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# The Humanity of Christ: Looking at Jesus, Ourselves, and Pastoral Ministry<sup>1</sup>

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## The Situation in Reformed Churches

How does the humanity of Christ inform and challenge our ministries? While we all will agree with the importance of a Christocentric ministry in general, I think in that affirmation we need to recapture a right emphasis on the humanity of Christ. Without doubt, in Jesus Christ we see God, the Word, the divine excellencies which are not as clearly communicated through anything else, including general revelation and even the visible institutions of worship. Just as importantly, however, is the reality that through Jesus Christ we meet humanity as it ought to be, seeking righteousness and continual communion with the Father through the Spirit.

Only by keeping the Incarnate Lord as the center of our ministries will we be able to hold together both the transcendence and immanence of God. While we might agree that for much of the evangelical world the great danger is that they are neglecting the transcendence of God, I am convinced that for the most part our struggle in the Reformed community is that we have neglected the immanence of God. A common misunderstanding of transcendence itself contributes to this problem, for it must be remembered that technically when speaking in biblical and theological terms transcendence conveys the idea of 'otherness,' rather than distance. When we speak of God as transcendent and holy, we tend to do so by painting a picture of a distant God that more resembles deism than Christianity, but this is a discussion for another time.<sup>2</sup> For the most part we are faithful to proclaim the transcendence of God, but what about his immanence?

It is only through a proper emphasis on the person of Christ, and particularly through a renewed emphasis on the humanity of Christ, that we will maintain both truths without undervaluing either of them. There is no clearer picture of the reality of both God's transcendence *and* immanence than in the Son's assumption of human nature.

I think Nigel M. De S. Cameron, in his little book *Complete in Christ*,<sup>3</sup> does a fair job critiquing evangelicals at the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century for failing on this very point. In their efforts to defend the deity of Jesus Christ against the rising powers of liberalism – a fight that was exceedingly important and needed to be waged – evangelicals ended up completely neglecting and often undervaluing the humanity of Christ. At times the neglect could be so serious that one could argue evangelicals were often on the edge of docetism: Jesus only *seeming* to be human, but not really so.

Sadly I'm not convinced that things have changed all that much when it comes to the average believer today, especially in our Reformed circles. From my experience and

conversations it appears that most people in our pews do not struggle with the idea that Jesus is God, especially those who have grown up in the church. What they do struggle with is firmly believing that he was really man!

I recently received a letter from a believer in her fifties who has been in Reformed Churches her entire life. Having previously written to her regarding some of my concerns about this apparent neglect in our tradition she responded enthusiastically. She described how she was brought up hearing about the 'transcendent Christ' but rarely ever heard about Jesus' true human struggles and identification with our broken world. This neglect has left her struggling, and she claims she can 'still feel the effects.' Then she perceptively adds, 'but if this glorious truth [i.e., the true humanity of Jesus] stays a matter to be debated and not a wonder to thrill us and move us to the core and send us out with a fresh sense of his identification with us, we've missed the blessing.'

Can you relate to her experience? What about your average congregation member? For example, when they hear that Jesus fasted for forty days does it strike them as extraordinary in any way, or do they simply think to themselves, 'of course he did, he was God.' Do they understand the weakness, frailty, and effort that went into his fasting which ultimately prepared him for some of his most intensified temptations? Do they believe that Jesus' temptations were real, or were the temptations just a game by which Jesus had to act like it was difficult? Were the tears of Jesus before his death a manifestation of sincere anguish and struggle, or was this simply the action of empty high drama?

What Reformed Christians often have trouble believing, at least with our hearts if not also with our minds, is that Jesus Christ is not only truly God but also really human. This is not a small matter, as John reminds us: 'Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the *flesh* is from God' (1 John 4:1-2). A full endorsement of the ancient creeds likewise requires affirming that Jesus Christ is truly God *and* truly man.<sup>4</sup> Denying one is as devastating to the faith as denying the other!

## **A Fresh look at Jesus**

Recapturing a right emphasis on the humanity of Jesus Christ is crucial in understanding and proclaiming redemption in the *imago Dei*. As Gregory of Nazianzen rightly said, 'only what is assumed may be healed.'<sup>5</sup> This statement reflects the truth that the Son assumed a real, finite, limited human nature, even taking upon himself our 'common infirmities.'<sup>6</sup> With this in mind, we need to make sure that in our efforts to protect the deity of our earthly Lord we do not end up defending unscriptural assertions which make Jesus immune to the realities of a true incarnation.

While Jesus was from birth without sin, he was also – and here he is different from the first Adam – born into a fallen world. The grief, pain, anguish, suffering, and groans of creation, those utterly unknown before the fall, were all elements of Jesus' earthly life. He experienced restless nights, weariness, belly laughter, hunger pains, a dry throat, and the need to relieve himself. I do not mention any of these to be humorous, nor to be controversial. Instead, I raise this simply to say that if we cannot agree about the reality of Jesus' bodily functions while he was on earth, then we are embracing a docetistic heresy which has always been fiercely rejected by the Church. It is a heresy that ultimately undermines not only Jesus' humanity, but also our own!

We do our Lord not more honor, *but less*, when we fail to portray him in his full humanity. As sand slipping through our hands, so does the significance of the incarnation lose its power over people's hearts when we let slip the realities of his human nature. Here we speak of the eternal Son of God, by whom the Universe was created, humbling himself – an absurd idea to the natural mind. How can the humiliation of the Son be true? It was no small matter for the second person of the Trinity to 'be made nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!' (Philippians 2:7-8). Only by a robust emphasis on the complete *person* of Jesus Christ, who is both truly God and truly man, does this central truth of the Christian faith keep its power for the believer.<sup>7</sup>

Stephen Charnock, when reflecting on the Word made flesh and the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ captures the profundity of this great humiliation:

What greater distance can there be than between the Deity and humanity, between the Creator and a creature? A God of unmixed blessedness is linked personally with a man of perpetual sorrows; infinite purity with a reputed sinner; eternal blessedness with a cursed nature; almightiness with weakness; omniscience with ignorance; immutability with changeableness; incomprehensibility with comprehensibility; a holiness incapable of sinning made sin [a sin-offering]; a person possessed of all the perfections of the Godhead inheriting all the imperfections of the manhood in one person, sin only excepted.<sup>8</sup>

Our God is not a distant 'unmoved mover,' but a loving Father who sent forth his Son to bring reconciliation. Jesus does not stand far off, but came near, being born not in a sterilized time capsule dropped from space, but crying in a lowly manger. He was raised by humble parents in a dysfunctional family – since all families that include sinful people are somewhat dysfunctional. Jesus spent countless hours studying the scriptures, walked tiring miles on dusty roads, ate long meals with friends and strangers, wept with those who wept, and grew angry with those whose hearts were cold and hard.

Jesus Christ is our portrait of true humanity, and to him we look for our restoration. His life was one which sanctified the seasons of life, and ultimately his obedience allowed him to die in our stead: 'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God' (2 Corinthians 5:21). The assumption of a true human nature secured each believer's union to Christ. Here is a powerful reminder that the kingdom was ushered in by humiliation, rather than by militarization!

## **Looking at Ourselves and our Churches**

It may be interesting to discuss these ideas in the abstract, but what does it mean for us? How might a renewed appreciation of the humanity of Christ apply to our ministries? In sum, I believe the truth of the Incarnation requires a call for a holistic ministry. Let us take a few minutes to explore creatively what this may mean for us on a practical level.

To begin, the ancient idea that the *imago Dei* is simply rationality must be rejected. This view has had devastating effects on the Church throughout its history, and even to this day persists in some theologies and pulpits. Yet we can reject this theory not simply based on exegesis of Genesis 1, but also for Christological reasons. By the Son's assumption of a true human nature he affirms and actually provides real dignity for every aspect of being made in the image of God. The Son did not assume some alien or

supernatural nature, but a real complete human nature, including body, mind, will, and affections.

When we study the earthly life of Jesus, we see that he did not view other humans as simply walking minds. Jesus affirms, both through his own true human nature and through his relationships with other humans, that to minister to others one must do so holistically and relationally. God does not simply send a proposition, but he sends his Son, a person who is also the Word. Furthermore, when Jesus interacts with others he inevitably tells stories, parables, and illustrations. This was not simply a show of effective rhetorical skills that kept people's attention, but rather a subtle affirmation of a holistic view of humanity. He knew that to touch people he needed to reach more than simply their minds, but also to challenge their wills and engage their affections, a feat most effectively accomplished through imagination, powerful illustrations, and creative expression. His willingness to apply physical touch alongside his message further testified to his holistic approach (e.g., Matthew 8:3, 15; 9:29; Mark 10:13,16). He did not need to communicate or act in these ways, but chose to, knowing that in so doing he engaged the whole person he was addressing. Which brings us to a neglected truth: Jesus was not simply the great exegete of scripture (e.g., Luke 24), but also the great exegete of the human heart.

Now we again face the temptation of neglecting Christ's humanity. How did Jesus know the human heart so well? Was it simply that he was God and so he knew everything? Or was it that he needed to be with others, listen to them, watch them, engage with them in his true humanity, and in so doing he *learned their* weaknesses, *their struggles, their pain*? These are not abstract syllogisms to him, but real people. For example, was it from omniscience or from his human experience that Jesus knew what the rich young man lacked? While we should avoid opposing the divine and human natures of Jesus, we need also to be careful not to subconsciously allow his divinity to swallow up his humanity. We fall into this danger when we neglect Jesus' human relational skills and instincts – points which can be overshadowed by too hastily pointing to divine omniscience. So how did Jesus know what would prick the heart of the self assured youth? While Jesus could have just said the easy Sunday school response: 'you are a sinner so turn to God,' instead he gives a personalized answer. Perhaps he is here skillfully applying his natural sensitivity to the circumstances. Jesus has been a student of humanity, interacting with various people who have diverse problems, and so he has the natural resources to draw from by which he can ask a particular question that applied to that specific situation. Mark's account of this exchange includes the moving detail that 'Jesus looked at him and loved him' (Mark 10:21).<sup>9</sup> Standing there was a lost and confused man, and yet it appears that Jesus loves him enough to find out his particular weaknesses; this enables Jesus to challenge him to become a true disciple who gives himself wholly to God. Jesus leaves him with a penetrating command that will linger in the man's soul until it finds resolution. In this story we may gain insight not only into Jesus' ability to exegete the human heart, but also his willingness to take seriously the humanity of his listener, demonstrated by his deliberateness to give such a thoughtful response to an apparent stranger.

Are we not tempted when we minister to people to simply enter a default mode and give them a standard answer for their problems? When we preach, are we not tempted to fall back on worn-out labels we assign to a few general sins, rather than creatively

probing the distinctive struggles of those living in a particular context? If we do this we subtly deny the listener's true humanity, inevitably causing our words to hit the floor without ever making it to the hearts of the parishioners.

Probing this idea further, was it from Jesus' divine nature or from his human history that he came to see how corrupted the Pharisees' hearts were, comparing them to whitewashed tombs? Remember, in Matthew 23 Jesus cites observable examples of their actions rather than supernatural knowledge: they tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders; everything is done for men to see; they travel over land and sea to make a convert, only in the end to make him also a son of bondage; they exalted rather than humbled themselves. In their assumed leadership over God's people Jesus saw that the Pharisees' actions only further distorted the people's image of God, instead of pointing faithfully to it. Jesus, as the great shepherd, felt compassion on those without a faithful guide. Here again Jesus reminds us of the importance of a holistic ministry. If we only speak of grace, forgiveness, love and freedom, but *our* lives reflect bondage, anger, fear, and resentment, then we ourselves need to see Jesus afresh.

Here we are personally confronted with a mirror. Before we can point others to Jesus, we need to ask some honest questions of ourselves. When was the last time we felt like we enjoyed God's presence? When was the last time we felt like our weak prayers made it beyond the confines of our skull? When was the last time that we wept for joy over the forgiveness of our own sins? Can we be honest with one another and ourselves about our own actual human struggles?

I have an older friend who has been involved in Reformed ministry and pastoral care for many years. In preparation for this presentation I wrote and asked for prayer about the BEC conference. I briefly explained that this was a pastors' conference in which six people would give short addresses on various elements of theological anthropology. Just last week I received a response which not only agreed to be in prayer, but also included the following personal challenge:

I just see a picture of hearts of the men you are to minister to next week. Some are bleeding to death with pain of rejection, weariness, hopelessness, despair. Others dare not even face the pain and have enclosed themselves with 12 inch thick and ten foot high concrete walls of protection. Some are like dried out mud cracking in the heat of relentless sun. Some may even prefer a safe 'out there' theological discussion which they can keep at arms length.

Such words are probing and uncomfortable. Does this person know us all? No! Rather, these emotions have been personally battled by my friend, added to also by the knowledge of countless friends who have likewise lived many years in the turmoil of a life in the ministry.

Is Jesus a distant God who seems unapproachable to you when you are alone? When you pray, do you feel a sense of shame and condemnation? Do the voices in the silence cry out 'failure, failure'? If so, don't just shove those emotions down deep and act like everything is okay. Don't just fill your time with more ministry activities, hoping that they will satisfy the void in your heart. When we deny our struggle we deny our humanity, and we deny the transforming power of the incarnation.

Many of us here need to experience Jesus' presence anew, being soaked in his love and acceptance. What is Jesus saying to you in your particular situation and struggle?

Be courageous next time you are in the silence, and don't be so quick to fill it with repetitious and empty words. Be patient, wait and let him come.

During the late sixties the 'God is dead' movement was at a popular level and creating all kinds of controversy. During that time Billy Graham came out with a statement in which he said, 'God is not dead, I know so because I spoke with him last night.' A skeptic reflecting on Graham's comment replied, 'but that is not the question. The question is, "did he speak back?"' When was the last time he spoke to you?<sup>10</sup>

We need to look afresh to Jesus Christ, being renewed in the reality of the incarnation so that we might continue to be transformed into his image. Only in this way will we be able to serve the Church effectively.

## **The Tension: Keeping Eyes on Both Images**

My challenge for us, for ourselves and for our congregations, is to keep our eyes consistently moving between the True Image of Jesus and the broken image of our humanity, for only by doing this can we communicate effectively the redemption found in Jesus Christ.

When John Owen was asked by the King why he ever listened to John Bunyan, that 'uneducated tinker,' Owen (at least as we have it recorded) gave a memorable response. 'Could I possess the tinker's abilities for preaching, please your majesty, I would gladly relinquish all my learning.'<sup>11</sup> Why would Owen respond by saying something so apparently outrageous? Owen believed Bunyan not only understood the reality of human suffering, temptations, and struggle in a profound way, but Bunyan also possessed the rare ability to powerfully communicate hope in the midst of these realities. This tinker had lived in the mire, had wrestled with the enemy, and had found his only hope in a vibrant communion with Jesus Christ. You would be amazed at the intimate language of lovers, almost embarrassing to read, which Bunyan sometimes used to describe some of his times of communion with Jesus.<sup>12</sup> This was no dry static relationship with his God, but a loving, vibrant, communion experienced with his whole soul as he wrestled with the Lord through difficult times. This tinker could tell a story that allowed people to know both themselves and God better (cf. Calvin's *duplex cognitio*), and for this gift Owen gave unreserved praise.

The humanity of Christ reminds us that we, like Bunyan, need to be students of both scripture and the human heart. Sure we all know everybody is a sinner, but what does that mean? Not just abstractly but experientially. Let us look to Jesus for a minute. Do you know what the number one general human emotion attributed to Jesus is in the scriptures? Compassion!<sup>13</sup> Why is it that he is consistently portrayed as expressing compassion? Was it simply because he was God and so was never tempted to blow up with anger and frustration? Or was it because Jesus was able to see in people the broken image, and it was painful for him to behold. Here were people suffering from the effects of the fall, both internally and externally. They abused one another, themselves, and ultimately showed alienation from their God. When Jesus looked on them he felt an emotion that moved his innermost soul, causing grief, anger, and sorrow. Jesus models for us the truth that to minister to others we need to incarnate their struggle, entering into their worlds rather than standing safely at a distance in our sterilized environments.

So how do we, like Bunyan, better learn to point broken images to the True image? How do we better reflect the real humanity of Christ in our ministries?

Let me give you some very bad news. The average congregation member's view of God is deeply shaped by the lives of three individuals: their father, their spouse, and their pastor. Just as the attributes of one's earthly father (both good and bad) are often subconsciously ascribed to the Heavenly Father, so the character of one's pastor is often deeply influential for how one views Jesus Christ. This is not universally the case, but it is more common than often acknowledged.

When I was in California this last winter I spent time with a dear Christian gentleman who has been at the same church for the last twenty years or so. We have prayed together on countless occasions over the years and I always noticed that he had a distinctive style in the way he prayed. However, it was not until this Christmas when I joined him at his normal worship service that I had a *deja va* experience. When I heard his pastor pray I heard my friend pray. They approached God with the same demeanor. It was like the strange impression one gets when meeting the father of a close friend. You instantly have an uncanny feeling when you realize that the son carries himself just like his father, has many of the same mannerisms, even using similar expressions. To see one is to see a reflection of the other. In similar fashion, congregation members often model themselves after the pastor in order to model their Lord Jesus Christ. Is this not what Paul encouraged when he said, 'Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ'? (1 Corinthians 11:1). In some way you are the human representation of Jesus to your congregation, like it or not.

When a believer tends to view the pastor as someone who is consistently angry and threatening, so Jesus appears to her to be of similar character. When the pastor seems to communicate that nothing matters and that your actions are not all that significant with God, then Jesus is often viewed as a happy go-lucky buddy. When pastors come and go every couple of years, a common problem in the States, then parishioners tend to question Jesus' commitment to them.

Likewise, when a pastor is consistently compassionate, patient, quick to listen and slow to speak, telling the truth *in love*, shepherding his flock by intimately knowing his flock, then they tend to view Jesus in that way. One of the most effective ways to communicate the true humanity of Jesus Christ is through your life of freedom in Christ. When we find our significance and worth in Christ we tend to demonstrate a loving acceptance of the broken images in the congregation. Such ministers reflect, though far from perfectly, the true humanity of Jesus Christ, our elder brother. He demonstrates to the parishioner that Jesus is approachable and gracious. This is a tall order, in fact an impossible commission, and yet it is the very reason ministers are considered shepherds modeling the true shepherd!

## **A Final Challenge**

Let me end with this final practical challenge: learn afresh to be exegetes of the human heart! Take practical steps to make it a priority to open your eyes and heart to the mass of humanity around you. If you live in London, once a month jump on the tube for a couple hours for the sole purpose of better understanding the human struggle in the city. When I first get onto the tube, especially at rush hour, the people I see annoy me. It is crowded, dirty, smells like urine, and I often end up leaving the station frustrated. Jesus, on the other hand, who looked upon the crowds and was moved with compassion, rides the tube with a different set of eyes. Riding the tube brings one face to face with humanity's loneliness,

addiction, alienation, anger, lust, religious zeal, and countless other expressions of a fallen world. These realities ought to melt rather than harden our hearts.

If you live outside of London use your imagination. Take walks in public areas, occasionally visit a busy park or pub for lunch, with the goal of better understanding various elements of human struggle. Take time to meet with congregation members, but make it your purpose to simply listen rather than offer answers. Help them feel they can become honest with you about their struggles, pain, hopes, and dreams. This may require you to become a bit vulnerable in the process, which is surely a risk, I admit. But the truth is, if ministry is not a risk then it is probably not ministry!

You can only exegete the human heart when you engage the human heart. When you do, you are allowed into people's lives in a unique way, and as such you are able to incarnate their trials, temptations, and suffering. You minister to their broken humanity by pointing them to Jesus, the true humanity. Such deep and humble involvement will inevitably influence your preaching and help you become not only better exegetes of scripture, but also of the human heart.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Originally given at the BEC Theological Study Conference, March 2000, on 'Theological Anthropology – The Image of God in Man.' I thank the participants for their feedback.
- <sup>2</sup> For an important corrective for how people use the language of immanence and transcendence see Colin E. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1991), 170-71. Immanence (ie, *stressing God's relation*) and transcendence (i.e., *stressing God's otherness*) should not ultimately be viewed as opposites, since they are complimentary rather than contradictory.
- <sup>3</sup> Cameron, (Carlisle, Paternoster, 1989).
- <sup>4</sup> The clearest and most significant statement of this is found in the Chalcedonian definition of 451, which reads: 'We ... teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body ... consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin.'
- <sup>5</sup> In context Gregory writes: 'If anyone has put his trust in [Jesus] as a Man without a human mind, he is really bereft of mind, and quite unworthy of salvation. For *that which He has not assumed He has not healed*; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved. If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of Him that was begotten, and so be saved as a whole. Let them not, then, begrudge us our complete salvation, or clothe the Savior only with bones and nerves and the portraiture of humanity. ... But if He has a soul, and yet is without a mind, how is He man, for man is not a mindless animal,' *Epistolae*, 101, 'To Cledonius the Priest Against Apollinarius,' *NPNF*, Vol. 7. Here Gregory is rejecting Apollinarius' attempt to replace Jesus' human mind with the Logos. Apollinarius made this theological move in order to avoid claiming Christ was sinful, since it was commonly believed that sin resides in the mind. Gregory, however, argued such a move compromised Jesus' true humanity, thus making it impossible for him to secure redemption for humans. See J N D Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco, 1978), p 289-301.

In recent times there has been great debate – often arising out of how to understand Gregory and other Patristic writers – regarding whether or not it is appropriate to speak of the Son assuming a 'fallen' human nature. Great confusion has arisen from the careless use of the term 'fallen', often giving the impression that Jesus is personally sinful and in need of a redeemer. This debate originally surfaced with the writings of Edward Irving (1792-1834) who posited that Jesus took to himself a 'fallen' human nature. See his *The Doctrine of the*

*Incarnation Opened in Six Sermons* (London, 1828); *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of our Lord's Human Nature* (London, 1830); *The Opinions Circulating Concerning our Lord's Human Nature* (London, 1830), and *Christ's Holiness in Flesh* (Edinburgh, 1831). Other prominent theologians to affirm a similar position include Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 1.2 (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1956), esp. 147-159. Cf. CD 2.1, 397-98; T F Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 161-68; Kallistos Ware, 'The Humanity of Christ: The Fourth Constantinople Lecture,' in *Anglican and Easter Churches Association* (1985). For an example of a theologian with strong objections to this viewpoint see Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, ed. Gerald Bray, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IVP, 1998), p 221-230.

A recent work by the Catholic theologian Thomas Weinandy, *In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh: An Essay on the Humanity of Christ* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1993), attempts to give both historical and biblical reasons for affirming that Jesus assumed 'sinful flesh.' Interestingly, in the preface the Protestant theologian Colin Gunton recommends the book for the most part, with an intriguing qualification. 'A theologian of the Reformed tradition might well want to put some of this rather differently, and while welcoming the use made of the theology of the great Edward Irving – surely a modern pioneer of this approach – I would also point to its anticipation in the thought of the Puritan, John Owen,' p x.

While we do not have space to interact with this theological debate here, it seems that Owen's understanding and emphasis on the true humanity of Jesus Christ, combined with his much more careful language, may offer both accurate and creative insights into better appreciating this area of Christology. To date the closest Owen scholarship has come to addressing this contemporary problem in light of Owen's thought comes from Alan J Spence, 'Incarnation and Inspiration: John Owen and the Coherence of Christology' (PhD, King's College London, 1989). In my forthcoming thesis from King's College London I explore different elements of John Owen's anthropology. Chapter 3, which deals with the humanity of Christ, investigates these particular questions in more detail.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, 8.2.

<sup>7</sup> Due to the limitations of this study we are unable to develop a fuller treatment of how the two natures relate in one person. For now it is sufficient to note that only by his unique Person can Jesus take on the sins of the world, securing redemption for those who believe.

<sup>8</sup> Charnock, *The Power of God*; cited by William G T Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. 3: Supplement (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), p 394.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Luke 18:24 and Matthew 19:21 which leave this detail out.

<sup>10</sup> When listening for God's 'voice' one is first of all directed to God's Word, but that does not mean that with the 'closing of the canon' the Spirit ceases to stir, challenge, convict, and comfort individual believers in their particular circumstances. We still listen for his 'voice,' though we always test such experiences against the Word of God.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Toon, *God's Statesman: The Life and Work of John Owen: Pastor, Educator, Theologian* (Exeter, The Paternoster Press, 1971), p 162.

<sup>12</sup> E.g., *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners: or, A Brief and faithful relation of the exceeding mercy of God in Christ, to his poor servant, John Bunyan* (London, 1688), p 172: 'Oh! 'tis a goodly thing to be on our knees with Christ in our Arms, before God.' Cf. the intimate spiritual experiences recorded by Samuel Rutherford in his 'Letters,' *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> This argument is made by B B Warfield, 'The Emotional Life of our Lord,' in *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1950), p 93-145. Warfield's essay remains one of the best treatments on the subject of Jesus' emotions.

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