

OCCASIONAL NOTES

Strangers Rest Evangelical Church

Spring 2018

Leading Article by Mark Mullins

‘... Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.’

(Philippians 2:5-8)

In this edition of the Occasional Notes, I would like to consider what it meant for the Lord Jesus to make Himself of no reputation. The Greek word used is *kenōō* and has been correctly translated in some versions, such as the English Standard Version, as ‘emptied’. So verse 7 is translated as follows:

but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant...

This translation is consistent with other translations of the Greek word, *kenōō*, in the New Testament. The question is, of what has the Lord emptied Himself? As we look at this question we will see that it leads us on to the doctrine of the hypostatic union whereby the two natures of the Lord Jesus Christ, human and divine are perfectly united, though unmixed, in one person.

A teaching that has been circulated about the Kenosis of Christ states that the Lord Jesus laid aside His divine attributes when He became a man. The teaching goes that the Lord Jesus ceased to be omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient and sovereign. This, I suggest, arises from a failure to appreciate the distinction between Christ’s two natures.

When the Lord Jesus was born He was born with a pure human nature which is why the angel said to Mary in Luke 1:35:-

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

We see at once that the baby conceived in Mary’s womb was like no other baby because this baby was holy. The miraculous conception of the Lord Jesus meant that his human nature was not inherited from Adam like ours but was created holy because the Lord Jesus’s Father was God, the Father, and not a human father. He was no less than God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).

On the other hand, the Lord’s human nature was subject to the same stresses and strains that we experience.

We can, therefore, point to situations when the Lord was weak, tired and thirsty. As a man he was in one place and not another at the same time. Here are some scriptures that remind us of His humanity:

Luke 2:51:- And he (the Lord Jesus) went down with them, and came to Nazareth, **and was subject unto them**: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

John 4:6-7:- Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, **Give me to drink**.

Matthew 21:18:- Now in the morning as he returned into the city, **he hungered**.

John 19:28:- After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, **I thirst**.

Perhaps the most obviously human characteristic that he demonstrated was that he died on a cross, while God is eternal.

However, as we look through the Gospels we see that the Lord Jesus's divine attributes were also present during His ministry:

The Lord Jesus was omnipresent (that is present everywhere):

Matthew 18:20:- For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Note that the Lord Jesus used the present and not the future tense.

The Lord Jesus was all powerful:

John 11:25:- Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

In other words, He has the power to give life to anyone who believes in Him.

The Lord Jesus demonstrated his ability to create from the dust of the earth when He restored the blind man's sight:

John 9:6-7 When he had thus spoken,

he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

The Lord Jesus demonstrated His power over creation when He calmed the storm and walked on water:

Mark 4:37-39: And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Matthew 14:25: And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

The Lord Jesus was omniscient or all-knowing both before and after his resurrection:

Luke 6:8 But **he knew their thoughts**, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

John 21:17: He (the Lord Jesus) saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, **Lord, thou knowest all things**; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

There has been some controversy about whether the Lord Jesus continued to create and sustain the world while He was on earth. Some have erroneously suggested that the Lord Jesus handed over this function to the Father or the Holy Spirit. However, nowhere does the Bible say this. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus was also in heaven while He was

on earth:

John 1:18:- No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

John 3:13:- And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even the Son of man which is in heaven*.

Obviously, the Lord Jesus was not in heaven in His human nature while He was on earth but in His Divine nature He was in heaven because, as God He is omnipresent.

Finally, the Lord Jesus, while on earth forgave sins, which only God can do:

Mark 2:9-11:- Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk*? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house*.

One of the great mysteries of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus is that we find during His life on earth that during His ministry He acted both in His human nature and in His divine nature. In His human nature He was filled with the Holy Spirit. Indeed, unlike any man before or after Him, the Lord Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). Thus, the Lord Jesus was tempted in His human nature after He had been filled with the Holy Spirit:

Matthew 4:1:- Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Some believe that the Lord Jesus did all His miracles as a man, by the power of the Holy Spirit. For the reasons I have already given, I do not believe we can say this because it is quite evident that some of His miracles were performed in His divine nature – such as the calming of the storm in Mark 4 and the raising of Lazarus in John 11. These are important distinctions to make because if such miracles

can be performed by a man filled with the Holy Spirit then it might lead to Christians speaking to the elements and trying to calm the storm like our Lord. However, Christians are not to do so because this is God's prerogative alone.

In John 17:5, in His high priestly prayer, the Lord Jesus prayed:

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

This verse, like our opening verse from Philippians 2, indicates that the Lord Jesus had a glory with the Father which He laid aside when He came to earth. Note that this was a glory He shared with the Father. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that from eternity the Lord Jesus was the brightness of the Father's glory. This glory was not laid aside when He came to earth. Rather it was *veiled* so that men could not see it.

Consider Isaiah 53:3-4:-

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

These verses show that Christ, in His flesh, was not recognised as the Son of the Living God. If the Lord Jesus had revealed Himself in all His glory then men could not have stood before Him. An example of this is when the soldiers came to arrest Him. John 18:6 records that as soon as the Lord Jesus identified Himself the men sent to arrest Him "went backward and fell to the ground". For a moment the Lord Jesus showed His glory to these men. Yet they did not acknowledge Him.

On the other hand, the disciples beheld Christ's glory as John testified in John 1:14:-

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.

In order to reconcile this verse with John 17:5 and Philippians 2:7 we have to conclude that the Lord Jesus never lost His glory but that this was only a veiling of it.

The transfiguration is another example of the Lord Jesus revealing his glory. This is what Peter said of this glorious event:

2 Peter 1:16-18:- For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.



Unfortunately, not all the great men of the past have understood this point. One does not like to criticise men like Charles Wesley. Yet there is a line in his tremendous hymn, “And can it be, that I should gain an interest in the Saviour’s blood” that needs to be altered. The verse goes like this:

He left His Father’s throne above
(So free, so infinite His grace!)
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam’s helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,

For, O my God, it found out me!

While this verse makes for soul-stirring singing, the third line has an unfortunate implication. The Lord Jesus did not empty Himself of any of His divine attributes which might be implied here. The emptying implied in John 17:5 and Philippians 2:7, as we have already seen, is restricted to a veiling of the divine nature by the human nature. Some hymn books have, correctly (in my view) changed the third line to: “Emptied Himself and came in love” which brings the verse into conformity with biblical revelation.

When we consider the two natures of Christ we must also recognise that the Bible does *not* divide the two natures of Christ. Instead, anything done in the one nature is attributed to the person of Christ. This can be illustrated in respect of the crucifixion in two ways. It is clear that God did not literally die on the cross. It was strictly speaking Christ in his human nature that died. Yet the person of Christ died. Thus, we read in 1 Corinthians 2:8 that the princes of this world crucified the Lord of Glory. We know from Psalm 24:8-10 that the King of glory is Jehovah of hosts. Because Christ is both fully God and fully man anything attributed to one nature is necessarily an act of His whole person. So God died on Calvary.

This is also true of the blood that was shed on Calvary. Plainly, on one level, it was natural human blood and could not therefore have been more than eight pints. Yet the blood was also divine because it belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ who was both God and man. This is specifically stated by Paul at the end of his farewell sermon to the Ephesians in Acts 20:28 where he stated:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the **church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.**

This verse is literally saying that the blood that was shed was God’s blood. Now this has an important implication for our salvation and emphasises the great importance of the doctrine of the two natures of Christ perfectly united in one person. If it was only a man’s

blood that was shed then, even if that man was sinless, as was Christ in His human nature, it would not have been sufficient to atone for our sins. Psalm 49:6-9:-

They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever) that he should still live for ever and not see corruption.



The difference between a merely human death for sin and the death of the Son of God for sin is that because God's blood was shed, God being infinite is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him (Hebrews 7:25). Thomas Watson, the Puritan divine, drew an interesting analogy between the altar that sanctifies the gift (Matthew 23:19) and the divine nature of Christ that sanctified the sacrifice made in His human nature. He made the point that, while separate, the two natures in Christ were essential for the work of redemption to be completed. This is how he put it in *A Body of Divinity: Contained in Sermons upon the Westminster Assembly's Catechism*, at page 149:

How could Christ suffer, being God? Christ suffered only in the human nature. But if only Christ's humanity suffered,

how could this suffering satisfy for sin? The human nature being united to the divine, the human nature suffered, the divine satisfied. Christ's Godhead supported the human nature that it did not faint, and gave virtue to his sufferings. The altar sanctifies the thing offered on it. Matt 23:19. The altar of Christ's divine nature sanctified the sacrifice of his death, and made it of infinite value.

I would like to deal with one further point on this subject before closing. It has been suggested that, by the Lord Jesus Christ becoming a man, He introduced change into the Godhead. On one level, this seems a legitimate objection to make and is connected to whether or not the Lord Jesus gave up any of His divine powers when He became a man.

Yet the writer to the Hebrews is clear that this is not the case since in Hebrews 13:8 we read that "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever". We see then, that even though the Second Person of the Trinity only took upon the name of Jesus Christ at His birth into the world in about 4 BC, yet because He is God, in His person, He has never changed but has been the same for all eternity and will continue to be the same. Therefore, adding to His deity humanity has brought *no* change to the Godhead. What an extraordinary mystery this is! Should we not therefore end this study with the words of the doxology at the end of Romans 11:33-36?

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

Some might see these great doctrines as in some way dry and esoteric – that is of no real practical significance. Yet Paul, in Philippians 3:10, that his overall purpose was "that I might know Him". If we are to know the Lord Jesus Christ we must study what the scriptures say

about Him. If we do not then we will have a low view of the Lord Jesus which might cause us to view Him more as man than God. Alternatively, if we do not appreciate that He was fully human we might fall into the trap of thinking that He was some kind of Herculean man, being part God and part man. Taken to an extreme, if we

do not correctly grapple with these great doctrines we might find ourselves worshipping a different Christ who is no Christ at all, so let us be diligent in our studies of our great Saviour that we might know Him and the power of His resurrection.

An Abiding Life: ‘Nothing is Important than that which is Eternal’ (Amy Carmichael) – Part 1 ¹ by Faith Amurao



Birth

Amy Beatrice Carmichael was born at Millisle, Northern Ireland on December 16, 1867. Amy was sent to boarding school in England at the age of twelve, and around the age of fifteen. After a Children’s Special Service Mission in which she and others sang Anna B. Warner’s ‘Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so’ she realised that she needed to open the door of her heart to Jesus. She wrote, ‘In His great mercy the Good Shepherd answered the prayers of my mother and father and many

other loving ones, and drew me, even me, into His fold.’

Family Tragedy

When she was nearly eighteen, the family fortune was lost after a large loan her father, David Carmichael, made in order to help a friend who was in need of starting afresh a new life, was not repaid. Soon after her father contracted double pneumonia. He died on 12 April 1885 at fifty-four years. The final word Amy read to him was from Milton’s *Samson Agonistes*:

All is best, though oft we doubt
What the unsearchable dispose
Of Highest Wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.

The loss of her father did not deter her from her commitment to serve others as she became a second mother to her siblings while taking classes in painting.

The Life-Changing Word

One Sunday morning would change Amy, her life’s values and purpose. Her and her brothers were returning from church when they caught sight of an old woman heavily laden with a bundle. Against their embarrassment at the scornful looks of other respectable people, they carried on and as they passed a lavish fountain, Amy writes, “this mighty phrase was suddenly

¹ This account is based on Iain Murray’s *Amy Carmichael: ‘Beauty for Ashes’* and Elisabeth Elliot, *A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael*

flashed as it were through the grey drizzle: 'Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide —" (1 Corinthians 3:12-14). Something had happened that had changed her life forever in the face of which she had to settle alone with God in the privacy of her room. From this point on, her life would be shaped by the thought that 'Nothing is important but that which is eternal.' She also acknowledged that even all her Christian activity such as her gospel work among children in a deprived area of Belfast would amount to a heap of wood, hay, and stubble until she began living a holy life and a life to help others.

The 'Dear Old Man': Mr Wilson

In 1887, at a meeting on the deepening of spiritual life in Belfast, she heard Robert Wilson, a Quaker, who would play an important part in her future. He was a widower whose only daughter had died when she was around Amy's age and an owner of a coal mine and a brick-making factory in Cumbria. After Amy's visits to him became more indispensable, he asked permission from Amy's mother whether she could be allowed to stay with him and his two bachelor sons in their late thirties part of the year as an adopted daughter.

He told her of the three inscriptions over the doors of the Milan Cathedral. The one with a carving of roses read, 'All that pleases is but for a moment', another with a carving of a cross said, 'All that grieves is but for a moment' and over the great central door are the words, 'Nothing is important but that which is eternal.'

The Call to Go

Amy recorded spiritual milestones, dates on which God met her in a special way. On a day of crisis as if she was torn in two because of her responsibilities to her family and Mr Wilson in 13 January 1892, a snowy Wednesday evening, Amy heard the categorical call again and again:

Go ye. She heard God say as clearly as a human voice, GO YE. In 1888, someone sent a ten-pound note to the chairman of Keswick Convention 'as the nucleus of a fund for sending out a Keswick missionary.' Four years later, the first one, chosen to be sent and supported by that fund was Amy Carmichael. On July 26 that year, Amy noted in her *Daily Light*, a book of daily Scriptural readings for morning and evening, on its margin, 'Definitely given up for service abroad.' The opening, morning verse was 'By faith Abraham ... called to go out ... obeyed.'

To Japan

'The thought came' to Amy to which Mr Wilson's feeling agreed that she should go to Japan. She told a friend what was not said to anyone else, 'The night I sailed for China, March 3, 1893, my life, on the human side, was broken, and it never was mended again. But *He has been enough.*' As the ship on which she was a passenger was leaving, her friends sang Matthew Bridges' hymn:

Crown Him the Son of Man
Who every grief hath known
That wrings the human breast,
And takes and bears them for His own
That all in Him may rest.

Amy watched the face of her old friend, Mr Wilson and each 'on the human side, was broken.' The peace in her heart was nothing less than the same final gift of the Lord to His beloved disciples: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' The peace was present but it did not completely undo the pain.

After a short time in evangelistic mission in Japan and a brief return to England after Mr Wilson suffered a stroke, she responded to an opening in the work of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society in India. On 11 October 1895, she left Britain at the age of 27 never to return.

Praise and Prayer Requests

For Praise:

- For another good year the Lord has blessed, the church anniversary being next month.
- For the help of a brother from Pakistan with the evangelistic outreaches, particularly the starting up of an evangelistic table in front of the church on Thursdays.
- For a renewed zeal in open air outreach, particularly involvement with the ministry of Peter Simpson (Penge Free Methodist Church) in his outreaches at Speaker's Corner, Leicester Square and other needy places.

For Prayer:

- That every child who attends the church, occasionally and regularly, would come to know the Lord Jesus as their own Saviour from their sins.
- That the Lord would continue to bless the preaching of the Word on the Lord's Day and during the week, including that the Word would reach the hearts of listeners, present and online, and change lives.
- That God would continue to provide grace for the administration and smooth running of the church, including its premises.
- That more local individuals and families would join the church and fully participate in knowing and serving the Lord.

Notice



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