

ON THE STATURE OF OUR LORD.

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THE Christian reader naturally absorbs from the Gospels a sense of the dignity of their Central Figure ; he may even accentuate the dignity paradoxically by taking the words of the Psalm in which a Hebrew king is exhorted to "ride on in majesty," and using them in a hymn celebrative of the Triumphal Entry (as it is called) into Jerusalem. Such a transference, however, brings nothing of value for a historical portrait of Jesus, of which we are often sensibly in defect, and not necessarily helped nearer to by our sense of reverence or our desire to adore. For, when we examine the New Testament language carefully in search of words expressive of the majesty and dignity which we feel sure is involved, we find few that will assist either artist or historian. St. Paul will speak to us of having seen the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ ; but he was recalling a face that looked out on him from the Heavenlies, not one that had looked in at his windows from his own street. In the same way the Apocalyptic splendour of St. John, where, sunlike, Christ dawned upon him, was a splendour after His death, and perhaps not far removed in time from his own. The writer, who, under the name of Symeon Peter, speaks of having been an eye-witness of His majesty in the Holy Mount was, in any case, referring to an abnormal condition when, for a brief season, Heaven had mastered Earth.

None of these references furnish any answer to the enquiry regarding the personal appearance of Jesus, in the days of His flesh. Neither in the Gospels nor in the subsequent literature have we any satisfactory delineation. The faces and figures we are familiar with in Art are, of course, mere idealizations, and we are not helped nearer to facts by the ecclesiastical historians. Those who write the modern Lives of Christ usually refer to fictitious portraits like the one drawn by Nicephorus of Constantinople, or the still more artificial account which

was said to have been presented by Lentulus to the Roman Senate. Catholic propagandists circulate a portrait which is said to be taken from an emerald presented by a Sultan to a Pope : upon examination it proves to be a copy of the figure of Christ in Raphael's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes.

It is interesting, then, and important, to have the question of the personal appearance of our Lord, which Christian Art and Christian History have so assiduously closed, re-opened for us by a quotation in an early Christian document which has just been brought to light. It touches only a part of the larger enquiry, though closely connected with it, but it raises for us the involved question, "What was the actual height of our Lord, according to the measure of men?"

In a recent BULLETIN OF THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY,¹ Dr. Mingana has translated a Syriac document relating to the diffusion of Christianity throughout the Continent of Asia by Nestorian Missionaries. He rightly observes that "the glory of converting the peoples of Central Asia, and of the Far East, to the Gospel of Christ, and the merit of implanting among them the Western Civilization, based on the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, belong entirely to the zeal and marvellous spiritual activities of the Nestorian Church, which was by far the greatest missionary church the Christian cause has produced." The document to which we refer is one of the many proofs brought forward by Dr. Mingana of the zeal and vitality of the East Syrian Church. As, however, the writing in question, with regard to the Nestorian propaganda, emanated from a hostile church, and is actually inscribed with the name of one of the greatest of the Jacobite or West Syrian teachers, the bishop Philoxenus of Mabbog, it must be read through the mists and clouds of theological rancour and misrepresentation ; but even with its enemies as witnesses the Nestorian must surely have been the greatest of Missionary Churches. The document, too, is early, and its original composition can hardly be referred to a later date than the eighth century, a fact which gives its evidence a very high value for the Church Historian. The actual authorship is, however, doubtful. Dr. Mingana is inclined to believe that it was composed, not by Philoxenus, but about A.D. 730-790 by a Jacobite writer living in Baghdad.

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It is not our intention to repeat or to review the study which Dr. Mingana has made on this MS. and related documents. We are very grateful for it, and especially for one illuminating line, which raises afresh this interesting question, to the discussion of which we now address ourselves.

This Jacobite writer has given us, in his diatribes against Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius, a fragment of a hymn which is said to be the work of Theodore himself, and to be taken from a lost hymn of Theodore's, dealing with the nature of Christ and related theological matters. As almost the whole of the voluminous treatises and tracts of Theodore were destroyed by his enemies, we are grateful for every scrap that comes to light, even in a Syriac translation, and though embedded in a mass of historical or hostile statements. In this instance, as we shall see, the fragment is of great importance. Let us examine, then, what our Jacobite writer says. We are told that "the wretched Theodore began to introduce into the Church the teaching of Nestorius (sic! 'the last shall be first') which he had previously embraced, and he wrote the hymn called *The Epiphany of the King* in which he contradicted the Church in teaching openly four persons in the Trinity." So far as the Christ is concerned he holds and believes Him to be a mere man, in saying thus :—

"Thy stature, O Christ, was smaller than that of the children of Jacob who sinned against the Father who elected Thee, and who kindled the wrath of the Eternal Son who dwelt in Thee, and who angered the Holy Spirit who sanctified Thee."

The writer goes on to observe "it is obvious that he preached four persons in that unholy hymn called *The Epiphany of the King*, viz : the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit *plus* the Jesus in whom the Eternal Son dwelt.

What concerns us here is the recovery of some sentences from Theodore's hymn, and in particular the statement contained in these, regarding the defect in our Lord's personal appearance. Dr. Mingana shows that the hymn is actually quoted in the Nestorian Breviary under the name of Theodore, so that the reference to our Lord's personal appearance must be credited, as the Jacobite writer says, to Theodore himself. We seek to show that the statement was not of his own invention but one derived from a very early and widely-diffused tradition. The matter is so important that we must scrutinize carefully

both the text and Dr. Mingana's translation of it ; the text, in order to recover the original Greek of Theodore's hymn, the translation, in order to get a proper equivalent for the Greek so recovered.

We begin with the expression, "Thy stature was smaller than that of the children of Jacob ;" the word rendered "stature" is the Syriac *hezwah*, which does not exactly answer to the Greek ἡλικία (*stature*), but would be more nearly equivalent to εἶδος (*appearance, form*). The words "smaller than the children of Jacob" suggest a poetical variation of the Septuagint text of Isaiah 53², where εἶδος also occurs, and there is a contrast in form or appearance with other men ; τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον καὶ ἔκλιπον παρὰ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων . ("His form was dishonourable and defective compared with the sons of men.") We see, then, that Theodore is versifying Isaiah, and that the Syriac word "little" is the translator's attempt to render the Greek ἔκλιπον. "Defective appearance" has been interpreted as "deficient height." That Theodore is working on Isaiah is apparent from another minute textual survival. In the Hymn as quoted by Philoxenus (or whoever it may be), it is further said :

"Blessed be God the Word who came down and put on the Christ, the second Adam, and made Him *as a child* in the water of baptism."

If we turn to the verse of Isaiah, which precedes the one quoted above, we shall find the Septuagint render it,

"Lord, who hath believed our report,
And to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?
He made announcement before Him, *as a child*."

Theodore is trying to explain the words ὡς παιδίου ("as a child") in Isaiah, and he uses Adoptionist language and makes the day of the Baptism of the Lord, His birthday.

Now let us return to Theodore and the interpretation of "the form that was, from the human standpoint, defective." Is this mere exegetical subtlety, or are we face to face with a traditional account of our Lord's appearance, which goes back to earlier days than Theodore's, and may possibly be historical? Students of early Christian literature will at once remember that this was one of the questions to which Celsus gave his attention, and which Origen discussed after him in his great apology. The argument of Celsus

was, that if a divine spirit had been in Jesus, it would have differentiated him from other men, either in *size* (μέγεθος) or beauty or strength or voice . . . : whereas *they say* that he was small and ill-favoured and ignoble (μικρὸν καὶ δυσειδὲς καὶ ἀγενές).¹ Evidently Celsus is quoting popular tradition about Jesus, and amongst the defects deficiency of stature is specially noted.

Origen's reply is interesting ; he is not quite sure about our Lord's littleness (οὐ σαφῶς δηλοῦται ὅτι μικρὸς ἦν), but he is at one with Celsus in the rest of his description, and suggests that Celsus has been reading Isaiah ; if so, he argues, he should read further and believe more. For himself, he accepts the statements of the prophet, as to the lack of personal beauty, but he points out, on the opposite side, that there is the Gospel, and in the Gospel, the Transfiguration and the Glory on Mt. Tabor. Even if the outward signs of physical beauty or mental majesty were absent, it was always in the power of the Creator, who is the prime originator of material structures, to transform them in a moment into bodies of glory. The argument is evidence, at least, that Origen did not attempt to refute the assertions of Celsus relating to the stature of our Lord ; he only doubted the adequacy of the evidence. More convincingly, but with the same net result as to his personal opinions, he uses the argument that the eye itself needs the training of its own power of vision. The Lord's body appeared to each one of such a nature as it was proper for him to behold it, whether in humiliation or in the surpassing beauty of the Transfiguration. It appears, then, from Celsus' text, and from Origen's replies to it, that the question of our Lord's stature is a question of the second century at the latest.

Before we leave Origen, and his mystical explanation of the Divine Beauty, we think we can show that the matter of his argument is not wholly of his own creation, but that there is reason to believe that the difficulty had been dealt with and resolved, a century before his day, in the manner that he suggests. That suggestion is, that the body of Jesus was susceptible of metamorphosis or transfiguration, and he proves it by the actual Transfiguration in the Gospel. His language is as follows :

"It is not a subject of wonder that matter which is by nature susceptible of alteration and change, and of being transformed into anything that the

¹ Origen, *C. Celsum*, vii., 75.

Creator chooses, and is capable of receiving all the qualities that the artificer desires, should at one time possess a quality answerable to the prophecy 'He had no form nor beauty,' and at another time be so glorious and majestic and marvellous that the spectators of such surpassing loveliness—three disciples who had ascended with Jesus—should fall upon their faces."

Now let us turn to the *Acts of John* of which Dr. M. R. James has recently given us a new translation. We note, in the first place, that these Gnostic Acts (some passages of which have now been set to music) are, in Dr. James' judgment, *not later than the middle of the second century*. Secondly, we observe, that the writer of the *Acts* has a number of paradoxical statements about Jesus, among which the most significant is that he is subject to instantaneous metamorphosis. Accordingly St. John says :

"Oft-times He would appear to me *as a small man* and uncomely, and then again as one *reaching unto heaven*."

The contrast which the *Acts* present is based upon an interpretation of the Transfiguration, for when Christ anticipated His glory on the Holy Mount, St. John says :

"His head *touched the heaven*, so that I was afraid and cried out, and He, turning about, appeared as *a man of small stature*."

Now this is exactly the interpretation of Origen, but earlier in date ; and, as we can hardly suppose that Origen is drawing directly upon the *Acts of John*, we are obliged to conclude that the traditional explanation of Christ's stature as defective, is at least as early as the middle of the second century. It will probably be safe to say that we have now three witnesses from the second century who agree in their belief that our Lord was small of stature, viz., Celsus, the author of the *Acts of John*, and the source from which Origen derives.¹

It is clear, from the foregoing references, that the early writers are using the miraculous situations in our Lord's life in order to escape from something which belonged to the non-miraculous. Thus we have Origen answering Celsus, in regard to his critical descriptions of

¹ We suspect that the author of these Acts is drawing also on the Septuagint text of Isaiah, for, like Theodore, he tries to explain how our Lord appeared *ὡς παιδίον* ("as a child"). When James and John are called by Jesus, James says to John, "What is *this child* on the sea-shore wanting with us?" But John replied to him, "You have sea-blindness ; don't you see that *a man* is standing there?"

Jesus, by advising the philosopher to remember the Transfiguration. The author of the *Acts of John* does the same, saying significantly that on that occasion the head of Jesus touched the heavens.

The language is, as we say, significant. First of all it implies the transition from small to great which had taken place; this descriptive touch would not have been needed if a contrast had not been required for some other reason. Further, we are reminded of a similar accentuation of height which, according to the *Gospel of Peter*, took place at the Resurrection; for here also, when Christ emerges from the tomb, walking between two angels, his head is said to be *higher than the heavens*,¹ a description which again suggests a physical limitation miraculously transcended. There might almost be said of our Lord's body something similar to what Paul affirms of the general resurrection, that it was "sown in littleness, and raised in grandeur."

If our suggestion of a parallel gnosis in the Gospel of Peter to the Acts of John in the accentuation of our Lord's height has any validity, we shall have added another second-century witness to our former group.

Traces of the same belief may be found in the *Acts of Thomas* to which we shall presently refer, and they are also discernible in another famous apocryphal writing which is referred to the latter part of the second century. In the *Acts of Paul* (tr. James), we find as follows:

c. 3. "He saw Paul coming, *a man little of stature*, thin-haired upon the head, crooked in the legs, of good state of body, with eyebrows joining, and nose somewhat hooked, full of grace; for sometimes he appeared like a man, and sometimes he had the face of an angel.

c. 21. But Thecla, as the lamb in the wilderness looketh about for the shepherd, so sought for Paul: and she looked upon the multitude and *saw the Lord sitting, like unto Paul*, and said, As if I were not able to endure, Paul is come to look upon me."

Here the author of the Acts has produced an artificial similarity between Paul and Jesus, so that one can be taken for the other, something in the same way as Judas Thomas and Jesus become interchanged by twinship in the *Acts of Thomas*: and here also the

¹ It is possible that a similar gnosis may underlie Heb. 7²⁶, where the High-Priest after the order of Melchizedek is said to have *become higher than the heavens*.

small stature of one of the pair is reflected on the other. It seems natural to suppose that the Paul-Jesus identification had its motive in the small stature which tradition assigns to both of them. We have now three Apocryphal works (one of which goes back to the second century), which show traces of a belief in the small stature of our Lord.

And now let us see if we can find any further evidence on the subject more definite than that derived from or supported by the language of Isaiah.

Our next witness shall be St. Ephrem the Syrian, and we may remind ourselves, in approaching the subject from this side, that he has recently been canonised, and that his works have now, in consequence, the authority and the standing of those of a doctor of the Church Universal. He is outside the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (to which our own writings have a natural and accelerated gravitation). No suspicion of unorthodoxy attaches to St. Ephrem, such as might have been felt when either Origen or Theodore was in the witness-box—*Roma locuta est*. And now let Ephrem speak for himself.

In the *Hymni de Ecclesia et Virginibus* (opp. S. Eph., ed. Lamy. iv., col. 632) we find as follows :

“God took human form and appeared *with a stature of three human cubits*, while at the same time sustaining all things. He rose upon us *little of stature*.”

Here we have a definite tradition as to Christ's stature, accompanied by an actual numerical statement. The emphasis is on the *littleness*, and this is involved in the number of the cubits, as we shall presently show. We are certainly not drawing upon the Greek text of Isaiah ; indeed it would hardly be possible for Ephrem to do so, if Isaiah's text is to be that of the Septuagint, for Ephrem's O.T. is the Peshitta which is made from the Hebrew. Moreover, the dimension cannot be explained as the ordinary height of man, for it is certainly in defect. The matter is somewhat complicated by the variation in the cubit, both from country to country and from age to age. For example, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* it is stated that the most probable value of a Biblical cubit is 17·58 inches, a measurement which would make three cubits equal to 52·74 inches, or rather less than 4 ft. 5 inches. Now this can hardly be right ; it would mean

mere dwarfage, so we must look a little closer into possible or probable cubit measures. In Vigouroux' *Dict. de la Bible* s.v. Coudée, we find a statement that the temple cubit contained 525 millimetres and the common cubit 450. This would represent a height, respectively, of 5 ft. 2 inches or 4 ft. 4 inches. It is probable, however, that Ephrem's cubit was that in use in his own city, Nisibin, in his own time, which would be the Persian one. There are two ways of estimating this cubit; one is by reference to Babylonian standards, where the royal cubit stands at 555 and the old at 495 millimetres—the Persian cubit being $\frac{2}{3}$ of the former, say, 532·8; the other, by the popular standard for a cubit (*dra*) in the East, which tells us that a cubit is 24 times the space occupied by six grains of barley placed side by side: (cf. the old English estimate of three barley corns to an inch). In Ivan V. Müller's *Handbuch der Klass. Alterthums*, there is a general summary for the various cubits in use in Asia Minor: the following measures have been detected:—

Cubits of 555, 525, 517·5, 499·5, 495, 444 millimetres, to which we add the Persian, as above, 532·8 millimetres. This last will give us for a height of three cubits, the equivalent of 5 feet 2 inches.

It is evident, then, that according to any computation of Ephrem's cubit, it is his belief that our Lord was small of stature. It is not an allegorical but an actual littleness. In a tract ascribed to St. Ephrem, preserved in Armenian (Ephr. *Arm.*, ii., 278) our Lord's person as well as His Kingdom and teaching is compared to the littleness of the mustard-seed:

“For our Lord came, He appeared to us as a man *small in stature*, limited, despised, and abject:”

the coincidence with the previous quotation is striking; only we cannot be sure that we are now out of reach of the influence of Isaiah. It appears, then, that both Ephrem and Theodore, when interrogated, tell the same story.

Now let us examine further the Apocryphal literature and see if we can find any other traces of this tradition.

If we turn to the Syriac *Acts of Thomas*, a work, the importance and antiquity of which is known to all scholars, and which belongs to the early part of the third century, we shall find a constant identifica-

tion of Thomas (or, as he is really called, Judas Thomas), as the twin-brother of Jesus. He is affirmed to be the double of the Messiah and like Him in all respects. It is not necessary, for our present purpose, to decide whether this is history or mythology ; but we cannot avoid the conclusion that a writer who held (rightly or wrongly), that Jesus had a twin-brother, must have thought of them as alike in stature ; and therefore, if he believed Judas to be of small height, he must have had a similar belief about our Lord : to credit one with smallness of stature is to imply it in the other, and in fact, in the history, the two are so alike that the one is constantly mistaken for the other. Let us see, then, what is said of Judas Thomas (Judas the Twin) and his appearance. The following passage speaks to the point : *Acts of Thomas*, p. 178 :

"And the Apostle lifted up his eyes, and saw people *raised up one upon another that they might see him, and going up to lofty places*. And the Apostle saith to them, "Ye men who are come to the assembly of the Messiah, men who wish to believe in Jesus, take unto yourselves an example from this, that if ye do not raise yourselves up, *ye cannot see me who am little*."

It was necessary to climb on some other person's shoulders, or to seek a "coign of vantage," if one wished to see the preacher in the midst of the crowd. No doubt can exist, therefore, as to the Edessan belief about the short stature of St. Jude ; the question that does arise is whether the writer is not imitating the passage in the Gospel of Luke, where we are told that Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree in order to get a better view of Jesus. In the language of Luke,

"Zacchaeus sought to see what sort of person Jesus was, and because of the crowd he was not able to do so *since he was little of stature*" (Luke 19².)

It has almost always been assumed that this means that Zacchaeus was a little man ; but we now see, with the assistance of the eyes of the author of the *Acts of Thomas*, another possible explanation of the passage. Was it Jesus, and not Zacchaeus, who was diminutive of stature ? ¹

¹ Cardinal Mai, in a note on Luke 19³, in the commentary of Cyril of Alexandria, says, "*Statura ergo Zachaei pusilla erat, ut nemo hactenus, dubitavit, non autem Christi domini ut hodiernus scripsit qui praepostere fortasse intellexit Vulgati Latini versiculum*." Who is the *hodiernus* to whom Cardinal Mai refers ?

It is not necessary to spend more time on St. Thomas ; enough has been said to show that when he speaks of his littleness, as he frequently does, he is referring not to his humility of spirit, but to his physical dimensions. And when, by implication, similar terms are used of our Lord, the presumption is that the reference is not to the fact of the Incarnation, but to the stature of the Incarnated. It would be easy to give further illustrations from the Apocryphal literature ;¹ but as our enquiry has landed us in the Gospels, and brought us face to face with a situation where there seems to have been almost universal misunderstanding on the part of commentators, we may be permitted to conclude the argument with a conjectural speculation arising from our Lord's own words. He tells us, his disciples, not to be anxious, for "who by anxious care can add a cubit to his stature ?" Here the Revisers, with their usual infelicity, have suggested on the margin the addition of a cubit to one's *age*. The older rendering is the more correct. But why should Jesus talk of adding a cubit to one's height ? The normal man certainly has no wish for such an augmentation. Was it, then, because His own stature was small ? And if so, did He say it with a smile, and with a twinkle in His eye ? And may we read "Which of us," instead of "Which of *you* can add to his stature ?" Do the MSS. show any trace of variation from *ὁμῶν* (you) to *ἡμῶν* (us) in the Sermon on the Mount ?²

We have said nothing, in our discussion, about the attempts made in later ages to represent the form and features of Christ. For the most part they are obviously inventions ; but there is one detail in the account which Nicephorus of Constantinople gives of the Lord which may be historical. He tells us that our Lord's height was fully seven spans. This is either a mistake or else it is a survival of the primitive tradition of defective height. As it stands it is nearly the same as our first estimate from Ephrem ; a span being half a cubit, Nicephorus' estimate of our Lord's height as being fully seven spans, means nearly the same as the three cubits of Ephrem : only here it is not the

¹ E.g., in the Coptic Apocryphal Literature, Thomas is frequently spoken of as diminutive, and Jesus calls him "Little Man ;" but there is no need to go further than the *Acts of Thomas* in our enquiry.

² One of the oldest Latin MSS. (Cod. *a*) omits the words "of you." On the other hand the Oxyrhynchus Gospel Fragment (No. 655) emphasises the "you" but omits the "cubit." According to this Apocryphon our Lord said, "Ye, who can add to your stature ?"

Persian cubit but the Graeco-Roman. This would give a height of just over 5 feet 1 inch. It would be well, however, not to lay any stress on Nicephorus' measurements, for he is clearly describing a figure of great dignity, for whom seven spans would not suffice.

We have now shown conclusively, that there was an early tradition of the Church concerning our Lord's defective stature : the question remains whether this may not have been an incorrect deduction from the language of Isaiah, in the fifty-second and fifty-third chapters. We have made it evident that the prophetic terms are involved in the argument, and not only the Hebrew terms, but, by preference, the Greek of the Septuagint. It is in the latter, indeed, that we find the emphasis laid most clearly on the "despect" of our Lord's aspect. In it, also, we have the Hebrew which we render "as a tender plant" interpreted to mean "as a child"; we can see the early expositors at work on the Greek words rather than on the Hebrew; nor can there be any doubt that the Isaian language generally was much in debate in the earliest times, the New Testament itself being witness. What we have to determine is whether a gnostic or early Christian interpretation of Isaiah is sufficient, in itself, to create so widespread a tradition : we may, perhaps, reserve our judgment on the point, knowing how different the early Christian way of writing history is from our own. But on the other hand, there is the testimony of Ephrem, which is certainly not under the influence of the Greek of Isaiah; and contains a numerical specification which was not borrowed from the prophet; and, though more doubtfully, there is the interpretation we have found of the Zacchaeus incident. There is also the evidence of the *Acts of Thomas*, a book not based on Greek documents, but on genuine Syriac. This may stand, so far as it incorporates gnostic tradition, with the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Paul*. We conclude, then, that we have in Dr. Mingana's new document an actual fragment of trustworthy evangelical tradition. It is too early a tradition to be neglected, and one not sufficiently explained as a deduction wrongly made from the text of Isaiah.

If the foregoing enquiry has led us to a correct conclusion, it is probable that the discovery will throw further light on the New Testament itself. It is not, of course, a creedal matter to affirm that our Lord was short of stature or the contrary; though it may be

admitted that incredulity would be provoked if he came in the form of a giant, and, on the other hand, in the form of a dwarf, he would be grotesque. We are not in fairyland, for, as we have said, we have discovered an actual historical trait. Whether the discovery will re-act on the New Testament is another matter. We will take a single instance. In Luke's version of our Lord's discourse the question is asked why "if ye cannot do *that which is least*, do ye worry about the rest?" Here the commentators are naturally perplexed as to how the addition of a cubit to the height can be called a very little thing. If, however, Luke is reporting from an Aramaic source, we may remember that there is no superlative in that speech, and that a very small change would allow us to read our Lord's question in the form, "If he cannot do this, who is little, why worry over the rest?" This would give intelligibility to Luke, and confirm us in our belief that we are dealing with actual stature. We may also find evidence of the desire to get rid of the belief in our Lord's lowliness of stature by observing how the Greek writers evaded the difficulty when they came to phenomenal situations like the Transfiguration or the Resurrection. For instance, the supplement to Mark, in summarizing the Emmaus incident, says that "he appeared to them *in another form*." And there are traces of the same exegesis in the *Harmony of Tatian*. Nor is it impossible that one reason for the emphasis on the account of the *Transfiguration* in the Synoptic Gospel may be found on the physical plane, as the Gnostic and Apocryphal writers suggest.

To the Greek mind we may note that there was nothing unnatural in the Gnostic suggestion that our Lord's stature was greater at the Transfiguration than normally. They had something of the same kind in Homer. When the shipwrecked Odysseus washes off the brine in the river and anoints himself with oil supplied by Nausica's maidens, we are told that Athena worked a miracle on him, so that he was *μείζονα τ' εἰσιδέειν καὶ πάσσονα*, *Od.* 6, 230, and had undergone, poetically, something of a transfiguration.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE.

In connection with the foregoing enquiry into the personal appearance and actual stature of our Lord, it will be interesting to examine

a passage in Tertullian (*adv. Marcionem*, iii., 16, 17) which may assist us toward the completion of the argument.

Tertullian, like the other authors, orthodox and unorthodox, Christian and Pagan, whom we have been quoting, has before him, in his dispute with Marcion, the question of the prophetic intimations of Christ in the Old Testament ; but he has to face the fact that the Old Testament speaks in two different tongues, according to one of which Christ was "fairer than the sons of men," according to the other "more dishonoured and dishonourable than the sons of men." He had to reconcile the 45th Psalm with the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, before he could throw any quotations from the Old Testament at the head of Marcion. In this difficulty he was not alone ; and his solution was not confined to his own argument. Others used it after him, and perhaps it was not his own discovery. The explanation was that the 45th Psalm was to be taken as an allegory of Christ as the Logos (for does it not open with the words, "My heart emitted a good Word" ?), while the prophecy of Isaiah was historical. The Logos who girds his sword on his thigh and rides forth to conquest, with superhuman beauty and gracious speech, is not the historical Jesus but the heavenly Christ ; while, on the other hand, the details of Isaiah's Messianic portrait are given for the actual recognition of the Humiliation and the Incarnation.

If then we had asked Tertullian whether Christ was *ὡραῖος τῇ κάλλει*, which he renders literally enough as *tempestivus decore*, he would answer in the language of the law-courts with which he was familiar,

"Mihi vindico Christum, mihi defendo Jesum ;"

but at the same time, the Christ whom he claims as his own is not David's but Isaiah's.

"Quodcunque illud *corpusculum* sit, quoniam habitum et quoniam conspectum fuit, si inglorius, si ignobilis, si inhonorabilis, meus erit Christus !"

The expressions used are striking ; he himself uses Isaiah to justify them ; Jesus was a tangible, visible person ; he describes him as a "corpusculum." If no question of the Lord's actual stature had been current in the second and third centuries, we might have explained

corpusculum affectionately and pitifully as a "poor body ;" but with such a question in the air, it becomes unnecessary to make the diminutive into a figure of speech. It can be taken literally, and probably it ought to be so taken. In that case Tertullian's evidence is added to that of Celsus and the rest who have spoken of the defective stature of the Lord.