

II. **THE ECLIPSED GLORY OF CHRIST**—“**[He] emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men . . . He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross**” (Phil. 2:7-8).

DOCTRINE: *Jesus’ divine and essential glory was veiled in His assumption of our nature, yet He manifested His glory in submission to the Father for the salvation of His people.*

A. **The Incarnation of Christ: the Glory of His Infinite Condescension**

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14)

“[W]ho, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant . . .” (Phil. 2:6-7)

We could entitle this consideration, the “earthly” glory of Christ, but I have taken rather the term “eclipsed” glory (cf. Owen, 344). In a certain sense His earthly existence and sojourn was without a visible glory. Some may even say of His earthly ministry, that it had “Ichabod”—no glory (cf. Owen, 327). Yet surely to the eye of faith the glory of Christ shines through though veil of His humanity and His humiliation. When John writes, **“we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father,”** it is not simply that moment of the transfiguration he has in mind. For he adds of this One that He is **“full of grace and truth.”** Later in chapter 2 after the Lord makes the water into wine, he says in verse 11, **“This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory . . .”** Thus, it is not simply a physically “seen” glory, but a spiritual glory, a glory of virtue. Surely, again, we encounter a subject worthy of years of study and exposition. May the Lord be pleased to strengthen our faith and deepen our love to Him who has given Himself for us in order to bring us to God, who became poor that we might become rich.

The entrance of the Son of God into human existence required a different way of speaking. His birth, as we have noted, was *not the beginning of His personal existence* (He really had no beginning). Even though the Gospels use “born” and “conceive” in the narrative accounts which deal with the birth of Christ, and even though Jesus said “to this end I was born” (John 18:37), it is still true to observe that there is something quite different about His entrance into human life. This difference is seen in the language used: John 1:14, 3:13, 17; 6:51; Rom. 1:3; 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:47; 2 Cor. 8:9; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:6-8; 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:16; Heb. 2:9, 14, 17; 1 John 3:5, 8.

Incarnation refers to that divine act in which the Second Person of the Triune God assumed a human nature, flesh and form. It is that act whereby He *“took human nature in its [completeness] into His person, with the result that He is both divine and human, without any impairment of the fullness of either the divine or the human”* (John Murray).

We shall consider this aspect of our Lord’s glory under the following categories: Condescension (Movement), Virgin Birth (Method), True Humanity (Manifestation), and Unique Constitution (Mystery).

The Infinite “Stoop” He Made. “Making Himself Nothing” (ESV). Here we consider His voluntary descent, His divine “stooping” to take up our humanity into His own deity. Who can rightly comprehend the “stoop” that He made (see Owen, 39-40; Octavius Winslow, *The Glory of*

the Redeemer, 127-128)!

Epitomizing Text: Philippians 2:5-8. It is important to note that this text is not set forth principally as a doctrinal exposition of the person of Christ, but as a practical exhortation to an imitation of Christ. Yet there is a doctrinal foundation behind the practical application. What happened?

1. **The NATURE of His Condescension.**

- First, the pre-incarnate Christ occupied the highest place and prominence. He was **“in the form of God”** (v. 6). The word “form” denotes the form, appearance, look or likeness of some one.” The “form” is not the essence, but it presupposes the essence. It is an “inside and outside” term. This One who emptied Himself is the One who had glory with the Father before the world began (Jn. 17:5). He possessed all the majesty of deity, performed all its functions and enjoyed all its privileges (as we have considered in His Pre-existent glory). He enjoyed unrivaled eminence.
- Second, we are told that Christ did not insist on His rights. Our text says that He **“did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped [*harpagmos*].”** We first note that He had “equality with God” is an assumption of the statement! He had rights: to be recognized, to be revered, to be served by the heavenly host and all creation, to be immune from weakness, poverty, pain and humiliation. But notice that He did not insist on holding on to His divine rights. He did not regard them as something to hold on to, to cling to, to “grasp” as a version renders it.

The connection of this with the previous could be either *concessive* or *causal*.

The concessive idea is found in many translations with its “although”: **“who, although, He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.”** The idea is that although He was God and could have insisted on the rights of being God, He did not.

The causal idea can be expressed in the following way: **“who, because He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.”** The idea here is that He recognized that equality with God is not a matter of getting and grasping, but of giving! In other words, this response of Christ was quite God-like! Support for this may be seen in the account of another “stooping and serving” in John 13:3-5. Notice the introduction that John gives to this act in verse 3. This can lead us to the conclusion that the impulse to serve lies at the very heart of deity. God is not self-centered and self-absorbed (though by all rights He can be!).

- Third, Christ **“made Himself nothing [*ekenosen*].”** The idea is of vanity and futility. It was not an emptying of His deity. The text says **“Himself.”** And it explains the emptying in the next phrase, **“taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men.”** The emptying came *not* by subtraction, but by “addition”—a **“taking”!** Note what He “added”:

First, the **“form of a bondservant.”** He became a servant as surely as He was God. He takes up a new relationship with the Father. From eternity He was a Son. Now He becomes a Servant, under the law, bound to obey, charged with a work to complete (John 17:4).

Second, He is **“made in the likeness of men . . . in appearance as a man.”** He assumed a “public image” which was entirely human. What He was in His fullness was veiled. His public impression was not noteworthy. There was nothing about His appearance to distinguish Him as anyone special or unique. Not a head would have turned as He walked. He looked utterly ordinary!

Third, in this posture and appearance, **“He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”** Stooping from glory, He continued to “stoop” as a man. He stoops all the way to death! This death would be a part of His obedience. In His original “form” He was immortal, immune to death; but He voluntarily assumes our mortality.

Changes . . . There were *massive changes* brought about by this “stoop.” There was a change in His dwelling place—from heaven to earth (John 6:51). There was a change in His possessions—from riches to poverty (2 Cor. 8:9). There was a change in His state of glory—from visible glory to obscurity (veiling) (John 1:10; 17:5). There was a change in His estate—from exaltation to service (Matt. 20:26-28; Phil. 2:6-7).

All of these changes were temporary, except for His assumption of our human nature. He forever remains “the Man,” though now exalted, clothed with glory and adored by the host of heaven (Acts 7:54-56; Rev. 1:17-18). [More of this shall be considered in His Exalted Glory]

Yet No Change. We must also note that there was *no change* in His divine nature as He assumed our human nature. He did not lay His divine nature and attributes and prerogatives aside. When He “stooped” He did not stop being what He had and will always be--God. *“He became what He was not, but He did not cease to be what He always was . . . He who is God, can never not be God, just as he who is not God can never be God”* (Owen). He did not change His divine nature into the human nature. His divine nature remained the same. It was not mixed into His human nature and made something else. The divine essence is the sum of all its attributes. *“To hold that God the Son actually emptied Himself in His state of humiliation of even one divine characteristic is [the same as] saying that He who ‘enfleshed’ Himself in the Incarnation, while perhaps more than man, is now not quite God either”* (Reymond, 616). The result of this, Bishop Moule, has observed, is a Savior not quite God, a “bridge broken at the farther end”! [cf. Owen, 41-43]

Theological Conclusions from this Passage. [Based upon summary/conclusion in Paul Feinberg's “The Kenosis and Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Analysis of Philippians 2:6-11” *TrinJ* 1:1 (Spring 1980) 21-46]

The kenosis:

- Precludes an “adoptionist” Christology. Terms used *Form of God* and *equality with God*. Pre-existence presented.
- Consisted in the surrender of Christ's position, not his powers or prerogatives. Contrast presented *form of God* and *form of a slave*.
- Involved the assumption of genuine humanity by Christ. Descriptive phrases *form of a slave*, *likeness of men* and *appearance as a man*.
- Included the veiling of the pre-incarnate glory of the Son. Morphe contrast: *morphe theou--morphe doulou*.
- Involved the voluntary non-use of Jesus' divine attributes. Reasoning: Could never be surrender of these attributes!

- Required that Jesus depend on the Holy Spirit. Converse of voluntarily setting aside His position. The true man walked in dependence on the Spirit (Matt. 12:28; Lk 4:14-18).
- Resulted in the exaltation of Jesus to the superlative position. God will most certainly exalt the Son--Yahweh!

2. The SIGNIFICANCE of His Condescension.

- First, the *kenosis* involved an obscuring of the divine glory of Christ. *‘Christ, indeed, could not divest Himself of godhead,’ wrote Calvin, ‘but He kept it concealed for a time, that it might not be seen, under the weakness of the flesh. Hence He laid aside His glory in the view of men, not by lessening it, but by concealing it’* (Macleod, 217).
- Second, the *kenosis* involved a willingness to stoop as low as necessary to save us. Two great decisions behind it: the pre-temporal decision to assume the form of a servant and the likeness of men, and the temporal decision to humble Himself in obedience to death (cf. Heb. 10:5-7). It is the beginning of an act which really was not finished until He could exclaim from Calvary, **“It is finished!”** as is apparent from the text of Philippians 2:8. All His steps took Him on a long downward journey that would end on the Cross. *“Every day of the Lord’s life He re-enacted the kenosis, renewing the decision what had made Him nothing and choosing to move further and further into the shame and pain it involved”* (Macleod, 218). He cast Himself, as it were, into the hands of His Father.
- The *kenosis* involved a real renunciation of status and privilege. It was an unrivaled renunciation. *“It is what Christ assumed that humbled Him—He emptied Himself not by changing His own divinity but by assuming our changeableness.”* He did not give up any of His divine attributes. The “emptying” occurred by “taking the form of a servant,” that is, assuming our human nature. It involves taking on a lowly status and position, not laying aside His essential attributes or nature. As one version (NIV) renders it: *“He made Himself nothing.”*

Avoid Common Misunderstandings of this “Stooping.”

- Not temporary suspension or, at best, a truncation, of His deity.
- Not an “emptying” or “renouncing” of His deity.
- Not a “surrender” of the powers, prerogatives and privileges of His deity. Rather a “self-denial” of their exercise on His own behalf (though not so in the case of others, see Macleod, 220). It is not a case of deity “reduced” as of divine capacities “redirected” (though not always). It might be better to say, His divine capacities were now freely and fully “submitted” or “enlisted” to the great purpose of the Father to redeem and reconcile our rebel race and restore a fallen cosmos. *“When Jesus chose to use His divine attributes it was only at His Father’s will, always to authenticate His mission and never for His own benefit”* (Blanchard).

The Point. *“We now see what it meant for the Son of God to empty Himself . . . It meant a laying aside of glory (the real kenosis); a voluntary restraint of power; an acceptance of hardship, isolation, ill-treatment, malice and misunderstanding; finally, a death that involved such agony—spiritual, even more than physical—that His mind nearly broke under the prospect of it . . . It meant love to the uttermost for unlovely men, who ‘through His poverty, might become rich’”* (Packer, *Knowing God*, 55).

3. The GLORIOUS PURPOSES of His Condescension.

- a. ***To Save Sinners by His Life and Death.*** First, and primarily, Jesus Christ, as God, assumed our humanity in order that He might save sinners by His life and death. Probably no clearer text of Scripture sets this forth than what we find in Hebrews 2. But considering verse 9: **“But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.”** Here in this verse are set forth the essential elements in our own redemption. First, there is His incarnation. He is **“Made for a little while lower than the angels.”** Second, there is his **“suffering of death.”** This could not have taken place without the first. Third, there is the wonderful truth that this death was substitutionary, for He tasted death for **“everyone.”** And, finally, the declaration that all this is **“By the grace of God.”** This truth is declared later in the same chapter in versus **14-15.** There were no sacrifices which in themselves could wash away sin completely. **“Sacrifice and offering Thou has not desired, but a body Thou hast prepared for Me...”** (Heb. 10:5). A Mediator—the man Christ Jesus. *“It was God who was offended, and it was God who satisfied,”* said the Puritan Watson, to which we would add, *“It was man who offended, and it was man who must answer for the offense.”* Both are necessary for our redemption. For our redemption there was required a perfect obedience and a perfect payment/satisfaction, each having infinite value to answer for a world of sinners. His deity answers the demands of an infinite obedience and an infinite payment. His humanity answers the demands of a human substitution and human satisfaction. Luther called our Lord, *maximus peccator*, the greatest sinner, as bearing our sins in His body.

Consider this: He took up our flesh that He might render for us what we owed to God in terms of obedience. Consider this: He took up our flesh that He might die in it for us what we owed to God in terms of disobedience. The goal of Bethlehem was always Golgotha. The whole point of this birth of this blessed fruit is not sentimental, but sacrificial. He was enfleshed to be slaughtered for sinners. The body prepared for Him was prepared to be **“one sacrifice for sins for all time.”** The humanity He willingly and lovingly assumed, was assumed that He might assume our sin; be made sin for us; absorb our guilt; and, in our place, assuage the holy and righteous wrath of Almighty God against sin. He took a body that He might take the blows due to sinners. Here is why the fruit of Mary’s womb was so blessed. Had Christ not been made flesh, then we would forever have been made cursed. Had He not been incarnated, then we would have been incarcerated and incinerated forever!

- b. ***To Share with Sinners His Life.*** Second, Jesus Christ, as God, assumed our humanity in order that He might share with sinners His own eternal life. More than pardon, as wonderful and essential as it is, is needful for the Christian life. It is not only his death which we need, but His life, the virtue and power of it. This, too, is a blessing which flows out of this blessed fruit of Mary’s womb. In John 10:10 the Lord declares, **“I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”** Here is one of the Lord’s purposes for coming. That His sheep may have life—eternal life, abundant life. Notice, however, how this life is to be made available in the next verse: **“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”** It is by laying down His life that the Good Shepherd gives to His sheep eternal life. Consider one more passage in John 6. In the context of this chapter the Lord Christ declares that He is **“the bread of life”**—the bread wherein life is found and given. In verse 1 He says, **“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread; he shall live forever.”** In the rest of the verse He specifically declares what this bread

is: “[A]nd the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.” An incarnate life given is the ground for our eternal life. As one has written: “*No incarnation, no death; no death, no atonement; no atonement, no Bread of life dying for men. Without God made flesh, no eternal life for sinners*” (McClain). This blessed fruit of Mary is blessed living bread, our manna from heaven. Thus says Paul in Galatians 2:20: “**the life which I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.**”

- c. *To Sympathize with Sinners.* Third, Jesus Christ, remaining fully God, assumed our humanity in order that He might sympathize with sinners. In Hebrews 2:17 this fact is declared: “**Therefore, he had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.**” The scriptures bear full witness to His engagement and identification of our human situation. He was “**tempted in all things as we are**” (Heb. 4:15). He was tired and hungry and thirsty. He wept. “**He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears**” in the face of death. “**He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.**” “*Christ took our flesh that He might know how to pity us . . .*” (Watson.) See Him standing before the deaf and dumb man in Mark 7. In verse 34 we are told He looks “**up to heaven with a deep sigh.**” Not because He was unequal to the task, but because of deep compassion over the physical condition. See Him standing in veiled omnipotence before the tomb of Lazarus and what is recorded? He “**wept.**” No cold, dispassionate physician He! He had the same kind of nerve endings we have. The same glands and acids. The same internal fibers and impulses raced through His body. He was made up of the same complexes of emotion and will and understanding. He was no divine automon. His humanity was not just a coat, merely upon Him but detached from Him. Not a flak jacket for bearing sins. Now, it is appropriate to ask whether it was necessary for Christ, as God, to become man in order to be sympathetic to sinners. No, *as God* omniscient He would absolutely comprehend. But *as man* He would experientially comprehend and remove from us all doubt as to His sympathy. Oh, how true it is when the Psalmist declares in Psalm 103:14: “**He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.**” And if this could be said when our Blessed Christ was naked in the splendor of His preincarnate glory, how much more now He who bore our frame (without its sin)!

Find a human situation wherein the Lord Christ, in His humanity, was not exposed to it. Though you may say to the closest earthly companion you have, “*You can’t understand,*” you cannot say that of Christ. You can’t say to this blessed fruit, “*You haven’t been in my shoes!*” In the incarnation our comfort is fleshed out. Now this understanding and pity of Christ is not that we may engage in spiritual sloth or self-pity. It is that we may not get discouraged in pressing on! “**For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart**” (Heb. 12:3). Does the world hate you? It hated Him first, and he felt the blows of its hatred. Have you been slandered and reviled? Have you been broken over personal betrayal? And it is identity with us in the flesh which informs and fuels His own sympathetic intercession for us at the right hand of God! “**For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin**” (Heb. 4:15).

In all the struggles of the heart,

The Man of Sorrows had a part.”

d. **To Show Sinners Godliness.** Fourth, Christ Jesus assumed our humanity by which He sets for us the pattern of godliness. That is really the intention of Paul in I Timothy 3:16 when he speaks of the **“mystery of godliness”** in terms of Christ. He is that mystery which true godliness embraces and on which it feeds. By fulfilling all righteousness as the God-man, the Lord Christ established the pattern for our obedience. In His humanity He became our Exemplary, our Example, of faith and obedience. This blessed fruit of Mary’s womb has fleshed out for us gospel faith and obedience. It remained no longer an ideal abstraction. He condescends to show us what pleases the Father. He will speak the purity of God’s gospel and show us the living of it. Thus can John write in I John 2:6: **“[T]he one who says he abides in [Christ] ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”** So the Lord Himself could say in John 13:34: **“[L]ove one another, even as I have loved you.”** How could Paul exhort the saints at Corinth, **“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ”** (I Cor. 11:1), unless there was such a pattern fleshed out? And is there not this same idea in Paul’s words to the Ephesians in chapter 5 and verse 1: **“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”** Certainly this verse ties to the previous wherein the forgiveness of God is mentioned, but it is tied also to verse 2: **“and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us.”** What does He say later? **“Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her”** (Eph. 5:25). In the incarnation our gospel obedience is fleshed out. On the last day of his incarnated life this blessed fruit of Mary’s womb stoops to wash the filthy feet of His followers and says, **“I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you”** (John 13:15). Later He tells them on the same occasion to love one another as He had loved them (v. 34). Blessed hands and feet of Christ! Yes, blessed as nailed to the tree for our pardon, but blessed as yielding to the Father for our pattern! The pattern for our disposition (2 Cor. 10:1). The pattern for our suffering/submitting (I Peter 2:21). The pattern for our enduring (Heb. 12:1). The pattern for our resisting sins and temptation (Heb. 12:3-4). The pattern for our praying. The pattern for our humility (Phil. 2:5f). The pattern for our loving. The pattern for our serving. The pattern for our obeying. The pattern for our zeal (Jn. 2:17). The pattern for our contempt of the world (Jn. 14:30). Oh, the prophet’s words are now our own: **“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you. . . .”** (Micah 6:8). Yea, He has shown us!

Beloved, this is the high calling of our faith. There is not one who has lived up to that pattern, but that does not take away from the value and blessedness of it. We dare not take our eyes off it! To look any lower is to abandon ourselves to a lower plane. As Christ was willing to be made in our image, let us strive to be conformed to His. This is the blessed fruit of true religion—to be like Him in all our thoughts, words and deeds.

e. **To Show Sinners Their Perfected Humanity.** Fifth, Jesus assumed our humanity to sanctify it forever. Said Watson, *“[H]e took our flesh, that He might ennoble our human nature with honor.”* The original human nature was untainted. It did not have within it the seed of disease and decay and death. It was untainted of sin and perfectly suited to the praise and service of God. But **“through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men. . . .”** (Rom. 5:12). In the accurate words of the children’s couplet: *“In Adam’s fall, we sinned all.”* Since Adam our humanity as it bears the image of God has been drastically marred. The humanity which Christ assumed He kept and still keeps and will keep forever. Isn’t

that an amazing thing?!? What He willed to put on in the virgin's womb, He will never put off! He does not disdain the body, the flesh, our humanity! He will ascend to glory wearing it, and will reside in glory with it. **"He is not ashamed to call [us] brethren"** and will bear the badge of this identified with us! *"Christ having married our flesh has exalted it above the angelic nature"* (Watson). This humanity is exalted in glory to the highest degree, but humanity it remains. Certainly it was endowed and equipped with qualities which enable Him to reside and function in the transcendent realm, but even so endowed, it remains humanity still. Not humanity deified, but humanity glorified. Not humanity changed into something else, but humanity raised like nothing else. The peasant rags of His humiliation have been made the royal robe of His exaltation! But still that He should wear it all! Thirty years after His resurrection and ascension into heaven Paul still calls Him in I Timothy 2:5, **"the man Christ Jesus."** In Acts 17, as Paul exhorts the men in Athens to repent, he tells them of God's appointed day of judgment **"through a Man whom He has appointed"** (V.31). *"Jesus will come in human nature to judge the world"* (Murray). And it is Christ as God, yet holding onto a glorified humanity that we look. **"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory . . ."** (Phil. 3:20-21). And this is the testimony of John: **"Beloved, now are we children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be." We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him. . ."** You mean like Him as gods, as Mormonism teaches? No, like Him as He is man whose humanity has been glorified! He remains our pattern in heaven and for eternity. In the incarnation our hope is fleshed out **Hebrews 2:9; 2 Cor. 3:18.**

- f. **To Show Sinners God.** Last, and paradoxically, Jesus Christ, as God became man to show us God! The apostle John climaxes the prologue to his gospel with these words in John 1:18: **"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."** Literally, *"He has exegeted Him."* Christ makes a living and breathing disclosure of the Father. In John 14:9 the Lord Christ tells Philip: **"He who has seen Me has seen the Father. . ."** The writer to the Hebrews declares that Christ **"is the radiance of [God's] glory and the exact representation of His nature. . ."** (Heb. 1:3; cf. Col. 1:15). In 2 Corinthians 4 Paul declares that the **"knowledge of the glory of God"** is **"in the face of Christ."** By the very name given Him in Matthew 1:23, **"Immanuel . . . God with us"**, this paradoxical disclosure is suggested. It is the confession of Thomas. *"The Word was made flesh that through the glass of His human nature we might look upon God"* (Watson).

Applications of this Glorious "Stoop." He is glorious in the infinite "stoop" He made.

In His leaving glory He is glorious. He enjoyed the highest eminence and the purest delights. *"He possessed all the majesty of deity, performed all its functions and enjoyed all its prerogatives. He was adored by the Father and worshipped by the angels. He was invulnerable to pain, frustration and embarrassment. He existed in unclouded serenity. His supremacy was total, His satisfaction complete, His blessedness perfect. Such a condition was not something He had secured by effort. It was the way things were, and had always been . . ."* (Macleod, 213). He left the blessed and pure confines of heaven for the dark and rebel suburbs of this world. He left the sweet adoration and worship of the angels to receive the taunts and mockings of men. He left unrivaled prominence to endure relative obscurity. He left eternal bounty to have not a place to lay His head. *"He abdicated His position of supremacy and entered one of servitude . . . Incomparable condescension was this. He who was by inherent right in the form of God, suffered His glory to be eclipsed, His honor to be laid in the dust, and Himself to be humbled to a most shameful*

death” (Pink).

Who can form a right conception of this? We jockey for our puny earthly places and challenge for puny earthly privilege, but He condescends!! He who is everything, literally makes Himself nothing for the purpose of redeeming us from our ruin. He takes on the **“form of a bond-servant,”** a slave without rights. This would form the very pattern of His earthly sojourn. Self-forgetfulness, self-renunciation, and self-denying sacrifice. He did not look on His own things, but at the things of others. All His acts were but part of this glorious mind of Christ. His laying aside His garments in John 13 and girding Himself with a towel to wipe His disciples’ feet was but one expression of this greater act whereby He laid aside the robes of His divine prerogatives and girded Himself with our humanity to cleanse our sin-stained souls with His shed blood. Stooping, He never stood up again, til He was raised from the dead. Is He not glorious in this, beloved?!? Do you not adore Him and love Him for this? Though we may say, in a sense, He is “entitled” to be, the Son, as very God was not self-centered or self-absorbed. Glorious in His self-denial. Our sins had separated us from our God, but the Father’s love sent His only Son to us. This act lead to all the others. He was willing to stoop to our sinful place, willing to assume the likeness of our sinful race, and bear at last our disgrace. Immanuel. Is there anyone who thinks that He will not stoop to save you if you call to Him? Does not His condescension witness His willingness to save? And does it not also remind us of His power to save. His glory was eclipsed but not His strength and wisdom and grace to save. Any think that He will not bend down to hear and help you if you call upon Him to have mercy on you? Here is the blessed ark of God, a sanctuary of salvation and help, pulled up to the shores of our sin-cursed and sinking race. He came to seek and to save. He came to be approached by faith.

Does it not reveal to us the glory of self-forgetfulness in the interest of others? Does it not assure us that we worship and serve One who knows our human life by personal experience?

This truth we must adore and must believe (1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7).