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CHAPTER XVIII

Further Reflections on Philippians 2:5-11

C. F. D. Moule

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A bare list of the main books and articles on this passage would occupy many pages — and, indeed, does so in R. P. Martin's excellent monograph¹ (and some more have appeared even in the short time since that was published²). It is none of my intention to go over the ground again. Instead, at the risk of seeming arrogant, I plunge straight in with a proposed interpretation which swims against the prevailing current of exegesis, although nearly, if not all, its suggestions have been anticipated. What I offer, therefore, constitutes an attempt to rehabilitate certain more or less neglected ideas, rather than anything original. It is offered respectfully to a colleague whose honesty and sterling scholarship have for many years been an incentive to me in my work; and, although *it* sets a question-mark against one small section of Dr Martin's book, it is offered with deep regard also to him, and in gratitude to him and his fellow-editor for inviting me to contribute to this volume.³

I

My proposal may be defined in six statements; but, for the sake of clarity, I prefix an explanatory paraphrase of the relevant parts of Phil. 2:5-11, exhibiting the results: Adopt towards one another the same attitude which (was) also (found) in Christ Jesus, who, although in the form of God (and therefore, by worldly reckoning, one who might have been expected to help himself to whatever he wanted), did not reckon that equality with God consisted in snatching, but, instead, emptied himself and took the form of a slave (who does not even lay claim to his own self)... And that is why (i.e.

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the fact that Jesus displayed the self-giving humility which is the essence of divinity is the reason why) God so greatly exalted him (in the resurrection and its sequel) and gave him the name (of his humanity — Jesus), which (because it epitomizes this divine self-giving) is in a position of (divine) supremacy over every name, so that at the name "Jesus" obeisance should be rendered such as is rendered only to God.

¹ Carmen Christi: Phil. ii. 5-11 in *Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, SNTS Monograph series ed. M. Black, Number 4 (Cambridge 1967).

² Among others, J. M. Furness has added another to the articles already cited by Martin: "Behind the Philippian Hymn", *ExpT* 79 (1968), pp. 178 ff. Dr R. P. Martin kindly draws my attention also to two recent writers who, he says, share (at least in part) the interpretation offered in this essay. They are R. Deichgräber, *Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit* (Göttingen, 1967) and I. H. Marshall in *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968), pp. 104-27.

³ I must also thank Dr E. Bammel at Cambridge, and many friends at Oxford, Basel, Zurich, Bern and Harvard, who saw or heard this paper at different stages of its evolution, and offered helpful criticisms and comments.

C. F. D. Moule, "Further Reflections on Philippians 2:5-11," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.265-276.

Now for my six statements:

(I) First, the elliptic phrase (verse 4) τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (equally elliptic in the Vulgate: "Hoc enim sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Iesu") is not to be filled out, as is usual now, into τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (meaning something like "adopt towards one another, in your mutual relations, the same attitude as you adopt towards Christ Jesus, in your union with him"). Rather, it should be expanded into τοῦτο τὸ φρόνημα φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (i.e. "adopt towards one another, in your mutual relations, the same attitude which was found in Christ Jesus"). This rendering goes with the prevailing exegesis to the extent of rejecting what is almost certainly a mistake in the Authorised Version's "Let this mind be in you",⁴ which represents, of course, the inferior reading φρονείσθω and which, when φρονεῖτε is read, can hardly be tolerated. It would make ἐν ὑμῖν mean "within each of you" (i.e. in your hearts), — at once an unlikely meaning for ὑμῖν and a redundant and unconvincing extension of φρονεῖτε (as though it were possible to think or adopt an attitude anywhere else but within oneself!). On the other hand, my rendering parts company with the present fashion by accepting the Authorised Version's "which was also in Christ Jesus"⁵ — if that may be understood to mean "which (mind or attitude) was also found in (the case of) Christ Jesus".⁶ The Authorised Version rendering is, according to F. W. Beare,⁷ "impossible in itself, and leads to a total misunderstanding of the sense of the whole passage". But I submit that, on the contrary, in the modified form I suggest, it avoids two false assumptions of current exegesis. One of these is that ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is bound here to represent the "Pauline" incorporation in Christ, merely because it often does so in other contexts and because, taken so, it would form a closer parallel to the ἐν ὑμῖν. The other false assumption, springing from the first, is that Christians could be conceived of (whether by Paul or by someone whom he is

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quoting) as adopting one attitude in their mutual relations with one another, and another attitude as incorporated in Christ. A study of the Epistles suggests, rather, that the two relationships are one and inseparable, and that they must both be either right or wrong together.⁸ No doubt it is possible for John Keble to wish that we might "live more nearly as we pray" — that is, live nearer to the Christian ideal. It is possible also for Paul to say (Gal. 5:25) that, if we owe our very life (our existence as Christians) to the Spirit, then we ought also to let our conduct be controlled by the Spirit. But neither of these phrases is comparable to saying that the outlook we have "in Christ Jesus" must be matched by the outlook we have in relation to each other. Such a phrase would imply a distinction between these two concentric (or, perhaps, even identical) spheres which would be most unlike New Testament thinking. In other words, in the phrase "Become what you are!" (which, though not in New Testament wording, undoubtedly expresses an authentically New Testament idea), the

⁴ So Luther: "ein jeglicher sei gesinnt".

⁵ So Luther's "(sei gesinnt) wie Jesus Christus auch war", and the Ziircher Bibel's "[diese Gesinnung] die auch in Christus war".

⁶ On the whole, this seems a more probable meaning than "which existed within Christ" — though even that, I think, is not impossible. While φρονῶ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ might be a redundant phrase, τοῦτο φρόνημά ἐστιν ἐν ἑμοί is understandable. J. B. Lightfoot, *in loc.* (see note 10 below) reverts to the middle in his expansion of the sense: ὃ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτο. He adds, contrary to what I have said, that ἐφρονεῖ ἐν ἑαυτῷ would have been the regular construction.

⁷ The Epistle to the Philippians, *BNTC* (London, 1959), p. 75.

⁸ Cf. P. Ewald in the *Zahn Kommentar* (Leipzig, 1908), *in loc.*

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contrast is not between two spheres of existence but between an already given condition, on the one hand, and the implementing of it, on the other.⁹ In terms of Pauline parallels, the given condition may be exemplified by Rom. 8:8, εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ...; the implementing of it by verse 11, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογιζέσθε εἶναι νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ... It is this latter note that I believe is struck by the τοῦτο φρονεῖτε of our passage; but a supposed ὁ καὶ φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ would not by any means correspond with the former. A very close parallel, on the other hand, to the sense which I am advocating for our passage is presented by Rom. 15:5: ὁ δὲ θεὸς... δώη ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις (=τοῦτο [φρόνημα] φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν) κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν (=ὁ καὶ [ἦν] ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Even nearer at hand is Phil. 4:2, where Euodia and Syntyche are exhorted τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν Κυρίῳ — which means, "to be harmonious with each other", not (which would be nonsense) "as they are harmonious in the Lord", but "as being in the Lord." I suspect that, in fact, this is the sort of thing that the advocates of the prevailing exegesis think they are making Phil 2:5 mean; but, if so, they are fatally ignoring the ὁ καὶ.

Having for many years maintained this exegesis, I was encouraged to find it supported by E. Larsson in his *Christus als Vorbild* (Uppsala, 1962), p. 233, and (tentatively, at least) by A. Schulz in his *Nachfolgen und Nachahmen* (München, 1962), p. 274.

(II) My second statement — and it is the heart of my contention — is that ἀρπαγμός in verse 6 is an abstract noun meaning "the act of snatching", and that οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ thus means "he did not regard equality with God as *consisting in snatching*". This rendering, though proposed long ago, has been almost universally

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rejected in favour of some sense built up round one or other of the concrete meanings usually indicated, in Latin paraphrase, as either *res rapienda* — something that is to be snatched, something not yet possessed which is desirable and attractive; or *res rapta* — something already snatched, already in one's possession, which (it is assumed for the purposes of this context) is not to be let go of or surrendered. The former meaning is found in a large number of the patristic references in Wetstein *in loc.*,¹⁰ and in J. B. Lightfoot's note on the phrase.¹¹ But as for the latter (*res rapta*), whatever appropriateness to the context it may have is derived from that last, quite arbitrary, addition to the meaning — namely, "not to be let go of". What is meant by the exegetes who adopt it is really not *res rapta* (which ἀρπαγμός might conceivably mean) but *res retinenda* — a desirable thing which is to be clung to; and it is questionable whether this sense of *retaining* inheres in ἀρπαγμός at all. In either case, as several writers have observed,¹² not ἀρπαγμός but ἄρπαγμα is the correct form to designate the concrete *res*; for, although it is perfectly true that a distinction in meaning is by no means always preserved between nouns ending in —μός and —μα, and it is possible to adduce other words in which these terminations seem to be virtually interchangeable, there appears to be no evidence that ἀρπαγμός, in particular, did, in fact, mean the same as ἄρπαγμα, except in those Christian Fathers who so interpreted it in the Philippians passage; and if their

⁹ Cf. Ignatius Smyrn. 11, τέλειοι ὄντες τέλεια καὶ φρονεῖτε.

¹⁰ J. J. Wetstein, *Novum Testamentum Graecum* etc., 2 (Amsterdam, 1752), pp. 268 ff.

¹¹ *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*² (London, 1888), pp. 133 ff.

¹² E.g., J. Ross, "ΑΡΠΑΓΜΟΣ (Phil. ii. 6)", *JTS* 10 (1909), pp. 573 f.; S. H. Hooke, *Alpha and Omega* (London, 1961), p. 258; F. E. Vokes, "Ἀρπαγμός in Phil. 2:5-11", in *Studia Evangelica* 2 = *TU* 87 (1964), pp. 670-75 (pp. 671-3).

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interpretation was due merely to a failure to understand the real meaning of the passage and a determination to make sense of it somehow, then the evidence for the equation is reduced to nil. In the only known places where this rare noun ἄρπαγμός is used outside Philippians 2 and Christian writers, who use it mostly in passages where Philippians 2 is explicitly discussed, it means (as W. Foerster admits) "die Tätigkeit des ἄρπάγειν".¹³ The non-Christian passages are as follows.¹⁴ Plutarch *Lib. Educ.* 15 (=11 F): καὶ τοὺς μὲν Θήμησι καὶ τοὺς ἐν Ἥλιδι (12A) φευκτέον ἔρωτας καὶ τὸν ἐν Κρήτη καλούμενον ἄρπαγμόν, τοὺς δ' Ἀθήνησι καὶ τοὺς ἐν Λακεδαίμονι ζηλωτέον. Before leaving Plutarch, note also the closely similar ἄρπαγμός in *Quaest. Conv.* II:10:2 (= 644 A): οὐ γὰρ φιλικὸν οὐδὲ συμποτικὸν οἶμαι προοίμιον εὐωχίας ὑφόρασις καὶ ἄρπασμός καὶ χειρῶν ἄμιλλα καὶ διαγκωνισμός...). Pausanias I: 20:3: Διόνυσος, ἥκων ἐκ τῆς Ἀριάδνης τὴν ἄρπαγὴν [v.l. τὸν ἄρπαγόν]. Phrynichus *Ecl.* 302 (= Bekker's *Anecdota Graeca* I, p. 36): Δέσις ὁ δεσμός, ὡς ἄρπασις ὁ ἄρπαγμός, καὶ λόγισις ὁ λογισμός. Vettius Valens II. 38 p. 122: Ἄρης κληρῶσται τὸν δαίμονα

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Σελήνη δὲ τὸν γαμοστόλον, ἄρπαγμός ὁ γάμος ἔσται ... [In W. Kroll's edition (1908), there is a note: "*nempe* ἄρπάγιμός.".] Of these, the Phrynichus passage seems to be concerned only with the comparative study of noun-formations, not with the meanings of the nouns in question. In all the others, ἄρπαγμός clearly means the act of snatching, or rape. It appears then, that, were it not for the Christian authors, we would have no reason whatever for imagining ἄρπαγμός to mean anything else. The considerably commoner noun ἄρπαγή can, indeed, mean both "snatching" and "booty snatched" (see, e.g., L. and S., s.v.),¹⁵ but there is no secular evidence of the same for ἄρπαγμός. Stephanus' *Thesaurus* is thus strictly correct in its entry against ἄρπαγμός; *raptus, ipsa Rapiendi actio, Direptio: in qua signif usitatius Ἄρπαγή* ... Is it arrogant, then, to suggest that the Greek Fathers have led us up the garden path? It would not, I think, be for the first time.¹⁶

To the interpretation of ἄρπαγμός we shall return. But, meanwhile, the rest of my position must be defined.

¹³ *TWNT* I, p. 472 (= *TDNT* I, p. 473).

¹⁴ See Foerster, loc. cit. and Bauer s.v. See additional note on p. 276. I understand that there is further evidence in an unpublished Harvard thesis by R. W. Hoover. See his summary, "The term ἈΡΠΑΓΜΟΣ in Philippians 2:6 A Contribution to the study of the Sources of Early Christian Language and Theology", *H.T.R.* 61 (Oct. 1968), 640 f. I have unfortunately not been able, so far, to consult this thesis, which reaches a different conclusion from mine.

¹⁵ But in the LXX, even ἄρπαγή is abstract in eight of its nine occurrences, the one exception being Isa. 10:2 (=šil).

¹⁶ The word used by the Peshitta in Phil. 2:6, *ἡτύφῃα*, often means the abstract "act of snatching" though it is also used of the concrete "booty" etc. The Reverend A. E. Goodman of Cambridge University (Lecturer in Aramaic) has very kindly surveyed the uses with Payne-Smith's *Thesaurus* and Brockelmann's *Lexicon* and concludes (in a letter to me): "There is then evidence of *ἡτύφῃα* used for both *raptus* and *res rapta* with by far the greater number of instances of *raptus*". His list is as follows: abstract: Ps. 62:10; Isa. 5:7; 62: 8; Hab. 1:3, 9; 2: 8, 17; (Pesh.) Matt. 23:25; Lk. 11:39; Heb. 10:34; Bar Hebr. *Chronicon* 457; *Liber Directionum* B.O. ii. 301; S. Isaac Antiochenus B.O. i. 226; 5. Cyr. *Comm. in Lucam* 267:32; 298:15; Eus. Theoph. ii. 13:19; iii. 61:25; Titus of Bostra 127:14 219:125. *Concrete*: Syr. Hex. 4 Kg. 21:14; Ezek. 25:7; Num. 14:3 (Pesh. has *bezta*, "spoil", in each case). One certain case in O.T. — Isa. 3:14. Amos 3:10 is perhaps a borderline case, but the Heb. (*ḥms*) suggests abstract.

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(III) My third suggestion is more speculative, and I would not lay any weight upon it, neither does my exegesis as a whole in any way depend upon it. I merely offer it for consideration. It is that the word δοῦλος is chosen, in verse 7, not primarily with reference to the Suffering Servant but mainly because slavery meant, in contemporary society, the extreme in respect of deprivation of rights. A slave, as property sold to another, scarcely belonged to himself. Pushed to its logical conclusion, slavery would deny a person the right to anything — even to his own life and person. This, indeed, far more than any actual maltreatment that a slave might or might not receive, is the essential gravamen against the institution of slavery, however little the rigorous logic of it may have, in fact, been pressed. So, if a human being, as such, possesses inherent rights, then slavery is, by definition intolerable; and the statement that Jesus so completely stripped himself of all rights and securities as to be comparable to a slave, constitutes a poignant description of his absolute and extreme self-emptying — even of basic human rights — and fits the context well. But I would not press the point. I mention it because it does not seem to have

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been suggested by others.¹⁷ In R. P. Martin's fine survey (*Carmen*, pp. 169-96) other suggestions are reviewed — that δοῦλος is a reference primarily to the Servant Songs, or to the righteous sufferer generally, or to servitude to astral powers; but this consideration of the essential implication of slavery does not figure.

(IV) Fourthly, regarding the word ὑπερύψωσεν in verse 9, I agree with those¹⁸ who treat the ὑπέρ as simply elative, indicating not an additional exaltation to a status higher than before, but simply the highest possible exaltation. Nobody, as far as I know, has proposed that ὑπερύψωσεν in Romans 8:37 should be laboriously and literalistically related to some previous victory on an inferior level. The Authorised Version is surely right in both places when it renders the one by "we are more than conquerors" and the other by "God also hath highly exalted him".¹⁹

(V) It follows from my first point — namely, the exegesis of the τοῦτο φρονεῖτε clause as "adopt in your relations with one another the same attitude which was found in Christ Jesus" — that I see the whole passage as an exhortation to follow the example of Christ. It must be emphasized that no attempt is here being made to determine the meaning of the passage in any independent existence it may have had before Paul used it. My concern — and it should surely be the first concern of any exegesis — is, if possible, to determine its meaning in its present setting and as used by Paul. E. Käsemann, among others, strenuously opposes this exemplary view, taking the passage as "kerygmatic", not exemplary.²⁰ But it is hard to deny that 2 Corinthians 8:9 constitutes evidence that Paul (at any rate) can appeal to the pattern of the incarnation as an example for Christians to follow: γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ

¹⁷ Since completing this essay, I have been told by the Reverend G. C. Thompson of Normanby Rectory, York, that he heard this idea put forward in lectures by Bishop T. Hannay, when he was Principal of the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield.

¹⁸ See Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 240 ff.

¹⁹ Cf. Ps. 96 (MT 97): 9 and (with Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 242, n. 1) 1 Clem. 24:5, Dan. 3:65.

²⁰ "Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5-11", in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen: erster Band* (Göttingen, 1960), pp. 51 ff.

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Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν. And ancient commentators certainly took it as a call to imitation. (See Wetstein's collection *in loc.*)²¹

To take this view is in no way to incur the charge of reducing the gospel to the humanistic level of imitating a fine example. All that is being suggested is that, *in this particular context*, Paul's primary concern is with the exemplary. Most certainly it must be said of Paul (if a parody may be permitted) that οὐ μίμησιν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἐν Χριστῷ, ἀλλὰ καινὴν κρίσιν. Paul was never tired of stressing that it is a new nature that is required, not greater human effort; and that the gospel is not about good

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advice but about the gift of this new nature. But that need not have prevented him from using the gospel story of God's self-giving in Christ as a way of saying "Be generous and self-sacrificing towards one another, for this is the most God-like thing you can do; it is precisely here that we can recognise Christ's divinity".

(VI) Finally, there is one other proposal that I have to make. It is by no means necessary to the others and it may be treated as an addendum; but I do not think it is irrelevant. My proposal is that, after all, and despite all the weight of opinion to the contrary, verses 9-11 concern the name "Jesus", not the title "Lord". It is usual to interpret ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ in verse 9 to mean "at (or to) the name (which belongs to) Jesus", viz. the name "Lord" (see Martin, p. 250). But this is certainly not the most natural way of taking the words. In itself the phrase would most naturally mean "When the name 'Jesus' is uttered". I suggest, then, that "the name which is above every name", bestowed by God, is, after all, not the name "Lord" but the name "Jesus". God, in the incarnation, bestowed upon the one who is on an equality with him an earthly name which, because it accompanied that most God-like self-emptying, has come to be, in fact, the highest of names, because service and self-giving are themselves the highest of divine attributes. Because of the incarnation, the human name, "Jesus", is acclaimed as the highest name; and the Man Jesus thus comes to be acclaimed as Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This involves taking Χριστός, in the phrase Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, as simply an extension of the "earthly" name Ἰησοῦς. This is, perhaps, slightly surprising, but does not seem to me impossible. Ἰησοῦς Χριστός is very nearly (though, admittedly, not quite) a proper name in Paul.²² Ephesians. 1:20 f., which presents, in some respects, a striking parallel, seems to be saying something similar of Χριστός as a name: God placed "Christ" far above every name that is named. On this showing, the Philippians passage becomes a Christian comment on the elevation of the name "Jesus" to a position such that it is no longer customary to call another human child by this formerly common name. On pp. 253 f., Martin alludes to the way in which Lohmeyer²³ and Käsemann²⁴ both emphasize the use of Ἰησοῦς in this passage as carrying a reference to the Jesus of history; but my proposal would, I think (if I

²¹ On this subject, see H. D. Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament [Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, ed. G. Ebeling, 37]* (Tübingen, 1967), pp. 163 ff. (p. 168). Cf. also E. J. Tinsley, *The Imitation of God in Christ* (London, 1960), pp. 134 ff.; and see the very carefully balanced estimate of E. Larsson, *Christus als Vorbild* (Uppsala, 1962), p. 263.

²² Professor Gottfried W. Locher of Bern kindly communicated to me, in conversation, his own idea that (on the contrary) Χριστός here corresponds to the first part of the hymn, concerning the glorious *pre-existence*. On this showing, Ἰησοῦς stands between Χριστός (representing the pre-existent glory) and Κύριος (representing the post-incarnational glory).

²³ E. Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Philipper*,⁹ Meyer (Göttingen, 1952), p. 97.

²⁴ "Kritische Analyse", pp. 89 f.

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understand them rightly) go a step further than both these scholars. And it would constitute a return to my instinctive judgment, recorded in *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge,¹ 1953), p. 78, as against later doubts recorded in an addendum (² 1959, p. 205).

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II

We return now to my main point (II, pp.266 ff.), that ἀρπαγμός means neither something not yet possessed but desirable (to be snatched at, *res rapienda*), nor something already possessed (*res rapta*) and to be clung to (*retinenda*), but rather the act of snatching (*raptus*). In spite of the evidence that, outside Christian writers, ἀρπαγμός was used in an abstract, not a concrete sense, the view that Christian writers were mistaken in taking it as concrete seems to have been adopted by comparatively few.²⁵ R. P. Martin (p. 135) cites only P. W. Schmidt,²⁶ P. Ewald,²⁷ J. Ross,²⁸ S. H. Hooke²⁹ and A. Feuillet,³⁰ and the last, as it seems to me does not, in fact, belong to this category, for (if I understand him rightly) his interpretation belongs rather to the *res rapienda* group. J. Ross might have been expected to have left, at least on English writers, more mark than he has. He formulates, as clearly as anyone, the view he represents. The phrase means, he argues, that Jesus "did not think that to be on an equality with God spelt rapacity, plundering, self-aggrandizement; that on the contrary He gave all away, did not set up as an earthly King, but was among His disciples 'as one that serveth', with all the infirmities of our mortality, submitting at last to the most shameful death. And here was St Paul exhorting them to imitate His mind" (pp. 573 f.) That Ross seems largely to have been forgotten, even by English writers, may be due to two or three causes. One is that the article has an amateurish air about it. It is very brief and very slenderly documented — so slenderly that, for instance, he refers vaguely to (p. 574) "the saying attributed to our Lord, Οὐκ ἔστιν ἀρπαγμὸς ἢ τιμὴ", without even giving the reference. Presumably he was referring to the

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anonymous quotation (alluded to by Wetstein and J. B. Lightfoot, *in loc.*) in the *Catena Possini* (Rome, 1673) on Mark 10:42. But, if so, Ross was wrong in calling it a saying

²⁵ It should be said that, already among some of the early exegetes, especially the Latin Fathers, there was one mode of interpretation in which the noun could be taken as abstract. This was the interpretation which made the sentence mean, in effect, that Jesus, already in the form of God, did not see the being-on-an-equality-with-God as an act of aggression, for it was his right. Seeing that being-on-an-equality-with-God as his inherent right, not as an act of plunder, he nevertheless emptied himself. Lightfoot (*loc. cit.*) points out the syntactical difficulties of this. And, in any case, this interpretation does not require ἀρπαγμός to be abstract: it can still take it as *res rapienda* in the sense "something requiring to be snatched". The interpretation I am advocating is different. It takes ἀρπαγμός as abstract and without an expressed object.

²⁶ *Neu Testamentliche Hyperkritik, au. dem jüngsten Angriff gegen die Aechtheit des Philipperbriefes auf ihre Methade hin untersucht. Nebst einer Erkbarung des Briefes* (Berlin, 1880). But, although Schmidt's footnote (p. 58 n. 3, on p. 59) seems to express this view ("Der ἀρπαγμός hat kein Objekt, er bedarf keines solchen.... Ἐρπαγμός bedeutet, schon aus philologischen Gründen, nichts anderes als das Rauben.... Die Philippischen Christen nun sind die ἀρπαζοντες), his paraphrase looks as though it adopted the *res rapienda* view: ".....das Gottgleichsein nicht für em Rauben hielt...".

²⁷ As in note 1, on p. 266 above, *ad loc.*

²⁸ As in note 3, on p. 267 above.

²⁹ As in note 3, on p. 267 above, pp. 257 f. ("Christ Jesus, who... did not think that likeness to God consisted in grasping for oneself....")

³⁰ "L'homme-Dieu considéré dans sa condition terrestre (Phil. 2, 5 seq. et parall.)", *RB* 51 (2932) (= *Vivre et Penser*, second series), pp. 58 ff. (p. 64).

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attributed to our Lord, for the words are: ὁ δὲ Σωτὴρ θεραπεύει αὐτούς... τῷ δεῖξαι ὅτι οὐκ ἐστὶν ἀρπαγμὸς ἢ τιμὴ, τῶν ἐθνῶν γὰρ τὸ τοιοῦτον. Moreover, it is questionable how far the quotation is relevant to Ross' case, for, in the context it looks as though ἀρπαγμὸς, has (as usual in the Christian interpreters) to mean *res rapienda* — or even needs to be emended to ἀρπάγμος "snatchable", as is suggested in the passage from Vettius Valens in Kroll's edition (see p. 268 above). The Latin version in the *Catena* goes: ...ostendo meritis obtineri legitimum honorem, non sorte aut raptu provenire.³¹

Another reason for the neglect of Ross' article may be that he ties up his theory with rather implausible speculations about Jewish ideas of Messiahship, and about a prominent Jewish element in the Philippian church. But perhaps the most decisive reason for the neglect may be simply that Ross' point has not been fully taken — any more (on this showing) than that of the original passage in Philippians. Thus, R. P. Martin (*loc. cit.*) argues against it on the ground that, if ἀρπαγμὸς is taken in an active sense ("snatching"), there is no satisfactory answer to the question: What exactly was it that our Lord refused to plunder? The same problem leads W. Foerster, as Martin points out, to dismiss the proposal.³² But to frame the problem in the form "If ἀρπαγμὸς is an 'active' noun, then what is its object?" is to miss the point. One might as well take the saying "It is more blessed to give than to receive" and puzzle over what it is that is given or received. ἀρπαγμὸς means simply "taking", "snatching", as opposed to "giving away".³³ It is a symptom of πλεονεξία, acquisitiveness. And the point of the passage (on this showing) is that, instead of imagining that equality with God meant *getting*, Jesus, on the contrary, *gave* — gave until he was "empty". It was a very common idea (and still is!) that God's almightiness means the ability to do what he likes: Godhead, like kingly power, has often been associated in popular thought with opulence and splendour. ἤδη κεκορεσμένοι ἐστέ, wrote Paul in one of his most sarcastic moments: ἤδη ἐπλουτήσατε· χωρὶς ἡμῶν ἐβασιλεύσατε (1 Cor. 4:8). That reflects the popular view of kingly power. Well, Philippians 2:7 is saying, Jesus thought otherwise: he thought of equality with God not as πλήρωσις but as κένωσις, not as ἀρπαγμὸς but as open-handed spending — even to death.³⁴

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All this time, it has been tacitly assumed that ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγεῖσθαι can legitimately be interpreted to mean "reckon to be a matter of snatching", or (as Ross puts it) that Christ did not think that equality with God "spelt rapacity". But if there is any doubt on this score Ross can invoke some pertinent analogies from the New Testament. He appeals to such phrases as: ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος (Phil. 1:21.); ἀλλὰ ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν (Phil. 3:7.); οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρῶσις καὶ πόσις, ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη κ.τ.λ. (Rom. 14:17); νομιζόντων πορισμὸν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν (1 Tim. 6:5 — this is a very close parallel in sense and syntax); τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν μακροθυμίαν σωτηρίαν ἠγεῖσθε (2 Pet. 3:15). Ross also observes that, had

³¹ The *non sorte* (representing nothing in the Greek) is reminiscent of Greg. Naz. *Or. IV, in ubianum*, 98 (xlvi) (Migne, xxxv).

³² *TWNT I*, p. 473 (= *TDNT I*, p. 474).

³³ So P. Ewald, *in loc.* (pp. 9f.): "Ebenso kann dabei das Objekt des ἀρπάζειν unbestimmt bleiben, indem aller Ton auf der Qualität des Verhaltens ruht..."

³⁴ The remark of *Epistle to Diognetus* 10:5 is relevant: οὐ γὰρ τὸ καταδυναστεύειν τῶν πλησίον οὐδὲ τὸ πλεόν ἔχειν βούλεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενεστέρων οὐδὲ τὸ πλουτεῖν καὶ βαίζεσθαι τοὺς ὑποδεεστέρους εὐδαμονεῖν ἐστὶν, οὐδὲ ἐν τούτοις δύναται τις μιμησάσθαι θεόν, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα ἐκτὸς τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος

C. F. D. Moule, "Further Reflections on Philippians 2:5-11," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.265-276.

the sense been *res rapienda*, it would have been more natural to use a gerund or gerundive such as ἄρπακτέον, or some phrase with δεῖ ἄρπάζεσθαι. Thus, Ross' position, when properly understood, is not lightly to be dismissed. Perhaps the most serious count against it is nothing to do with an "active" noun needing an expressed object, but rather that the pattern of Philippians 2:5-11 as a whole is undeniably that of a sequence — humiliation followed by exaltation, *descensus* followed by *ascensus*, loss followed by compensation; and this pattern, if pressed literally, does, of course, make nonsense of the identification and simultaneity of the two. A number of interpreters have accepted this pattern as basic to the sense. J. B. Lightfoot himself wrote of Jesus emptying himself of "the glories, the prerogatives, of Deity"³⁵ By contrast, the interpretation which I am urging (after Ross and others) is, in its essence, a "static" one, so to speak. Essentially, it is all at one time and on one level; there is no ultimate question of descent or ascent, of loss or compensation, because what is *styled* kenosis is, itself, the height of plerosis: the most divine thing is to give rather than to get. And that, admittedly, is not the pattern of the section as a whole; and it will not do, with K. Barth,³⁶ to try to get round the exaltation-climax in verses 9 ff. by denying that the διὸ καὶ... denotes subsequent reward.

But the question is: Ought one to take this pattern literally? Or (to put a parallel question) is it impossible that Paul should combine a "static" simultaneity with an allusion to an historical sequence of birth, death and resurrection? We are familiar with the ironic ambivalence of the Johannine use of ὑφοῦν by which the disgrace of lifting up on the cross is *identified* with that lifting up which is vindication and exaltation; but we forget, perhaps, that the very irony depends on its being possible to analyse and distinguish the two senses, although they are thus syncopated and superimposed. The force of such a *double entendre* always does depend upon the realisation that a curve has been forcibly squeezed out flat. But, if so,

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then it follows that, even when the pattern is not syncopated but shown in sequence, we are still not necessarily debarred from recognizing that *essentially*, and *in the last analysis*, the two moments are one. God has "exalted" Christ "after" his "humiliation" precisely because, *essentially*, that humiliation *was* itself exaltation. And it has to be remembered that the much-lauded simultaneity of the Johannine irony is balanced by a deliberate use of successiveness in other passages, as, for instance, in John 13. Successiveness and simultaneity are not mutually contradictory, save to the most literal of literal-mindedness. In a word, the presentation of so-called "merit" and so-called "reward" in sequence is not to blind our eyes to the same writer's insight that, the two being identical, neither is an adequate term and both are only groping, picture-words.

III

If this is correct, then there is no intrinsic improbability in seeing the sentiment "Jesus did not reckon equality with God in terms of snatching" as embedded in the pictorial language of making costly sacrifices and, therefore and thereafter, receiving compensation. It only means that the sentiment constitutes a deeply Christian comment — a revolutionary comment — upon the world's values and its quantitative notions. And if it is objected that Paul does not, in

³⁵ *Philippians* (as inn. 2, p. 267), p. 112.

³⁶ *Erklärung des Philipperbriefes* (Zürich, 1928), *in loc.*, quoted, and justly criticized, by Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

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fact, anywhere else express his conviction about Jesus in the "static", "simultaneous" way implied by the interpretation here adopted of οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο, one may say that this is at least implied by his references to Christ's humility and self-giving as his essential characteristic. No encouragement is offered, in Paul's writings or anywhere else in the New Testament, to the pagan notion that Christ was temporarily forgoing honour and glory merely with a view to winning them back again. Whatever he did was in his divine love for men, not for gain. The glory that accrued was a revelation of the reality that was there already.

But given this interpretation of Philippians 2, Philippians 3 ceases to provide so close a parallel as has sometimes been suggested. F. C. Porter,³⁷ E. Käsemann,³⁸ and M. Bouttier³⁹ among others, have pointed to the parallel (see Martin, p. 145). And at first it does seem a striking parallel not least because of the three-fold use of ἠγεῖσθαι. Paul had flung away what had formerly seemed precious, and, in exchange, had received something incomparably better:

ἄτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη,
ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν.

But the passage in Ch. 2 would be an exact analogy to this only if Christ

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had been said to have deemed equality with God sheer loss and to have flung it away; and this, as we have seen, is not, after all, the most probable meaning of οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο.... The most probable meaning, if my reasoning has been correct, is, rather, that the self-emptying was evidence of how Christ understood that equality with God which he possessed inalienably — indeed, that the self-emptying was an exhibition of that equality. St Paul's κέρδη might indeed be paraphrased by *res retinendae*; but that need only strengthen the contention that that is not the meaning of.

For my first point, I was able to appeal, among more recent writers, to E. Larsson for support. For this second point, I have support in the 'sixties from the late S. H. Hooke, and, in some measure, from B. Reicke⁴⁰ and from F. E. Vokes (as in n. 3, p. 267 above). The latter spends some time establishing the case against identifying ἄρπαγμός with ἄρπαγμα. But he seems to me to miss the point when he goes on to take 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*" (*op. cit.*, p. 624, my italics). In this he agrees with Meyer and Alford, alluded to by J. B. Lightfoot in his excursus on the passage in his commentary (see n. 2, p. 267 above); but, as will have been seen from my account of Ross' article, it is not correct to attribute this view to Ross, as Vokes does. To the unpublished lectures of F. C. Burkitt, which Vokes couples with Ross' article for this sense, I have not had access.

³⁷ *The Mind of Christ in Paul* (New York, 1931), pp. 215 f.

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 70, with acknowledgements to Bultmann for the suggestion.

³⁹ *La Condition chrétienne se/on Saint Paul* (Geneva, 1964), Ch. I; English trans., *Christianity According to Paul* (London, 1966).

⁴⁰ B. Reicke comes very near it, when he says "... le Christ n'a pas voulu utiliser son égalité avec Dieu pour tirer violemment à soi, pour harponner, les êtres de ce monde... La toutpuissance du Christ dans ce monde ne se base pas sur une aspiration de puissance mali sur la diaconie" ("Unité Chrétienne et Diaconie, Phil. ii. 1-11" in *Neotestamentica et Patristica*, Festschrift O. Cullmann (Leiden, 1962), pp. 203 ff. (p. 210)). But this, while duly giving ἄρπαγμός an abstract sense, for which the evidence is excellently summarised, nevertheless, in effect, paraphrases it as "an occasion for snatching".

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Since Vokes' article there has appeared an elaborate paper by the Danish philologist L. L. Hammerich: "An Ancient Misunderstanding (Phil. 2:6 'robbery')",⁴¹ touched off in part by correspondence between him and me, in which I had expressed my views about the meaning of ἄρπαγμός. Following my hint, and examining the secular uses of ἄρπαγμός, Hammerich confirmed the meaning *raptus*, rather than *res rapienda* or *rapta*. But he gave a completely new turn to its meaning in the Philippians context by taking it to mean (ecstatic) rapture, and arguing that the point of the passage is that Jesus refused to use his divinity as an easy way of escape — refused to allow himself to be rapt away from all the tribulations of mortal life. Instead, he accepted the human lot and its pains and hazards. Hammerich conducts his exposition with learning and ingenuity, but, to my mind, it falls short of complete cogency. ἄρπαγμός certainly need not mean "rapture"; as we have seen, it clearly can mean "rape" or

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"snatching"; and it is this sense that, as it still seems to me, suits the context better. The passage requires that ἄρπαγμός be something that (by human judgments) might be expected of one who is already on an equality with God; and that it is a divine prerogative to help yourself to what you want is exactly what the popular mind imagined; whereas rapture belongs properly to a less than divine being who is caught away to some higher status.⁴²

Thus, the case for interpreting ἄρπαγμός in our passage as *raptus* "snatching" or "acquisitiveness" seems to me to be a strong one. That deity means not, as is popularly supposed, getting, but, paradoxically, giving is, indeed, the heart of the revelation in Christ Jesus; and this insight can as intelligibly be embedded, as it is here, in the pattern of descent and ascent as it is — more tersely — in the ironic ambivalence of the Johannine use of ὑψοῦν. If so, the passage has nothing to do (as kenotic theories have) with the "how" of the incarnation, though it might be said to be about the "why" of it. It is a celebration, simply, of what Browning hailed in his now hackneyed lines about man's God-likeness:

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

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⁴¹ *Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser udgivet af Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab* Bind 41, nr. 4, Copenhagen, 1966).

⁴² P. Trudinger, "ἄρπαγμός and the Christological Significance of the Ascension", *ExpT* 79 (1968), p. 279, accepts Hammerich's view and applies it to the interpretation of the Ascension in the sense that this ultimate glorification was identical with the cross. But, for such an interpretation one only needs Ross' view.