

The Redeemers Humiliation

by J.C. Philpot

The sermon explores the humiliation of the Redeemer, focusing on the eternal purposes of God, the covenant of grace, and the assumption of human nature by the Son of God.

Scripture: Psalm 22:6, Isaiah 53:2, John 16:13, Romans 5:19, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 5:25, Hebrews 10:7, 1 John 2:20

Topics: "Christology", "Redemption"

Description

J.C. Philpot delves into the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the importance of understanding this profound mystery under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He highlights the eternal purposes of God revealed through the covenant of grace, showcasing the divine foresight and provision for the fall of man and the redemption through the Son of God. Philpot explores the voluntary act of Jesus taking on human form, emptying Himself of glory, becoming a servant, and displaying perfect, vicarious, and meritorious obedience to the Father's will, ultimately leading to the salvation and righteousness imputed to believers.

Transcript

Chapter Three from the book Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of Our Blessed Redeemer

In approaching the solemn subject of the sacred humanity of our blessed Lord, as engaged in the work of redemption when here below, we desire to do so under the special teaching and unction of the Holy Ghost, not only that nothing erroneous, inconsistent, or unbecoming may escape our pen, and that what we write may be in the strictest harmony with the oracles of God and the experience of his saints, but that life, and power, and savour may attend our reflections to those believing hearts which may desire to walk with us in these fields of heavenly meditation To guide into all truth, to take of the things of Christ and to show them to his disciples, and thus glorify Jesus, is the especial work of the Holy Ghost. #Joh 16:13-15 To have this divine teaching is to have "an unction from the Holy One whereby we know all things;" #1Joh 2:20 and is to be blessed with that anointing which "teacheth of all things and is truth, and is no lie." #1Joh 2:27 Prayer and supplication, reverent thoughts and feelings towards the sacred Majesty of heaven, inward prostration of spirit before his throne, submission of mind to the word of truth faith in living exercise upon the Person and work of the Son of God. hope anchoring within the veil, and love flowing forth to the adorable Redeemer, will all accompany this heavenly anointing. So unspeakably holy, so great, and so perfect is that true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man; one not made with hands, as the

tabernacle in the wilderness, but prepared by God the Father, assumed by God the Son, and sanctified by God the Holy Ghost, that we should as much dread to drop any word derogatory to or inconsistent with its grace and glory as the high priest under the law would have trembled to carry swine's blood, or the broth of abominable things into the most holy place.

The sacred humanity of his dear Son, as the temple of his Godhead, and as irradiated with the beams of his eternal glory, the eyes of the Father ever contemplate with ineffable complacency and delight. Nor was this tabernacle less glorious in his holy eyes who sees things as they really are not as they appear to man, even in Jesus' deepest humiliation and shame, when he was "a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people." When dogs compassed him, when the assembly of the wicked inclosed him, when they pierced his hands and feet, when He could tell all his bones as they hung stripped on the cross, when his enemies looked and stared upon him, parted his garments among them, and cast lots upon his vesture, #Ps 22:6;16-18, he was as much delighted in by the Father, and was as glorious in his eyes as he now is at the right hand of his throne. He ever was from the hour of his incarnation, he ever will be the same Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, when he hung upon the cross, today as he sits at the right hand of God, and for ever in the eternity of his kingdom, power, and glory. May we, then, who believe in his name, and cleave to him with purpose of heart, as beholding the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, feel such a sacred communion with him in his suffering humanity that we may be able to say, with holy John, in the flowing forth of faith and affection, "And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." #1Jo 1:3

The foundation of this sacred mystery was laid in the eternal purposes of God, and determined by a covenant ordered in all things and sure. The creation of this lower world, and indeed we may say, of the higher world of bright, angelic beings, was but a first step to the bringing to light of these hidden purposes of Jehovah. When he formed man in his own likeness, it was not merely after his moral image, #Eph 4:24 Col 3:10 but after the likeness of that man who was set up in the mind of God from everlasting, or ever the earth was. #Pr 8:23 It was utterly impossible that a holy God could create a sinful man. He, therefore, made man upright, but able to fall. During the period of man's innocency the promises of the covenant of grace, so to speak, slept. They were in the bosom of the covenant, ready to appear, but were not yet needed. But immediately that man sinned and fell, -as soon as Justice, which, as the revelation of the intrinsic holiness of Jehovah, had the first claim to speak, had pronounced sentence on the head of the guilty criminals, mercy, as already laid up in the covenant of grace, stepped in with the first promise which issued from the lips of a sin-pardoning God, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Here was the first intimation of the manifestation of the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil. The bruiser of the serpent's head was to be of the seed of the woman; and the sufferings of the sacred humanity to be assumed of the woman were at the same moment foreshadowed in the declaration that the seed of the serpent should bruise his heel.

As a further development of the sacred mystery of the Slaughtered Lamb, the gracious Lord then instituted Worship by sacrifice, for it is evident from Abel's offering "of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof, which he doubtless burned on the altar, in strict accordance with the Mosaic ritual afterwards appointed, #Nu 18:17 that the Lord then instituted the rite of sacrifice, and himself clothed our first parents with the skins of the sacrificed victims as emblematic of the righteousness of the slain Lamb of God, who was thus revealed to their faith.

Let us not think that these solemn transactions in the garden of Eden were a sudden thought in the mind of God - an expedient then and there for the first time devised to patch up the fall. The covenant of grace

between the three Persons of the sacred Trinity was entered into with a foreview of the fall; and therefore the blessed Lord is called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" #Re 13:8 It is, indeed, derogatory to the character of him who "declareth the end from the beginning," #Isa 46:10 who "looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven," #Job 28:24 to think that the Adam fall took him, so to speak by surprise, was an unlooked-for unexpected event, of which there had been no foresight, and for which there had been made no provision. Far from our mind be such low, grovelling thoughts of the great and glorious self-existent I AM. Such views would root up the very foundations of our faith in his omniscience and omnipotence If God did not foresee the fall, an event charged with the eternal destiny of millions, what minor circumstance can he foresee now? If God did not provide a remedy for the fall as foreseen, where is his wisdom as well as his prescience of the circumstances whereby we are at present surrounded? Such a blind God groping, as it were for a remedy amidst the ruins of the fall, which he never foresaw, is worse than a heathen idol. At any rate it is not the God of the Bible it is not the God whom living souls believe in, worship, and adore. They admire with holy reverence his eternal foresight, and bow with submission before his fixed decrees; they adore his sovereignty in the election of the vessels of mercy and the rejection of the vessels of wrath; and when favoured with a sip of his love, bless his holy name for having loved them with an everlasting love from before the foundation of the world. If those foundations of our most holy faith be destroyed, what can the righteous do? #Ps 11:3 But blessed be God, his prescience and his providence, his wisdom and his grace, his mercy and his love, are all from everlasting to everlasting, secured by a covenant ordered in all things and sure, fixed by firm decree and ratified by his word and by his oath, two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie. #Heb 6:18 In this everlasting covenant it was appointed that the Son of God, the second Person in the glorious Godhead, should take our nature into union with his own divine Person, that he might offer it as a sacrifice for the sins of his elect people, and thus redeem them from all the consequences of the fall, and reconcile them unto God.

We have already shown that this sacred humanity of our adorable Lord was a real human body, and a real human soul, taken at one and the same instant into union with the divine Person of the Son of God, and that it was essentially impeccable and immortal. We have, with God's blessing, in pursuance of our sacred theme, and as a further opening up of "the great mystery of godliness. God manifest in the flesh," to show the work accomplished in that sacred humanity whilst here on earth in its state of humiliation and suffering.

The first consideration is, what he became by this voluntary act of taking our nature into union with his divine Person. In opening up this part of our subject we shall tread closely in the footsteps of that portion of holy writ where the apostle Paul unfolds the sacred mystery of the humiliation of the blessed Lord. #Php 2:5-8

1. He emptied himself of all those outward adjuncts of his glorious Person wherewith he had for ever shone as the eternal Son of the Father in the courts of heaven. We use the word "emptied himself," as being the literal translation of the word rendered in our version, "made himself of no reputation," but we do not mean thereby that he deprived himself of any one of the perfections of the divine nature. Not a single essential attribute of Deity was, or indeed could be in the least degree diminished by his assumption of our nature, for he could no more cease to be all that God is than he could cease to be God. But he emptied himself of them before the eyes of men laying aside their outward and visible manifestation. As an earthly king may lay aside for a while his regal state, and yet not cease to be a king, so the Son of God laid aside for a season those bright beams of his glory which would otherwise have shone forth too brightly and gloriously for human eyes to look upon; for no man can see God and live. #Ex 33:20. Besides which, there

was a secret purpose in the mind of God, whose glory it is to conceal a thing as well as to reveal it, #Pr 25:2, that the glorious person of his dear Son should be veiled from all eyes but those of faith.

As, then, the sun is sometimes veiled in a mist, or by passing clouds, through which his light shines and his orb appears, though dimmed and shorn of those rays which the human eye cannot bear, so the Son of God veiled his divine glory by the tabernacle of the sacred humanity in which he dwelt. He is therefore said to have "tabernacled among us," as the word "dwelt" #Joh 1:14 literally means; for as the Shechinah, or divine presence, dwelt in a cloud of glory, upon the mercy-seat, in the tabernacle erected in the wilderness, #Le 16:2, so that the most holy place needed not the light of the golden candlestick which illuminated the outer sanctuary, and yet was veiled by the curtains of the tabernacle, #2Sa 7:2, so the sacred humanity of the blessed Lord was as a tabernacle to his divine nature, veiling it from the eyes of men, and yet by its indwelling presence filled with grace and glory.

Thus, to common eyes, he had no form nor comeliness, was as a root out of a dry ground, was despised and rejected of men, and when they saw him there was no beauty in him that they should desire him. #Isa 53:2. It is true that sparkles of his eternal Sonship and glorious Godhead shone through the veil of his humanity to believing eyes and hearts, for John says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." #Joh 1:14 And the Father not only outwardly, with a voice from heaven, twice declared that he was his beloved Son, #Mt 3:17 17:5 but revealed him inwardly as such to the hearts of his disciples, according to the Lord's own testimony in the case of Peter #Mt 16:16,17 As long as he was in the world he was the light of the world, #Joh 1:9 8:12 9:5 as the sun, however veiled by clouds, is still the light of the earth. Though rejected and abhorred of men, he could, therefore, still look up to his heavenly Father, in the lowest depths of his humiliation, and speak in the language of filial love and confidence, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." #Isa 49:5

2. The second act of humiliation of the eternal Son of God in assuming our nature was to take upon him the form of a servant. Some are born servants, as Abraham had three hundred and eighteen trained servants born in his house; #Ge 14:14 and some are made servants by others, either taken captive in war #De 21:10 or bought with money. #Le 25:44-46 But the blessed Son of God took upon him the form of a servant, as a voluntary act of grace; and not only the form, but the reality, for the word form respects not only his outward appearance whilst here below. but his inward subjection of soul to God. Therefore the Father said of him, in the language of prophecy, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," #Isa 42:1 and unto him, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." #Isa 49:3 He was formed from the womb to be God's servant, #Isa 49:5 so that he became a servant at the very instant that he took our nature into union with his own divine Person in the womb of the Virgin. Thus the apostle, quoting the words of #Ps 40:6, "Mine ears hast thou opened," (marg. "digged,") that is, "Hast made me thy willing servant," in allusion to #Ex 21:6, renders them, "A body hast thou prepared me;" for by taking the prepared body he became the willing servant of the Father, according to his own words, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." #Ps 40:8

3. By taking this prepared body, he was therefore made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man, that is, though his sacred humanity was intrinsically different from ours, as being holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, impeccable, and immortal, yet, in outward form and appearance, as in reality and truth, it perfectly resembled man's. It ate, it drank, it slept, was weary, sweat drops of blood, endured pain of body and travail of soul. The early church was much pestered with what is called the Gnostic heresy, which, under the plausible assumption that real flesh was too gross and material a

substance for the Son of God to assume, asserted that he took a shadowy, aerial form, in which there was no real flesh or blood, but only the appearance. It is against this heresy that holy John draws his sword, when he declares that "the Word was made flesh," and gives this as a test of saving truth and damnable error: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come. and even now already is it in the world." #1Jo 4:2,3 We must hold fast, then, to this vital truth, that it was real flesh and blood, though holy flesh and blood, that the Son of God assumed in the womb and offered on the tree.

4. Having, then, thus voluntarily assumed the form of a servant, the blessed Lord took that in which the very essence of servitude consists, obedience, and that not only to the word. but to the will of his heavenly Father.

As this obedience forms our justifying righteousness and is a part of his finished work, it claims at our hands the most attentive, prayerful, and meditative consideration. Not, however, to dwell too long on this part of our subject, we may briefly name these five particulars as most marked and blessed features of the obedience of Jesus, whilst here in this state of humiliation. It was voluntary - delighted in - perfect - vicarious - and meritorious.

i. It was voluntary. "Lo! I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God," #Heb 10:7 were, so to speak, the words in his heart and mouth when he came out of the bosom of the Father to take flesh in the womb of the Virgin. There was no compulsion to bring him down from heaven to earth but the compulsion of love. As the love of Christ is said to constrain us not to live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again, #2Co 5:14 so, in a sense, we may say that the love of his people constrained him to live and die for them. They were his inheritance, the portion given him by his Father when he appointed him heir of all things, #Heb 1:2 that they might be his eternal possession. #De 32:9 Ps 2:8 "Thine they were," he therefore meekly reminds his Father, "and thou gavest them me," adding, to show the unity of mind, will, purpose, and possession in the Father and the Son, "And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." #Joh 17:6,10

He, therefore, loved the church as his own bride, the spouse of his heart, whom he had betrothed unto himself as the gift of the Father before time was. #Jer 31:3 Ho 2:19,20 Yes, before the mountains were settled; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world, even then was he rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth that part which his saints should inhabit, and his delights were with the sons of men. #Pr 8:25,26,31 When, then, in and by the fall, the church had become defiled and polluted beyond all thought and expression, when sunk beyond all other help and hope, the image of God in which she had been created, marred, and defaced, she an enemy and an alien by wicked works, the willing captive of sin and Satan, with hell opening its mouth to swallow her up in the same gulf of eternal woe where the fallen angels were already weltering then, even then, O miracle of grace! O wonder of unutterable love! the Son of God, by a purely voluntary act, yet in accordance with the will and counsel of the Father and the Holy Ghost, gave himself for her.

This free, voluntary gift of himself, with all its blessed fruits and consequences, is beautifully unfolded by the apostle in that striking passage, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." #Eph 5:25-27 The forlorn, abject, helpless, and hopeless state of the

church by the fall, and the pitiful compassion of the blessed Lord as her covenant Head and Husband, are beautifully set forth by the prophet Ezekiel, where he compares her to a poor, deserted, abandoned infant, cast out in the open field to the loathing of its person in the day that it was born. No eye pitied it, no hand was stretched forth to do it any necessary office, or give it food, warmth or shelter. Abandoned to die, had not he who is "very pitiful, of tender mercy" pitied her, #Jas 5:11 had not he whose love passeth knowledge loved her, into what an unfathomable depth of everlasting woe must she not have sunk! But in this very hour of need he passed by, and the time was the time of love, for he spread his skirt over her, and swore unto her, entered into a covenant with her, and she became his. But before she could pass into his arms, he had himself to wash away all her filth in the fountain of his own blood, to anoint her with the oil of his grace, and the regenerating, sanctifying influences of the Blessed Spirit, and to clothe her with brodered work, even the righteousness that he wrought for her by his own active and suffering obedience the three blessings of which the apostle speaks as the present portion of the saints of God: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." #Eze 16:5-10 1Co 6:11

ii. It was an obedience that the blessed Lord delighted in. His own words, in the language of prophecy, as if in holy anticipation of his coming from heaven to earth, a thousand years before the incarnation, were, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." #Ps 40:8 Thus he could say, when faint and weary at Samaria's well, his love and delight in doing the will of God absorbing all feeling of the natural wants of the body, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." #Joh 4:34 In this spirit also he said, a year before his actual sufferings and death, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with" - and O what a baptism of suffering and blood! of what agonies of body, and of what travail of soul! "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" #Lu 12:50 - as though his holy soul panted with intense desires for the overwhelming baptism of garden sorrows, and pressed forward to meet it, and the sufferings of the cross, as the fulfilment of his Father's will.

So, on his last journey out of Galilee towards Judea, "he went before," as if he would exceed his usual pace, and outstrip his lagging disciples, "ascending up to Jerusalem," where the will of his Father was to be obeyed, and the atoning sacrifice to be offered. #Lu 13:33 19:28 Blessed Lord! would that we could follow thee in this holy example, and delight to do thy will as thou didst delight to do thy Father's will. And such surely would be our desire and delight were we more conformed to thy suffering image, and more moulded after the pattern of thine obedience. #Ro 12:1,2 Animated by the same holy delight, he said to his disciples, on the eve of his sufferings and death, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." #Lu 22:15 And when the solemn hour drew nigh when the waters came in unto his soul, when he sank in deep mire where there was no standing, when he came into deep waters where the floods overflowed him, #Psa 69:1,2, {1} in the gloomy garden, when he had to drink of the cup of wrath put into his hand, what meek submission, what holy resignation he showed to his Father's will! Where can we look to see such sorrows? But where can we look to find such holy obedience, such meek submission, such patient endurance of them?

iii. Again. It was a perfect obedience. Every thought, every word, and every act of that holy and sacred humanity were perfect, not only as proceeding from a nature intrinsically pure, but as filled with all the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, that glorious Person in the undivided Godhead who not only begot by a divine operation the sacred humanity of our blessed Lord in the womb of the Virgin, but filled it with all his gifts and graces, descending upon him more visibly at his baptism, and anointing him as Prophet, Priest and King, #Isa 61:1 Lu 3:22 4:1 Joh 3:34 Ac 10:38 Heb 1:9 but abiding in him in all his fullness during the

whole of his ministry, sufferings, and death. The law demanded a perfect obedience; it could, indeed, from its very nature, accept no other; and this obedience must be unwavering, flowing on in one uninterrupted stream from the heart, and that stream, like Jordan, all the time of harvest, overflowing all its banks with love to God and man. As the Lord promised that rivers of living water should flow out of the belly (or heart) of him that believed in his name, so the rivers of living obedience flowed from his own heart and lips, as he himself believed in God and did his will from the heart.

iv. The obedience of Jesus to the Father's will was vicarious, that is, rendered on behalf of his church, and imputed to her for righteousness. He stood in her place and stead as her Surety and Representative. She owed a debt which she could not pay, an obedience to the Law which she could not render. The Father accepted his Son's, and thus his obedience became hers. Thus, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, many are made righteous; #Ro 5:19 for God made the Lord Jesus to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. #2Co 5:21.

v. This obedience was meritorious. Here we see the beauty, grace, and glory of the incarnation of the Son of God. As God, he could not suffer; as man he could not merit- but as God-man he could suffer as man, and merit as God. And as though he has two natures, he has but one Person, his doing and dying, his sufferings and obedience, his blood and righteousness, are stamped with all the value and invested with all the validity of Godhead, because he who obeyed and suffered as man is truly and verily God.

Here, then, is "the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." Here flow through this consecrated channel pardon and peace. Here God can be just and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Here every attribute of God is harmonised, the law magnified, the gospel revealed, the sinner saved, and God glorified.

{1} It is in the Psalms, especially #Psalms 22; #Psalms 40; #Psalms 69, that the inward experience of the blessed Lord as a Man of sorrows is set forth.

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