

Php 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

5. He now recommends, from the example of Christ, the exercise of humility, to which he had exhorted them in words.

There are, however, two departments, in the *first* of which he invites us to imitate Christ, because this is the rule of life: ¹ in the *second*, he allures us to it, because this is the road by which we attain true glory.

Hence he exhorts every one to have the same disposition that was in Christ.

He afterwards shews what a pattern of humility has been presented before us in Christ.

I have retained the passive form of the verb, though I do not disapprove of the rendering given it by others, because there is no difference as to meaning.

I merely wished that the reader should be in possession of the very form of expression which Paul has employed.

Php 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

6. *Inasmuch as he was in the form of God.*

This is not a comparison between things similar, but in the way of greater and less.

Christ's humility consisted in his abasing himself from the highest pinnacle of glory to the lowest ignominy: *our* humility consists in refraining from exalting ourselves by a false estimation.

*He gave up his right: all that is required of us is, that we do not assume to ourselves more than we ought. Hence he sets out with this -- that, **inasmuch as he was in the form of God, he reckoned it not an unlawful thing for him to shew himself in that form; yet he emptied himself.***

Since, then, the Son of God descended from so great a height, how unreasonable that we, who are nothing, should be lifted up with pride!

The *form of God* means here his majesty.

For as a man is known by the appearance of his *form*, so the majesty, which shines forth in God, is his figure. ²

Or if you would prefer a more apt similitude, the *form* of a *king* is his equipage and magnificence, shewing him to be a king -- his scepter, his crown, his mantle, ³ his attendants, ⁴ his judgment-throne, and other emblems of royalty; the *form* of a *consul* was -- his long robe, bordered with purple, his ivory seat, his lictors with rods and hatchets.

Christ, then, before the creation of the world, was in the form of God, because from the beginning he had his glory with the Father, as he says in [John 17:5](#).

For in the wisdom of God, prior to his assuming our flesh, there was nothing mean or contemptible, but on the contrary a magnificence worth of God.

Being such as he was, he could, without doing wrong to any one, *shew himself equal with God*; but he did not manifest himself to be what he really was, nor did he openly assume in the view of men what belonged to him by right.

Thought it not robbery.

There would have been no wrong done though he had shewn himself to be *equal with God*.

For when he says, *he would not have thought*, it is as though he had said, "He knew, indeed, that this was lawful and right for him," that we might know that his abasement was voluntary, not of necessity.

Hitherto it has been rendered in the indicative -- *he thought*, but the connection requires the subjunctive.

It is also quite a customary thing for Paul to employ the past indicative in the place of the subjunctive, by leaving the potential particle *a]*n, as it is called, to be supplied -- as, for example, in [Romans 9:3](#), *hujco>mhn*, for *I would have wished*; and in [1 Corinthians 2:8](#); *eij ga<r e]gnwsan*, *if they had known*.

Every one, however, must perceive that Paul treats hitherto of Christ's glory, which tends to enhance his abasement.

Accordingly he mentions, not what Christ did, but what it was allowable for him to do.

Farther, that man is utterly blind who does not perceive that his eternal divinity is clearly set forth in these words.

Nor does Erasmus act with sufficient modesty in attempting, by his cavils, to explain away this passage, as well as other similar passages. ⁵

He acknowledges, indeed, everywhere that Christ is God; but what am I the better for his orthodox confession, if my faith is not supported by any Scripture authority?

I acknowledge, certainly, that Paul does not make mention here of Christ's divine essence; but it does not follow from this, that the passage is not sufficient for repelling the impiety of the Arians, who pretended that Christ was a created God, and inferior to the Father, and denied that he was consubstantial. ⁶

For where can there be *equality with God* without *robbery*, excepting only where there is the essence of God; for God always remains the same, who cries by Isaiah, *I live; I will not give my glory to another.* (Isaiah 48:11.)

Form means figure or appearance, as they commonly speak.

This, too, I readily grant; but will there be found, apart from God, such a *form*, so as to be neither false nor forged?

As, then, God is known by means of his excellences, and his works are evidences of his eternal Godhead, (Romans 1:20,) so Christ's divine essence is rightly proved from Christ's majesty, which he possessed equally with the Father before he humbled himself.

As to myself, at least, not even all devils would wrest this passage from me -- inasmuch as there is in God a most solid argument, from his glory to his essence, which are two things that are inseparable.

Php 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

7. *Emptied himself.*

This *emptying* is the same as the abasement, as to which we shall see afterwards.

The expression, however, is used, *eumfatikwte > rwv*, (*more emphatically,*) to mean, -- being brought to nothing.

Christ, indeed, could not divest himself of Godhead; but he kept it concealed for a time, that it might not be seen, under the weakness of the flesh.

Hence he laid aside his glory in the view of men, not by lessening it, but by concealing it.

It is asked, whether he did this as man?

Erasmus answers in the affirmative. But where was the *form of God* before he became man?

Hence we must reply, that Paul speaks of Christ wholly, as he was *God manifested in the flesh*, (*1 Timothy 3:16*;) but, nevertheless, this *emptying* is applicable exclusive to his humanity, as if I should say of man, "Man being mortal, he is exceedingly senseless if he thinks of nothing but the world," I refer indeed to man wholly; but at the same time I ascribe mortality only to a part of him, namely, to the body.

As, then, Christ has one person, consisting of two natures, it is with propriety that Paul says, that he who was the Son of God, -- in reality equal to God, did nevertheless lay aside his glory, when he in the flesh manifested himself in the appearance of a servant.

It is also asked, secondly, how he can be said to be *emptied*, while he, nevertheless, invariably proved himself, by miracles and excellences, to be the Son of God, and in whom, as John testifies, there was always to be seen a glory worthy of the Son of God? ([John 1:14.](#))

I answer, that the abasement of the flesh was, notwithstanding, like a veil, by which his divine majesty was concealed.

On this account he did not wish that his transfiguration should be made public until after his resurrection; and when he perceives that the hour of his death is approaching, he then says, *Father, glorify thy Son.* ([John 17:1.](#))

Hence, too, Paul teaches elsewhere, that he was *declared to be the Son of God* by means of his resurrection. ([Romans 1:4.](#))

He also declares in another place, ([2 Corinthians 13:4.](#)) that he *suffered through the weakness of the flesh.*

In fine, the image of God shone forth in Christ in such a manner, that he was, at the same time, abased in his outward appearance, and brought down to nothing in the estimation of men; for he carried about with him the *form of a servant*, and had assumed our nature, expressly with the view of his being a servant of the Father, nay, even of men.

Paul, too, calls him the Minister of the Circumcision, ([Romans 15:8](#);) and he himself testifies of himself, that he *came to minister*, ([Matthew 20:28](#);) and that same thing had long before been foretold by Isaiah -- *Behold my servant*, etc.

In the likeness of men. [Geno](#)>[menov](#) is equivalent here to *constitutus* -- (*having been appointed.*)

For Paul means that he had been brought down to the level of mankind, so that there was in appearance nothing that differed from the common condition of mankind.

The Marcionites perverted this declaration for the purpose of establishing the phantasm of which they dreamed.

They can, however, be refuted without any great difficulty, inasmuch as Paul is treating here simply of the manner in which Christ manifested himself, and the condition with which he was conversant when in the world.

Let one be truly man, he will nevertheless be reckoned unlike others, if he conducts himself as if he were exempt from the condition of others.

Paul declares that it was not so as to Christ, but that he lived in such a manner, that he seemed as though he were on a level with mankind, and yet he was very different from a mere man, although he was truly man.

The Marcionites therefore shewed excessive childishness, in drawing an argument from similarity of condition for the purpose of denying reality of nature. ⁷

Found means here, *known* or *seen*.

For he treats, as has been observed, of estimation.

In other words, as he had affirmed previously that he was truly God, the equal of the Father, so he here states, that he was reckoned, as it were, abject, and in the common condition of mankind.

We must always keep in view what I said a little ago, that such abasement was voluntary.

Php 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

8. *He became obedient.*

Even this was great humility -- that from being Lord he became a servant; but he says that he went farther than this, because, while he was not only immortal, but the Lord of life and death, he nevertheless became obedient to his Father, even so far as to endure death.

This was extreme abasement, especially when we take into view the kind of death, which he immediately adds, with the view of enhancing it. ⁸

For by dying in this manner he was not only covered with ignominy in the sight of God, but was also accursed in the sight of God.

It is assuredly such a pattern of humility as ought to absorb the attention of all mankind; so far is it from being possible to unfold it in words in a manner suitable to its dignity.