

"A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE TERM "SON OF GOD,, IN ST. PAUL, THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE HELLENISTIC WORLD AND IN PHILO,,

I. THE SON OF GOD IN ST. PAUL

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The divine sonship of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews is described in a more precise and in a deeper way than anywhere else. He is the organ of the creation of the world and of the ages (Hebr. 1:2: Δι' οὗ καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησε.) As the Son, He is the heir of all (κληρονόμος πάντων; cf. Rom. 4:13; Gal. 4:7). Christians are κληρονόμοι Θεοῦ διὰ Χριστοῦ. The idea of κληρονομία here is rather of eschatological and metaphysical character (cf. Matt. 19:29; 25:34; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:15; 18:18; I Cor. 8:9; 15:20; Gal. 5:21; Rev. 21:7). The inheritance is spiritual, incorruptible (ἀφθαρτος) and everlasting (αἰώνιος, Hebr. 9:12), preserved in heavens (τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἰς ἡμᾶς: I Peter 1:4).

The content of this inheritance is the Kingdom of God or Christ (I Cor. 6:9; Eph. 5:5 I Cor. 15:50) or the salvation (Hebr. 1:14) or blessings (eb. 12:17; κληρονομήσαι τὴν εὐλογίαν) or the promises (Heb. 6:12; κληρονομούντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας...)¹. God ἔθηκε Christ as the heir of all things². Christ, moreover, is described in terms of the Wisdom literature. So, according to the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, He is the effulgence of the glory (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης) and the very character of the substance of God (χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως). (Hebr. 1:3.) The new term used here to describe Christ's metaphysical relationship to God are: ἀπαύγασμα δόξης and χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (God). These words do not occur in the New Testament books; this is the only place where they are mentioned. Synonyms to them are the words (1) αὐγάζειν (II Cor. 4:4; εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν...) in the meaning of seeing distinctly, enlightening (metaphorically)³. (2) χάραγμα (from the verb χαράττειν, Hebrew כָּתַב, which means to engrave, to mark, design figure, Acts 17:29; Rev. 13:16; 17; 14:

1. Cf. Col. 1:12; εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί).

2. The meaning of τιθέναι here is to make, to destine, to appoint. (Cf. Acts 13:17; τέθεικά σε εἰς φῶς ἔθνῶν; cf. Rom. 4:17; cf. Arndt and Gingrich: A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1957. pp. 823-4.

3. Liddell and Scott: A Greek-English Lexicon. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon press. 1925. I:274.

11; 15:2; 10:4). The word is translated as representation, mark (R.S.V.). In its classical meaning, the word stands for any mark engraved or imprinted, an inscription, a stamped document.¹ Metaphorically, it means mark, stamp, character, endorsement. In the Old Testament the word ἀπαύγασμα occurs once in the description of the Wisdom as the effulgence of the Divine light (Wisdom of Sol. 7:26: ἀπαύγασμα φωτὸς αἰδίου). Χαρακτήρ is used in the Old Testament in the meaning of fashion, way of living.² The Hebrew word צַרְחָה (Latin: cicatrice) also means forma, character, person, nota, signum (Lev. 13:28: ὁ γὰρ χαρακτήρ τοῦ κατακαύματός ἐστιν). Christ, as the ἀπαύγασμα δόξης and χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως of God is an exact representation of God's nature.³ Ὑπόστασις from ὑπό—ἵστημι etymologically designates that which falls under the appearances, the οὐσία the essence of a being. (Latin substantia, fundamentum, constitution; Hebrew נִבְּנָה constitutare.) (Wis. of Sol. 16:21.)⁴ It also means assurance, steadfastness (Heb. 11:1: πίστις ἐστὶν ἐλπίζομένων ὑπόστασις), confidence (II Cor. 9:5 ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτῃ τῆς καυχήσεως: cf. 11:14). The term underwent a development during the first centuries of our era, becoming equivalent to a person by the time of the fourth century theological discussions.⁵ So ὑπόστασις became identical with a concrete person, an independent being; "Ὅταν μὲν γὰρ τὰς φύσεις διακρίνωμεν, τελείαν τὴν φύσιν τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου φημὲν καὶ τέλειον τὸ πρόσωπον. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπρόσωπόν ἐστιν ὑπόστασιν εἰπεῖν· τελείαν δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον ὁμοίως."⁶ The existing relation between these two expressions is that the expression χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ completes and makes precise that of the ἀπαύγασμα δόξης in stressing the idea of the substantive reality of the distinct personality and eventually in excluding the modalistic interpretation.⁷

Thus by ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης is meant the close relationship which

1. *Ibid*, II, 1976.

2. II Macc. 4:10.

3. The majority of the Church Fathers, especially the Greek Fathers and many modern commentators, give to the ἀπαύγασμα the active sense, i. e., radiation, emanation of the Glory.

4. In the papyri, signifies property (περιουσία). p. Oxyr. 1:138:26; III:488:47; cf. Jer. 10:16: Συνήγαγεν ἐξωθεν τὴν ὑπόστασίν σου; cf. Ez. 43:11.

5. T. B. Strong, «The History of the Theological term «Substance» Journal of Theological Studies, Jan.-Oct., 1901, pp 224-235; *ibid*, Oct. 1902, pp. 22-40.

6. H. B. Swete, Theodori Episcopi mopsuestias in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii (2 vols., Cambridge, 1880-82), II, 229.

7. Spicq, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

exists between the Father and Son.¹ This closeness is similar to that of the light and its radiation.² As ἀπαύγασμα Christ is eternally-existent and not born in time.³ The Father is the only source of the Son. As such, the Son participates in the substance of the Father, and, so we have con-substantiality. Oecumenius renders the ἀπαύγασμα as having the meaning of the process of the Son from the Father according to the very nature. Διὰ τοῦ ἀπαύγασμα τὴν κατὰ φύσιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς πρόοδον τοῦ υἱοῦ δηλοῖ· οὐδὲν γὰρ ὄλωσ οὐδαμοῦ κατὰ χάριν καὶ εἰς ποιήσιν ἀπαύγασμά τινος, οὐκ ἀπὸ ἡλίου, οὐκ ἀπὸ πυρός, οὐκ ἀφ' ἑτέρου τίνος, ἀφ' οὗ πέφυκεν ἀπαύγασμα εἶναι⁴.

The idea of adoption is here excluded since the relationship of the Son as ἀπαύγασμα to the Father is not the result of any favor (κατὰ χάριν) but is a relationship of everlasting process (πέφυκε). The idea here implied is that the Son shares with the Father all the divine attributes. He participates in all the glory of the Father, while the other creatures enjoy only partial participation in the divine glory⁵. There is full agreement between Father and Son; there is not any possibility or disagreement. Father and Son are found in a close bond of relationship which cannot be broken. Gregory of Nyssa regards the δόξαν and ὑπόστασιν as the highest of all good; the ἀπαύγασμα and χαρακτήρ as denoting the closeness and inseparability existing between Father and Son⁶. From what has been said, it is concluded that the Son is not only pre-existent and post-existent since He sat at the right hand of God in highest (ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς. Hebr. 1:4; cf. Phil. 2:11; Eph. 1:21; I Peter 3:22). but also eternally co-exists with the Father⁷. The participle ὢν is used by the author to describe the condition of Christ's existence and gives more emphasis to the meaning of the everlasting existence. It denotes not only the temporary act but a permanent relation, an eternal one, and eventually excludes the idea of any adoptive filiation of Christ to the Father⁸. The idea is analogous to that of Phil. 2:5-11, where the eternal existence of Christ is described

1. Cf. John. 10:30.

2. Theodoret of Cyrus: Ad Hebrews, M. G. P., LXXXII, 680-681.

3. Origen; Homily 9:4, in Jer. M.G.P., XIII, 357.

4. Ad loc.

5. Origen; In Ju. 32:18.

6. Gregory of Nyssa, De perfecta Christi Forma, M. G. P., XLVI, 265.

7. Gregory of Nyssa, Against Arians and Eunomians; Zigabinus, M.G.P., CXXX, 601.

8. Spicq, op. cit., p. 9.

with the verb *ὑπάρχειν* (ὁ ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων)¹. The description of Christ as the *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης* introduces us to the idea that God is light. an idea perpetuated by St. John in whom the contrast between light and darkness (*φῶς-σκότος*) constitutes the tendency of His whole theology². In the Old Testament, God is covered with light like a garment³ or His glory is like a bright and shining iron⁴. The idea of God as being light (*φῶς*) occurs also in Philo and is the Hellenistic Judaism of Alexandria where it was taken up by Primitive Christianity whose representatives compared God with the sun or the light in their evaluation of His divine properties⁵. The idea in Philo runs as follows:⁶ Καθάπερ γὰρ τὴν ἀνθήλιον αὐγὴν ὡς ἥλιον οἱ μὴ δυνάμενοι τὸν ἥλιον αὐτὸν ἰδεῖν ὀρώσι... οὕτως καὶ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰκόνα τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ λόγον ὡς αὐτὸν κατανοοῦσι...»

The idea is not unknown to the Gnostic systems of the second century A.D. In the «Excerpts ex Theodoto» there is a description of God as light (*φῶς*) very similar to that of St. John's Gospel. The text runs so:

Αὐτὸς γὰρ καὶ ἄνω φῶς ἦν καὶ ἔστι τὸ ἐπιφανὲν ἐν
σαρκί, καὶ τὸ ἐνταῦθα ὄφθην οὐκ ὕστερον τοῦ ἄνω, οὔτε
διεκέκοπτο ἢ ἀνωθεν μετέστη δεῦρο, τόπον ἐκ τόπου
ἀμείβον, ὡς τὸν μὲν ἀπολαβεῖν, τὸν δὲ ἀπολιπεῖν,
ἀλλ' ἦν τὸ πάντῃ ὄν καὶ παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ κἀνταῦθα».

This characterization of Christ as being light exists in both of His statuses-in heaven and on earth-so that the earthly appearance is a continuation of His heavenly one⁷.

(2) As character of God's substance (*χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως* Hebr. 1:3), Christ is conceived of by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews as the perfect representation of God's nature. In the *χαρακτήρ ὑποστάσεως* it becomes obvious that the elements of perfection, of

1. Zigabinus, M.G.P., CXXX, 105. According to this author, the word *ἀπαύγασμα* means (1) the divine origin of Christ; (2) His resemblance to God; (3) His independent personality.

2. John 1:5,9; I Tim. 6:16.

3. Ps. 104:3: ἀπὸ ἀναβαλλόμενος φῶς ὡς ἡμάτιον.»

4. Exod. 24:17; «τὸ δὲ εἶδος τῆς δόξης Κυρίου ὡσεὶ πῦρ φλέγον».

5. Spicq, L'Épître aux Hébreux, op. cit., p. 7.

6. De somnus, 1, 239.

7. Clement of Alexandria, The Excerpta ex Theodoto, ed. R. P. Casey (London: Christophers, 1934), 4:1.

con-substantiality, and of similarity can be found in Christ¹. The character (χαρακτήρ) is used by the Church Fathers to denote the person (πρόσωπον, Latin *personna*) as an independent Being, or the attribute or quality, According to Gregory of Nyssa, there is some kind of equality or identity between *ὑπόστασις* (substance) and *χαρακτήρ* (character). This implies that all the divine attributes existing in the substance (*ὑπόστασις*), i. e., God, are found in the character of the substance too. Even the majesty of God (*μεγαλειότης—μεγαλωσύνη*) is reflected in Christ: «ὁ γὰρ Ἀπόστολος τὸν υἱὸν χαρακτήρα λέγει τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς ὑποστάσεως· Δῆλον οὖν ὅτι ὅση ἂν ἡ ὑπόστασις ᾗ τοῦ Πατρὸς, τοσοῦτος καὶ ὁ χαρακτήρ ἐστὶ τῆς ὑποστάσεως· οὐ γὰρ ἐνδέχεται εἶναι μικρότερον τὸν χαρακτήρα τῆς θεωρουμένης ἐν αὐτῷ ὑποστάσεως..... Ἀλλὰ μὴν πάση τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ μεγαλειότητι ἡ τοῦ λόγου μεγαλειότητης συνθεωρεῖται².

The epistle gives us also some references to the unique and original Sonship of Christ and to His equality to God, in pointing out the application of many Old Testament passages ascribed to God in that context, as now referring to Christ. For instance, we have evidence of Christ's worship not only by man but even by the angels: «Καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ. (1:6). This worship is a proof of Christ's veneration by the angels since He is as much again higher than they are as the name which He has inherited is different than theirs. The comparison here between Christ and the angels shows the superiority of Christ over the Angels (*κρείττων τῶν ἀγγέλων γενόμενος*)³, the ruling of Christ over the Spiritual world (*Hebr. 1:7 ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πυρὸς φλόγα*)⁴ and the difference of nature and not of degree, as most of the Church Fathers understood and explained the passage⁵. This contrast in nature is accentuated by the usage of the word *διάφορος* which means something of a different nature (cf. *Hebr. 7:6;9:10*). diversity, distinction, and at the time, superiority⁶. Verse 5 helps us to understand the uniqueness of Christ's Sonship. The usage of the word *υἶος* here is entirely different from any other outside the New Testa-

1. John of Damascus, M.G.P., CXXX, 608.

2. Gregory of Nyssa; *Against Arians and Eunomians*; II, M.G.P., CXXXVI, 604.

3. *Κρείττων* might have also the sense of the superlative degree. Cf. Moulton and Milligan, see below.

4. Cf. *Hebr. 2:5-6; 2:2*.

5. Cyril of Alex. M.G.P., LXXIV, 953.

6. Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament illustrated from the Papyri and other non-Literary sources*. London: Hodder and Stoughton-1915, ad. loc.

ment. The author of the epistle is well aware of the application of the word Son (υἱός) to the Angels in the Old Testament (בְּנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים) and this designation is good evidence for showing their intimate relationship to God and their belonging to the category of the Divine¹. So Job 38:7 speaks of the «Sons of God» as existing prior to the creation proper. In Psalm 89:7, the angels are mentioned as «Sons of God» but their inferiority in comparison to God is pointed out: Καὶ τίς ὁμοιωθήσεται τῷ Κυρίῳ ἐν υἱοῖς Θεοῦ; but the angels, although they are called «Sons» of God and belong to the divine sphere, never enjoy the privilege of the Sonship which Christ truly does have. Angels are never called ἀπαύγασμα δόξης or χαρακτήρ ὑποστάσεως of God. They never rule the universe (spiritual and material world), although in the late Jewish literature they are appointed to some kind of ruling over the universe, especially in the apocrypha and-Pseudepigrapha². The angels are lower than the Son (Hebr. 1:4; cf. Rom. 8:38). They are His power and will accompany Christ in His second coming (II. Thess. 1:7; ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ). The whole spiritual world, to which the angels belong, became subject to Christ after His exaltation (Eph. 1:21; I Peter 3:22; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15; Hebr. 2:5; II Peter 2:10) as to God.

Other quotations from the Old Testament referred to God now transferred to the Son are: Hebr. 1:8; 1:10. In 1:8 the quotation is from Ps. 45:7,8: «Ὁ θρόνος Σου ὁ Θεός εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, καὶ ράβδος ἐυθύτητος ἢ ράβδος τῆς βασιλείας Σου. Ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν· διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέ Σε ὁ Θεός, ὁ Θεός Σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους Σου.» This quotation refers directly to the divinity of Christ. A problem is raised here with reference to the word Θεός of the first line. There are two ways of explaining it. First to take it as a nominative case; if so, the interpretation runs. «God is thy throne», or «thy throne is God»³. Secondly, the word Θεός can be taken as a vocative,

1. P. Heinisch, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. W. G. Heidt (Minnesota: The North Central Publishing Company, 1955), p. 131; Jacob, E. *The Theology of the Old Testament* Trans. by A.M. Heathcote and P.J. Allcock: New York. Harper and Bros. 1959. p. 68. This participation of the Angels in the divine nature is also indicated by their appellation as the Holy ones (ἅγιοι; cf. Ps. 89:6,8; Job. 5:1; 15:15; Dan 4:10, 14:20; 8:13; Zach. 14:5; Sir. 42:17) which rather refers to their moral perfection.

2. See my paper, «Angelology according to the late Jewish Literature», *Θεολογία*, Athens, June, 1963.

3. B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: 1889), p. 25.

a frequent usage of the case in the Greek language (cf. Hebr. 10:7, «*τοῦ ποιῆσαι ὁ Θεός τὸ θέλημα Σου*»), (cf. Ps. 3:8; 138:17), and this yields an excellent sense and may well explain the attractiveness of the text for a writer who wishes to bring out the divine significance of Christ¹. The second explanation renders the true spirit of the whole quotation. The word ὁ Θεός is found between two commas in the LXX, a phenomenon which excludes any possibility of the nominative case. The case becomes more clear in Ps. 3:8 where the imperative mood is used (cf. Luke 18:11; Rev. 15:3; Luke 8:54; Matt. 9:27; 20:30,31)².

The Church Fathers have so understood the verse. The «God» (Θεός) refers to Christ and denotes His superior nature³. The passage is not the only one that attributes the predicate «God», «Θεός» to the Son. In the following quotation, verse 10, the function of God as the Lord of the universe is attributed to Christ. The Lordship is derived from the fact that God (and now Christ) is (1) the creator of the world (v. 10: *κατ' ἀρχὰς τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν Σου εἰσὶν οἱ οὐρανοί*). (2) He is immutable (vs. 11,12: *Αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται—Σὺ δὲ διαμένεις. Σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ καὶ τὰ ἔτη Σου οὐκ ἐκλείψουσι*)⁴. (3) He is the one who renews all the creation (*καὶ ὥσει περιβόλαιον ἐλίξεις αὐτούς...*)⁵ The idea might come from Isaiah 34:4, where the prophet is referred to the day of judgment (*הַיּוֹם יְהוָה*). But the author here does not speak explicitly of any final retribution or judgment. He tries to define the omnipotence of Christ, as the creator and ruler of the universe, and to denote the mutability of the world contrasted with the unchangeable nature of God. The meaning of *ἀλλαγῆσονται* varies in the New Testament. Used by St. Paul five times it means (1) to exchange, to replace, to substitute (Rom. 1:23, *Καὶ ἠλλάξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου Θεοῦ ἐν*

1. Moffatt, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. New York. Scribner's Sons. 1924. p. 13; Beyschlag, *op. cit.*, II, 308-310.

2. «*Ἀνάστα Κύριε σώσον με ὁ Θεός μου*»; F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, trans. R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 81, 147. The Chaldee Targum reads: **בְּנִרְמִי יִתְרַךְ**

בְּמַאֲיָךְ אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וְעַד, Hebr. text. **דְּי מַהֵם לְעַלְמֵי עוֹלָמִין** (ὁ θρόνος Σου, Θεός, εἰς αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι.

3. Theodore of Mopsuest, *Ad. Hebraeos*, M.G.P., LXVI, 953; cf. Bultmann, *op. cit.*, I, 129.

4. Cf: Exodus 3:14 «**אֲנִי הוּא אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי**», 11:17; Amos 3:13; Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22-13.

5. For the textual uncertainty, see Moffatt, *op. cit.* p. 14; (cf. II Peter 3:13).

ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνας φθορῶν ἀνθρώπου)¹ (2) with reference to the last judgment, it means to transform, to transfigure, to take another body or mode of existence (I Cor. 15:52, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγσόμεθα ...καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἀφθαρτοὶ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγσόμεθα.) This meaning of the verb becomes more explicit in verse 52 of the same chapter. (Δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν....)² The interpretation given to this quotation is not unanimous. There are various explanations offered, especially by those who deny the divinity of the Son. The most important of them are the three following. (1) Some have supposed that the words of the Psalmist are quoted by the apostle as an address to the Father. It cannot be proved. The whole structure of the chapter forbids such a supposition. (a) This quotation does not have any place among all the others which are applied to Christ (Hebr. 1:5-14). (b) Of course, there is nothing to indicate the immediate application of the quotation to Christ, but the conjunction καὶ connects the previous one with the quotation under discussion. (c) The elements of the cosmic function, of eternity, of immutability are spread throughout the epistle to the Hebrews and the other Pauline letters (Hebr. 1:2; 2:10,8; 5:6; 6:20; 7:17,28; 11:26; 13:8; Col. 1:15-20; cf. John 1:3; Phil 2:5-11; II Cor. 8:9; I Tim. 3:16; II Cor. 17; II Tim. 1:9). (d) The whole spirit of the first chapter of the epistle, especially of the quotation, is to secure the unique Sonship of Christ and from God's declaration about Him as the only Son (μονογενής), to lead to Christ's sitting at the righthand of God, a place which above everything else shows that Christ is equated with God in participating in the Majesty (Μεγαλωσύνη) on high. (1:3, 13; 2:9; 4:14; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; cf. Luke 22:9; Mark 16:19.) (e) In the sense of its application to Christ the passage was understood and interpreted by the Church Fathers and most of the modern commentators³. (2) Others have alleged that (ἐθεμελιώσας) means «thou art the cause on account of which the Earth was founded. «But (a) nowhere does the verb have this meaning. The very meaning of the active form of the verb θεμε-

1. Cf. Ps. 105:20, καὶ ἀλλάξαντο τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι μέσχου ἐσθίουτος χόρτον...; Jer. 2:11, «εἰ ἀλλάσσονται ἔθνη θεοὺς αὐτοῦς). Cf. Wisdom of Sol. 12:24; Deut. 4:15-19; Hebrew 1:11 (Ps. 102:26; II Peter 3:10; Is. 51:6; 34:4).

2. Cf. Is. 51:6,16; 65:17; 66:22; II Peter 3:13; Apoc. 20:11.

3. Chrysostom M.G.P., LXIII, 29; Cyril of Alexander, ad loc., M.G.P. LXXIV, 960; Theodoret of Cyrus M.G.P., LXXXII, 688; cf. Eultmann, Theology of the New Testament, op., cit., I, 129; G. Lunemann. Epistle to the Hebrews, in Meyer's Commentary, XVIII, 96; Westcott, op. cit., p. 28.

λιούν (Hebrew בָּנָה) is to lay the foundation of, found firmly, not to be the cause of something to be founded. (Ps. 8:3; 23:2; 47:8; 86:5; 88:11; 101:25; 103:5; Zach. 12:1; Is. 14:32; 48:13; 51:13.)¹ The verb is also used metaphorically (I Cor. 3:10,11; Eph. 2:20; Hebr. 6:1; 11:10; Rev. 21:14; Col. 1:23; Eph 3:17; I Peter 5:10). (b) What makes the above argument weak is the following clause, a more emphatic statement and an anthropomorphic expression (very common in the Old Testament)² which says that the heavens are the works of Lord's hands. This anthropomorphic mode of creation harmonizes very well with a most spiritual conception of God, particularly in Isaiah (40:12 Τίς ἐμέτρησε τῆ χειρὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν σπιθαμῆ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν δρακί...») an idea analogous to that of Ps.102:26-28 is found in Isaiah 48:13: «καὶ ἡ χεὶρ Σου ἐθεμελίωσε τὴν γῆν καὶ ἡ δεξιὰ Σου ἐστερέωσε τὸν οὐρανόν». Cf. Ps. 24:2; Amos 9:6; Is. 45:18; Ps. 119:90. So this passage (Ps. 102:26-28) attributed by Paul to Christ shows the closeness between Christ, the Creator and the universe. There is no hint of allusion that Christ was only the cause on account of which the earth was founded. (d) Words like κατ' ἀρχάς (Hebr. לְפָנִים), Κύριε, διαμένεις, ἐλίξεις etc. bear witness to the Divine attributes ascribed to Christ. The usage of Κύριος is peculiar here. The word does not have any equivalent in the Hebrew language and denotes the omnipotence of God in every sphere of life. So there is no reason for confining the omnipotence of Christ by basing our argument on the verb «θεμελιούν» The expression κατ' ἀρχάς affirms the pre-existence of Christ, and the verb διαμένειν his post-existence and eternity³. (3) Others, commenting on the quotation, have argued that it is not the physical creation of the universe which is spoken of, but rather the moral renovation of human society. But this is not

1. For the cause of founding something, cf. Proverbs 3:19: «ὁ Θεὸς τῆ σοφίᾳ ἐθεμελίωσε τὴν γῆν».

2. F. Mich a eli, in his book Dieu à l' image de l' homme, E'tude de la notion anthropomorphique de Dieu dans l' Ancien Testament (Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1950), p. 147, writes concerning the anthropomorphism and its significance in the Old Testament: «L' idée du Dieu vivant donne à l' anthropomorphisme biblique une signification tout autre que celle qui s'applique aux expressions similaires, les idoles païennes. La encore les deux conceptions reagissent l' une sur l' autre: c' est parce que Dieu est vivant qu' on peut parler de lui comme d' un homme vivant mais c' est aussi en parlant de lui comme d' un être humain qu' on rapelle sans cesse qu' il est vivant... Il y a dans l' anthropomorphisme biblique une signification plus complete qu' le convient de préciser».

3. Cf. Gen. 1:1; John 1:1; 17:5; (πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι); I John. 1:1 (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς); 2:13 (τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) Prov. 8:28 (ἐν ἀρχῆ).

true because (a) the wording of the passages (10-12) betrays only the physical creation (γῆ, θεμελιούν, ἔργα, οὐρανοὶ παλαιούσθαι.) Never is human society described as earth (γῆν) or οὐρανοὶ (Heavens). These nouns are used in many places to denote human society or the heavenly world, but always with the article. (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:16,20; 3:2,5; II Peter 3:10; Hebr. 12:25,26; Col. 1:23; Hebr. 9:23; 12:25).

(b) There are passages of Scripture where both the physical and the moral creations are ascribed to Christ (Col. 1: 16-18; Eph. 1:10;21-23).

(c) If we accept the above given argument that the passages 10-12 speak only of the moral renovation of the human society, then we have to conclude that the verses imply a destruction of humanity or of the spiritual world, which is almost inconceivable. Nowhere in the Bible (Old and New Testaments) can the idea of a complete destruction of the human creation or of the spiritual world be found¹. What changes and perishes is the material world (I John 2:7: «ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ»; I Cor. 7:31: «παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου»). The spiritual world or the humanity, even in a transformed status, will continue forever. On that basis, the idea of the inheritance (κληρονομία) or that of being eternally with God can be justified. (Eph. 1:4; 5:5; Hebr. 9:15; cf. Matt. 19:29; 28:20; Mark. 10:17; Acts 20:32; I Tim. 4:8; cf. II Peter 3:13: «καινοὺς δὲ οὐρανοὺς καὶ καινὴν γῆν κατὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα αὐτοῦ προσδοκῶμεν, ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ.») So, the arguments brought against the application of this quotation to Christ are proved to be weak and cannot give the correct solution to the question raised by the fact that the quotation is used by the apostle as an address to the Father. Instead of accepting that this quotation is an address to the Father, we realize that here we have before us «a quotation which describes the native and personal dignity which belonged to Christ and the works and qualities which are ascribed to Him demonstrate His true and proper divinity. No higher terms are employed to describe the power and eternity, and immutability of God the Father, than are here used to describe those attributes of Christ.»²

From what we have said before, we can summarize the characteristic features of Christ's Sonship which bear witness to His divine nature in the metaphysical sense of the word rather than in adoptive or outward senses. (1) Christ stands to God in an aboriginal and metaphysical

1. Wisdom of Solomon 1:14-15. Cf. Beyschlag, op., cit., II, 305.

2. Origen; contra Celsus 6:17: «Τὸν ἀγέννητον καὶ πάσης γεννητῆς φύσεως πρωτότοκον».

relation. He is the Son of God from the beginning (Rom. 1:3; 8:3;32; Gal. 4:4,6; Hebr. 9:26; 7:3; 1:1;). The eternal divine Sonship manifests itself ἐν δυνάμει (Rom. 1:3). (2) As God's first-born (πρωτότοκος Col. 1:15; Hebr. 1:6; Rom. 8:29) He is anterior to and separate from all created beings (Hebr. 1:4; Phil. 2:9). (3) By sitting at God's right hand, on the throne of Majesty on high, Christ has become a partner of God's universal government (Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col 3:1; Hebr. 1:3; Phil. 2:9; I Peter 3:22)¹ (4) Through Christ, God communicates with the world, reveals Himself to the world and saves it (Rom. 1:4;5;10;8;3-4:29;32; I Cor. 1:9; Gal. 1:16;4:4; Hebr; 7:25; 9:27). (5) In I Cor. 15:28, we see that Paul speaks of the unity of Father and Son only in the closest connection with Heilsgeschichte, that is, with the Son's obedience (cf. Gal. 4:4; Rom. 5:10; I Thess, 1:10; Hebr. 1:6; 8:6—13; 9:15; 13:20)².

(6) There is no trace of Christ's subjection to God in St. Paul. The «subjection» supposed on the basis of some passages which would put Christ on a level lower than that of God, the Father, is not authentic; it is due rather to the hierarchy of offices (Father-Son)³. (7) The Cosmological significance of the Son, His worship, His becoming a subject of faith and His ruling over the whole universe (Hebr. 1:2,4; 2:8,10; 1:7,6; I Cor. 15:28; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:13; Col 1:15:20) leave no doubt about Christ's participation in the divine substance (not in the sense in which the term was understood in the fourth century) but in the sense of being the ἀπαύγασμα δόξης and the χαρακτήρ ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (of God), of His eternal existence, His nature and not in the meaning of His being Son⁴.

(Continued)

1. J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (corrected ed., New York: 1889), p. 727; Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p. 389.

2. Cullmann, op. cit., p. 293.

3. For an opposite assertion see Wernel, op. cit., pp. 322-323. In commenting on I Cor. 15:28, the author says that on the whole, Jesus stands for Paul below God. God has sent Him, His Son. He became obedient unto the Father, until death. God raised Him up, exalted Him, and gave Him power. It is God from whom the Son has all things. And even though the Son is now equal to God, and «above all things», when all enemies, men, and devils have been overcome He shall deliver up the Kingdom again to the Father, and subject Himself that the Father may be «all in all». (For a refutation of this assertion, see previous pages of this chapter).

4. Cullmann, op. cit., p. 270.