

XX.

**The Holy Spirit in the Mediator.**

“Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God.”—*Heb. ix. 14.*

The work of the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ is not exhausted in the Incarnation, but appears conspicuously in the *work* of the Mediator. We consider this work in the *development of His human nature*; in the *consecration to His office*; in *His humiliation unto death*; in *His resurrection, exaltation, and return in glory*.

First—The work of the Holy Spirit in the *development of the human nature in Jesus*.

We have said before, and now repeat, that we consider the effort to write the “Life of Jesus” either *unlawful* or its title a *misnomer*: a *misnomer* when, pretending to write a biography of Jesus, the writer simply omits to explain the psychological facts of His life; *unlawful* when he explains these facts from the human nature of Jesus.

There never was a life of Jesus in the sense of a human, personal existence; and the tendency to substitute the various biographies of Jesus of Nazareth for the simple Gospel narratives aims really at nothing else than to place the unique Person of the God-man on the same level with the geniuses and great men of the world; to humanize Him, and thus to annihilate the Messiah in Him—in other words, to *secularize Him*. And against this we solemnly protest with all the power that is in us.

The God-human Person of the Lord Jesus did not live a life, but rendered one mighty act of obedience by humbling Himself unto death; and out of that humbling He ascended not by powers developed from His human nature, but by a mighty and extraordinary act of the power of God. Any one who successfully undertook to write the life of Christ could do no more than draw the picture of His human nature. For the divine nature has no history, does not run through a process of time, but remains the same forevermore.

However, this does not prevent us from inquiring, according to the need of our limitations, in what manner the human nature of Christ was developed. And then the Scripture teaches us that there was indeed growth in His human nature. St. Luke relates that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. Hence there was in His human nature a growth and development from the less unto the greater. This would have been impossible if in the Messiah the divine nature had taken the place of the human ego; for then the majesty of the Godhead would always and completely have filled the human nature. But this was not the case. The human nature in the Mediator was real, *i.e.*, in body and soul it existed as it exists in us, and all inworking of divine life, light, and power could manifest itself only by adapting itself to the peculiarities and limitations of the human nature.

When maintaining the mistaken view that the development of sinless Adam would have been accomplished without the aid of the Holy Spirit, it is natural to suppose that the sinless nature of Christ did equally develop itself without the assistance of the Spirit of God. But

knowing from the Scripture that not only man's gifts, powers, and faculties, but also their working and exercise are a result of the work of the Holy Spirit, we see the development of the human nature of Jesus in a different light and understand the meaning of the words that He received the *Holy Spirit without measure*. For this indicates that His human nature also received the Holy Ghost; and not this only after He had lived for years without Him, but every moment of His existence according to the measure of His capacities. Even in His conception and birth the Holy Spirit effected not only a separation from sin, but He also endowed His human nature with the glorious gifts, powers, and faculties of which that nature is susceptible. Hence His human nature received these gifts, powers, and faculties not *from the Son* by communication from the divine nature, but from the *Holy Ghost* by communication to the human nature; and this should be thoroughly understood.

However, His human nature did not receive these gifts, powers, and faculties in full operation, but wholly inoperative: As there are in every infant powers and faculties that will remain dormant, some of them for many years, so there were in the human nature of Christ powers and faculties which for a time remained slumbering. The Holy Spirit imparted these endowments to His human nature without measure—[John iii. 34](#). This has reference to a contrast between *others*, whom the Holy Spirit endowed not *without measure*, but in limited degree according to their individual calling or destiny; and *Christ*, in whom there is no such distinction or individuality—to whom, therefore, gifts, powers, and faculties are imparted in such a measure that He never could feel the lack of any gift of the Holy Spirit. He lacked nothing, possessed all; not by virtue of His divine nature, which can not receive anything, being the eternal fulness itself, but by virtue of His human nature, which was endowed with such glorious gifts by the Holy Spirit.

However, this was not all. Not only did the Holy Spirit adorn the human nature of Christ with these endowments, but He also caused them to be exercised, gradually to enter into full activity.

This depended upon the succession of the days and years of the time of His humiliation. Altho His heart contained the germ of all wisdom, yet as a child of one year, *e.g.*, He could not know the Scripture by means of His human understanding. As the Eternal Son He knew it, for He Himself had given it to His Church. But His human knowledge had no free access to His divine knowledge. On the contrary, while the latter never increased, knowing all things from eternity, the former was to learn everything; it had nothing of itself. This is the increase in wisdom of which St. Luke speaks—an increase not of the faculty, but of its exercise. And this affords us a glimpse into the extent of His humiliation. He that knew all things by virtue of His divine nature began as man with knowing nothing; and that which He knew as a man He acquired by learning it under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

And the same applies to His increase in stature and in favor with God and men. Stature refers to His physical growth, including all that in the human nature depends upon it. Not



created an adult like Adam, but born a child like each of us, Jesus had to grow and develop physically: not by magic, but in reality. When He lay in Mary's lap, or as a boy looked around in his stepfather's shop, He was a child not only in appearance with the wisdom of a venerable, hoary head, but a real child, whose impressions, feelings, sensations, and thoughts kept step with His years. No doubt His development was quick and beautiful, surpassing anything ever seen in other children, so that the aged rabbis in the Temple were astonished when they looked upon the Boy only twelve years old; yet it always remained the development of a child that first lay upon His mother's lap, then learned to walk, gradually became a boy and youth, until He attained the fulness of man's stature.



And as the Holy Spirit with every increase of His human nature enlarged the exercise of its powers and faculties, so He did also with reference to the relation of the human nature to God and men, for He increased in favor with God and men. Favor has reference to the unfolding and development of the inward life, and may manifest itself in a twofold way, either pleasing or displeasing to God and men. Of Jesus it is said that in His development such gifts and faculties, dispositions and attributes, powers and qualifications manifested themselves from the inward life of His human nature that God's favor rested upon them, while they affected those around Him in a refreshing and helpful way.

Even apart from His Messiahship Jesus stood, with reference to His human nature, during all the days of His humiliation, under the constant and penetrating operation of the Holy Spirit. The Son, who lacked nothing, but as God in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit possessed all things, compassionately adopted our human nature. And inasmuch as it is the peculiarity of that nature to derive its gifts, powers, and faculties not from itself, but from the Holy Spirit, by whose constant operation alone they can be exercised, so did the Son not violate this peculiarity, but, altho He was the Son, He did not take its preparation, enriching, and operation into His own hand, but was willing to receive them from the hand of the Holy Spirit.

The fact that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at His Baptism, altho He had received Him without measure at His conception, can only be explained by keeping in view the difference between the *personal* and *official* life of Jesus.

## XXI.

## Not Like unto Us.

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.”—*Matt. iv. 1.*

The representation that Christ’s human nature received animating and qualifying influences and impulses directly from His divine nature, altho on the whole incorrect, contains also some truth.

We often distinguish between our ego and nature. We say: “I have my nature against me,” or “My nature is in my favor”; hence it follows that our person animates and actuates our nature. Applying this to the Person of the Mediator, we must distinguish between His human nature and His Person. The latter existed from eternity, the former He adopted in time. And since in the Son the divine Person and the divine nature are nearly one, it must be acknowledged that the Godhead of our Lord directly controlled His human nature. This is the meaning of the confession of God’s children that His Godhead supported His human nature.

But it is wrong to suppose that the divine Person accomplished in His human nature what in us is effected by the Holy Spirit. This would endanger His true and real humanity. The Scripture positively denies it.

Second—The work of the Holy Spirit in the *consecration of Jesus to His office* (see “First,” on p. 93).

This ought to be carefully noticed, especially since the Church has never sufficiently confessed the influence of the Holy Spirit exerted upon the work of Christ. The general impression is that the work of the Holy Spirit begins when the work of the Mediator on earth is finished, as tho until that time the Holy Spirit celebrated His divine day of rest. Yet the Scripture teaches us again and again that Christ performed His mediatorial work controlled and impelled by the Holy Spirit. We consider this influence now with reference to His *consecration to His office*.

By the spirit of the prophets already Christ testified of this saving by the mouth of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.” But the great fact which could not be learned from prophecy is that of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Jordan. Surely Isaiah referred partly to this event, but principally to the anointing in the counsel of peace. However, when Jesus went up out of Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and a voice was heard from heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son,” then only the anointing became actual.

In regard to the event itself, only a few words. That Christ’s Baptism was not a mere form, but the fulfilling of all righteousness proves that He descended into the water burdened with our sins. Hence St. John makes the words, “Behold the Lamb of God,” (*John i. 29*) precede the account of His Baptism. Wherefore it is incorrect to say, that Christ was installed

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