

THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 5-8.

ST. PAUL is speaking of those who thought more of themselves, and more highly, than they ought to have thought, who had formed a self-asserting vainglorious habit. To these he holds up, as at once a pattern and a warning, "the mind which was in Christ Jesus." This mind revealed itself in two acts, the *kenosis* and the *tapeinosis*; "He emptied Himself;" "He humbled Himself."

(1) In the first great act in which this great Mind revealed itself: there were two parts. (a) He who was "in the form of God" did not "clutch at His equality with God," but emptied Himself of, laid aside the form of, God: not the essential *being* (*οὐσία*) of God, nor the *nature* (*φύσις*), the essential qualities or properties of God; of these He could not divest Himself; but of the *form* (*μορφή*), the splendid condition, the royal state, the regalia or paraphernalia of the Godhead. At these He did not clutch; of these He willingly emptied Himself. Those to whom the Apostle wrote clutched at the poor pomps and shows, often and for the most part purely imaginary, which distinguished them above their fellows; while the Master whom they professed to follow and serve cheerfully parted with the unimaginable splendours of his Divine estate. (β) And, then, having divested Himself of "the form of God," He voluntarily assumed "the form of a servant," and that He might condescend to this servile form, "was made in the likeness of man." He was *made* man; for, in the Incarnation, not the will of the Son alone was concerned, but also the will of the Father; nor the activity of the Son alone, but mainly the activity of the Holy Ghost. But He who was *made* man, *took* the form of a servant. That was the pure determination of his own will. It was for this very end that

He assumed, or consented to assume, our humanity. He renounced the Divine form that He might take a form at the greatest possible distance below it; that He might be able to sum up His whole earthly history in the words (St. Luke xxii. 27), "I am among you as *the servant*" (ὁ δὲ δακονῶν). In fine, the disciples who seek to lift themselves as high as they can are warned to consider Him who stooped as low as He could.

(2) In the second act which revealed the Mind of Christ, his self-humiliation is shewn to touch the farthest possible limit. He who humbled Himself to become man, continues to humble Himself when He is man. He who had taken the form of a servant, sets no bounds to his service. He becomes "*obedient*"; obedient "*as far as to death*," obedient "*even to the death of the cross*," cheerfully submitting to the utmost degradation to which his new servile condition exposes Him. As man, He might have set Himself to be a great man, to exercise authority, to win reverence, to command service. But, true to the Mind which prompted Him to empty Himself of the splendours of the Divine form, He is content to dispense with the honours due to the human form. He no more clutches at his equality with the greatest and best of men than He had clutched at his equality with God. He will only be Lord of all by being the Servant of all; and hence He is obedient, obedient to death, obedient even to the cross. Obedience, the harmony of the human will with the Divine will, is the only and proper blessedness of man. Obedience, therefore, is the one aim of Him who was made man; obedience at all risks, at all costs. If death lie in the way of obedience, death shall be welcome; if shame, shame shall be welcome. For obedience to God is the highest service He can render to man.

Humility was surely never so splendidly illustrated or so weightily enforced.

E. E.