

VII.

The Creaturely Man.

“The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” — [Job xxxiii. 4.](#)



The Eternal and Ever-blessed God comes into vital touch with the creature by an act proceeding not from the Father nor from the Son, but from the Holy Spirit.

Translated by sovereign grace from death unto life, God’s children are conscious of this divine fellowship; they know that it consists not in inward agreement of disposition or inclination, but in the mysterious touch of God upon their spiritual being. But they also know that neither the Father nor the Son, but the Holy Spirit, has made their hearts His temple. It is true Christ comes to us through the Holy Spirit, and through the Son we have fellowship with the Father, according to His word, “I and the Father will come unto you, and make Our abode with you”; yet every intelligent Bible student knows that it is more especially the Holy Spirit who enters into his person and touches his innermost being.

That the Son incarnate came into closer contact with us proves nothing to the contrary. Christ never entered into a human *person*. He took upon Himself our human *nature*, with which He united Himself much more closely than the Holy Spirit does; but He did not touch the *inward man* and his hidden *personality*. On the contrary, He said that it was expedient for the disciples that He should go away; “for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you.” ([John xvi. 7](#)) Moreover, the Incarnation was not accomplished without the Holy Spirit, who overshadowed Mary; and the blessings that Christ imparted to all around Him were largely owing to the gift of the Holy Spirit, which was given Him without measure.

Hence the principal thought remains intact: When God comes into direct contact with the creature it is the work of the Holy Spirit to effect such contact. In the visible world this action consists in the kindling and fanning of the spark of life; hence it is quite natural and in full harmony with the general tenor of the teaching of Scripture that the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters, that He brings forth the host of heaven and earth, ordered, animated, and resplendent.

Besides this visible creation there is also an invisible, which, so far as our world is concerned, concentrates itself *in the heart of man*; hence, in the second place, we must see how far the work of the Holy Spirit may be traced in man’s creation.

Of the animal world we do not speak. Not as tho the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with their creation. From [Psalm civ. 30](#) we have proven the contrary. Moreover, no one can deny the admirable traits of cunning, love, fidelity, and thankfulness in many of the animals. Not that we would be foolish on that ground to call the dog *half human*; for these higher animal properties are evidently but instinctive preformations, sketches of the Holy Spirit, carried



to their proper destiny in man alone. And yet, however striking these traits may be, it is not a *person* that meets us in the animal. The animal proceeds from the world of matter, and returns to it; in *man* alone appears that which is new, invisible, and spiritual, justifying us in looking for a special work of the Holy Spirit in *his* creation.

Of himself, *i.e.*, of a *man*, Job declares: “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” (Job xxxiii. 4) The Spirit of God hath made *me*. That which I am as a *human personality* is the work of the Holy Spirit. To Him I owe the human and personal that constitute me the being that I am. He adds: “The breath of the Almighty hath given me life”; which evidently echoes the words: “The Lord God breathed into His nostrils the breath of life.” (Gen. ii. 7)

Like Job, we ought to feel and to acknowledge that in Adam you and I are created; when God created Adam He created *us*; in Adam’s nature He called forth the nature wherein we now live. Gen. i. and ii. is not the record of *aliens*, but of *ourselves*—concerning the flesh and blood which we carry with us, the human nature in which we sit down to read the Word of God.

He that reads his Bible without this personal application reads amiss. It leaves him cold and indifferent. It may charm him in the days of his childhood, when one is fond of tales and stories, but has no hold of him in the days of conflict, when he meets the stern facts and realities of life. But if we accustom ourselves to see in this record the history of our own flesh and blood, of our own human nature and life, and acknowledge that by human generation we spring from Adam, and therefore were in Adam when he was created—then we shall also know that when God formed Adam out of the dust He also formed us; that we also were in Paradise; that Adam’s fall was also ours. In a word, the first page of Genesis relates the history not of an alien, but of our own real selves. The breath of the Almighty gave *us* life, when the Lord formed man of the dust, and breathed into his nostrils and made him a living soul. The root of our life lies in our parents; but through and beyond them the tender fiber of that root goes back through the long line of generations, and received its earliest beginning when Adam first breathed God’s pure air in Paradise.

And yet, tho in Paradise we received the first inception of our being, there is also a *second* beginning of our life, *viz.*, when from the race, by conception and birth, each of us was called into being *individually*. And of this also Job testifies: “The Spirit of the Lord hath given me life.” (Job xxxiii. 4)

And again, in the life of sinful man there comes a *third* beginning, when it pleases God to convert the wicked; and of this also the soul testifies within us: “The Spirit of the Lord hath given me life.”

Leaving this new birth out of the question, the testimony of Job shows us that he was conscious of the fact that he owed his existence as a man, as a person, as an ego, hence his creation *in Adam* as well as his *personal being*, to God.



And what does the Scripture teach us concerning the creation of man? This: that the dust of the ground out of which Adam was formed was so wrought upon that it became a living soul, which indicates the *human being*. The result was not merely a moving, creeping, eating, drinking, and sleeping creature, but a *living soul* that came into existence at the moment when the breath of life was breathed into the dust. It was not first the dust, and then human life within the dust, and after that the soul with all its higher faculties in that human life; nay, as soon as life went forth into Adam, he was a *man*, and all his precious gifts were *natural* endowments.

Sinful man being born from above receives gifts that are *above* nature. For this reason the Holy Spirit merely *dwells* in the quickened sinner. But in heaven this will not be so; for in death the human nature is so completely changed that the impulse to sin disappears entirely; wherefore in heaven the Holy Spirit will work in the human *nature itself* for ever and ever. In the present state of humiliation the nature of the regenerate is still the Adam-nature. The great mystery of the work of the Holy Spirit in him is this: that *in* and *by* that *broken* and *corrupt* nature, He works the *holy works of God*. It is as light shining through our window-panes, but in no wise identical with the glass.

In Paradise, however, man's nature was whole, intact; everything about him was holy. We must avoid the dangerous error that the newly created man had an *inferior* degree of holiness. God made man *upright*, with nothing crooked in or about him. All his inclinations and powers with all their workings were pure and holy. God delighted in Adam, saw that he was good; surely nothing more can be desired. In this respect Adam differed from the child of God by grace in *not* having eternal life; he was to attain this as the reward for holy works. On the other hand, Abraham, the father of the faithful, begins with eternal life, from which holy works were to proceed.

Hence a perfect contrast. Adam must attain eternal life by works. Abraham has eternal life through which he obtains holy works. Hence for Adam there can be no indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There was no antagonism between him and the Spirit. So the Spirit could *pervade* him, not merely *dwelling* in him. The nature of sinful man repels the Holy Spirit, but Adam's nature attracted Him, freely received Him, and let Him inspire his being.

Our faculties and inclinations are impaired, our powers are enervated, the passions of our hearts corrupt; hence the Holy Spirit must come to us from *without*. But since Adam's faculties were all intact, and the whole expression of his inward life undisturbed, therefore could the Holy Spirit work through the *common* powers and operations of his *nature*. To Adam spiritual things were not a supernatural, but a natural good—except eternal life, which he must earn by fulfilling the law. Scripture expresses this unity between Adam's natural life and spiritual powers by identifying the two expressions—"To breathe into the breath of life," and "to become a living soul." ([Gen. ii. 7](#))

Other passages show that this divine “inbreathing” indicates especially the Spirit’s work. Jesus breathed upon His disciples and said: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” (John xx. 22) He compares the Holy Spirit to the wind. In both the Biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek, the word spirit means wind, breathing or blowing. And as the Church confesses that the Son is eternally generated by the Father, so it confesses that the Holy Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son as by *breathing*. Hence we conclude that the passage, “And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen. ii. 7)—in connection with, “The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters,” (Gen. i. 2) and the word of Job, “The Spirit of God hath given me life” (Job xxxiii. 4)—points to a special work of the Holy Spirit.

Before God breathed the breath of life in the lifeless dust, there was a conference in the economy of the divine Being: “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.” (Gen. i. 26) This shows—

First, that each divine Person had a distinct work in the creation of man—“Let *Us* make man.” Before this the singular is used of God—“He spake,” “He saw”; but now the plural is used, “Let *Us* make man,” which implies that, here specially and more clearly than in any preceding passage, the activities of the Persons are to be distinguished.

Secondly, that man was not created *empty*, afterward to be endowed with higher spiritual faculties and powers, but that the very act of creation made him after God’s image, without any subsequent addition to his being. For we read: “Let *Us* *create* man in Our *image* and after Our *likeness*.” This assures us that by *immediate* creation man received the impress of the divine image; that in the creation the divine Persons each performed a distinct work; and, lastly, that man’s creation with reference to his higher destiny was effected by a going forth of the breath of God.

This is the basis of our statement that the Spirit’s creative work was making all man’s powers and gifts instruments for His own use, connecting them vitally and immediately with the powers of God. This agrees with Biblical teachings regarding the Holy Spirit’s regenerating work, which also, tho differently, brings the power and holiness of God in immediate contact with human powers.

We deny, therefore, the frequent assertion of ethical theologians, that the Holy Spirit created the *personality* of man, since this opposes the entire economy of Scripture. For what is our personality but the realization of God’s plan concerning us? Such as God from eternity has thought each of us, as distinct from other men, with our own stamp, life-history, calling, and destiny—as such each must develop and show himself to become a person. Thus alone each obtains character; anything else so called is pride and arbitrariness.

If our personality result directly from God’s plan, then it and what we have in common with all other creatures can not be from the Holy Spirit, but from the Father; like all other things, it receives its disposition from the Son; and the Holy Spirit acts upon it as upon every other creature, by kindling the spark, imparting the glow of life.

VIII.

Gifts and Talents.

“And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.”—*Judges iii. 10.*

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We now consider the Holy Spirit’s work in bestowing gifts, talents, and abilities upon artisans and professional men. Scripture declares that the special animation and qualification of persons for work assigned to them by God proceed from the Holy Spirit.

The construction of the tabernacle required capable workmen, skilful carpenters, goldsmiths, and silversmiths, and masters in the arts of weaving and embroidering. Who will furnish Moses with them? The Holy Spirit. For we read in *Exod. xxxi. 2, 3*: “I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri . . . and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.” *Verse 6* shows that this activity of the Holy Spirit included others: “In the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded them.” And to give clearest light on this subject, Scripture says also: “Then hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work of the engraver and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer in blue and in purple and in scarlet and in fine linen of the weaver, even of them that do any work and of these that devise cunning work.” (*Exod. xxxv. 35*)

The Spirit’s working shows not only in ordinary skilled labor, but also in the higher spheres of human knowledge and mental activity; for military genius, legal acumen, statesmanship, and power to inspire the masses with enthusiasm are equally ascribed to it. This is generally expressed in the words, “And the Spirit of the Lord came upon” such a hero, judge, statesman, or tribune of the people, especially in the days of the judges, when it is said of Joshua, Othniel, Barak, Gideon, Samson, Samuel, and others that the Spirit of the Lord came upon them. Also of Zerubbabel rebuilding the temple, it is said: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.” (*Zech. iv. 6*) Even of the heathen king, Cyrus, we read that Jehovah had called him to His work and anointed him with the Spirit of the Lord—*Isa. xlv.*

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This last instance introduces another aspect of the case, viz., the operation of the Holy Spirit in qualifying men for *official functions*. For altho this operation upon and through the office receives its fullest significance only in the dispensation of grace, yet the case of Cyrus shows that the Holy Spirit has originally a work to perform in this respect which is not only a result of grace, but belongs essentially to the nature of the work, even tho it is obvious only in the history of God’s special dealings with His own people.

It is especially noticeable in the struggle between Saul and David. There is no reason to consider Saul one of God’s elect. After his anointing the Holy Spirit comes upon him, abides