revelation is the voluntary approximation of the infinite Being to the ways and thoughts of finite humanity.”

(c) In the continuous surrender, on the part of the God-man, so far as his human nature was concerned, of the exercise of those divine powers with which it was endowed by virtue of its

union with the divine, and in the voluntary acceptance, which followed upon this, of temptation, suffering, and death.

Mat. 26:53—“thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?” John 10:17, 18—“Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” ; Phil. 2:8—“and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” Cf. Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice: “Such music is there in immortal souls, That while this muddy vesture of decay Doth close it in, we cannot see it.”

Each of these elements of the doctrine has its own Scriptural support. We must therefore regard the humiliation of Christ, not as consisting in a single act, but as involving a continuous self-renunciation, which began with the Kenosis of the Logos in becoming man, and which culminated in the self-subjection of the God-man to the death of the cross.

Our doctrine of Christ's humiliation will be better understood if we put it midway between two pairs of erroneous views, making it the third of five. The list would be as follows: (1) Gess: The Logos gave up all divine attributes; (2) Thomasius: The Logos gave up relative attributes only; (3) True View: The Logos gave up the independent exercise of divine attributes; (4) Old Orthodoxy: Christ gave up the use of divine attributes; (5) Anselm: Christ acted as if he did not possess divine attributes...

Brentius illustrated Christ's humiliation by the king who travels incognito. But Mason, Faith of the Gospel, 158, says well that “to part in appearance with only the fruition of the divine attributes would be to impose upon us with a pretence of self-sacrifice; but to part with it in reality was to manifest most perfectly the true nature of God.”.....

Inasmuch, however, as the passage Phil. 2:6–8 is the chief basis and support of the doctrine of Christ's humiliation, we here subjoin a more detailed examination of it.

EXPOSITION OF PHILIPPIANS, 2:6–8. The passage reads: “who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.”

The subject of the sentence is at first (verses 6, 7) Christ Jesus, regarded as the preëxistent Logos; subsequently (verse 8), this same Christ Jesus, regarded as incarnate. This change in the subject is indicated by the contrast between μορφή θεοῦ (verse 6) and μορφήν

δούλου (verse 7), as well as by the participles λαβών and γενόμενος (verse 7) and εὔρεθείς (verse 8) It is asserted, then, that the preëxistent Logos, “although subsisting in the form of God, did not regard his equality with God as a thing to be forcibly retained, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, (that is,) by being made in the likeness of men. And being found in outward condition as a man, he (the incarnate son of God, yet further) humbled himself, by becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (verse 8).

Here notice that what the Logos divested himself of, in becoming man, is not the substance of his Godhead, but the “form of God” in which this substance was manifested. This

“form of God” can be only that independent exercise of the powers and prerogatives of Deity which constitutes his “equality with God.” This he surrenders, in the act of “taking the form of a servant” —or becoming subordinate, as man. (Here other Scriptures complete the view, by their representations of the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit in the earthly life of Christ.) The phrases “made in the likeness of men” and “found in fashion as a man” are used to intimate, not that Jesus Christ was not really man, but that he was God as well as man, and therefore free from the sin which clings to man (cf. Rom. 8:3—ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας—Meyer). Finally, this one person, now God and man united, submits himself, consciously and voluntarily, to the humiliation of an ignominious death.

See Lightfoot, on Phil. 2:8—“Christ divested himself, not of his divine nature, for that was impossible, but of the glories and prerogatives of Deity. This he did by taking the form of a servant.” Evans, in *Presb. Rev.*, 1883:287—“Two stages in Christ's humiliation, each represented by a finite verb defining the central act of the particular stage, accompanied by two modal participles. 1st stage indicated in v. 7. Its central act is: ‘he emptied himself.’ Its two modalities are: (1) ‘taking the form of servant’; (2) ‘being made in the likeness of men.’ Here we have the

humiliation of the Kenosis,—that by which Christ became man. 2d stage, indicated in v. 8. Its central act is: ‘he humbled himself.’ Its two modalities are: (1) ‘being found in fashion as a man’; (2) ‘becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.’ Here we have the humiliation of his obedience and death,—that by which, in humanity, he became a sacrifice for our sins.”

Meyer refers Eph. 5:31 exclusively to Christ and the church, making the completed union future, however, i. e., at the time of the Parousia. “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother” = “in the incarnation, Christ leaves father and mother (his seat at the right hand of God), and cleaves to his wife (the church), and then the two (the descended Christ and the church) become one flesh (one ethical person, as the married pair become one by physical union). The Fathers, however, (Jerome, Theodoret, Chrysostom), referred it to the incarnation.”

On the interpretation of Phil 2:6-11, see *Comm. of Neander, Meyer, Lange, Ellicott.*

On the question whether Christ would have become man had there been no sin, theologians are divided. Dorner, Martensen, and Westcott answer in the affirmative; Robinson, Watts, and Denney in the negative. See Dorner, *Hist. Doct. Person of Christ*, 5:236; Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, 327-329; Westcott, *Com. on Hebrews*, page 8—“The Incarnation is in its essence independent of the Fall, though conditioned by it as to its circumstances.” Per contra, see Robinson, *Christ. Theol.*, 219, note—“It would be difficult to show that a like method of argument from a priori premisses will not equally avail to prove sin to have been a necessary part of the scheme of creation.” Denney, *Studies in Theology*, 101, objects to the doctrine of necessary incarnation irrespective of sin, that it tends to obliterate the distinction between nature and grace, to blur the definite outlines of the redemption wrought by Christ, as the

supreme revelation of God and his love. See also Watts, *New Apologetic*, 198-202; Julius Müller, *Dogmat. Abhandlungen*, 66-126; Van Oosterzee, *Dogmatics*, 512-526, 543-548; Forrest, *The*

Authority of Christ, 340-345. On the general subject of the Kenosis of the Logos, see Bruce, *Humiliation of Christ*; Robins, in *Bib. Sac.*, Oct. 1874:615; Philippi, *Glaubenslehre*, 4:138-150, 386-475; Pope, *Person of Christ*, 23; Bodemeyer, *Lehre von der Kenosis*; Hodge, *Syst. Theol.*, 2:610-625.⁹

⁹ Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (3 Vol) 2:703, 5-6.