

## 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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into His Messianic office only at His Baptism. On the contrary, He was anointed from eternity. Wherefore He may not be represented as being for a moment unconscious, according to the measure of His development, of the Messiah task that rested upon Him. This lay in His holy Person; it was not added to Him at a later period, but was His before Adam fell. And as in His human consciousness His Person gradually attained stature, it was always the stature of the Messiah. This is evident from His answer when, at the age of twelve, He spoke of the things of His Father which were to occupy Him; and still more clearly from His words to John the Baptist commandingly saying: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

And yet it is only at His Baptism that Jesus receives the actual consecration to His office. This is proven from the fact that immediately after this He entered publicly upon His office as a Teacher; and also from the event itself, and the voice from heaven pointing to Him as the Messiah; and especially from the descent of the Holy Spirit, which can not be interpreted in any other way than as His consecration to His holy office.

What we have said with reference to the communication of the Holy Spirit qualifying one for office, as in the case of Saul, David, and others, is of direct application here. Altho in His human nature Jesus was personally in constant fellowship with the Holy Spirit, yet the official communication was established only at the time of His Baptism. Yet with this difference, that while in others the person and his office are separated at death, in the Messiah the two remain united even in and after death, to continue so until the moment that He shall deliver the Kingdom unto God the Father, that God may be all in all. Hence the descriptive remark of John: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven, *and it abode on Him*" ([John i. 32](#)).

And finally, to the question why the Person of the Mediator needed this remarkable event and the three signs that accompany it, we answer:

First, Christ must be a true man even in His office, wherefore He must be installed according to the human custom. He enters upon His public ministry at thirty; He is publicly installed; and He is anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Second, for His human consciousness this striking revelation from heaven was of the utmost necessity. The conflict of the temptation was to be absolute, *i.e., indescribable*; hence the impression of His consecration must be *indestructible*.

Third, for the apostles and the Church it was necessary to distinguish unmistakably the true Messiah from all the pseudo-messiahs and antichrists. This is the reason of St. John's strong appeal to this event.

If the work of the Holy Spirit with reference to the consecration is conspicuous and clearly indicated, the fact that the official influence of the Holy Spirit accompanied the Mediator throughout the entire administration of His office is not less clearly set forth in the Holy Scripture. This appears from the events immediately following the Baptism. St. Luke

relates that Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. St. Matthew adds: “To be tempted of the devil.” Of Elias, Ezekiel, and others it is said that the Spirit took them up and transferred them to some other place. This stands in evident connection with what we read here concerning Jesus. With this difference, however, that while the propelling power came to them from without, Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, felt its pressure in the very depths of His soul. And yet, altho operating in His soul, this action of the Holy Spirit was not identical with the impulses of Christ’s human nature. Of Himself Jesus would not have gone into the desert; His going there was the result of the Holy Spirit’s leading. Only in this way this passage receives its full explanation.

That this leading of the Holy Spirit was not limited to this one act appears from St. Luke, who relates ([chap. iv. 14](#)) that after the temptation He returned in the power of the Holy Spirit into Galilee, thus entering upon the public ministry of His prophetic office.

It is evidently the purpose of the Scripture to emphasize the fact of the inability of the human nature which Christ had adopted to accomplish the work of the Messiah without the constant operation and powerful leading of the Holy Spirit, whereby it was so strengthened that it could be the instrument of the Son of God for the performance of His wonderful work.

Jesus was conscious of this, and at the beginning of His ministry expressly indicated it. In their synagogue He turned to [Isa. lxi. 1](#), and read to them: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me”; then added: “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

The Holy Spirit did not support His human nature in the temptation and in the opening ministry only, but in all His mighty deeds, as Christ Himself testified: “If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you” ([Matt. xii. 28](#)). Moreover, St. Paul teaches that the gifts of healing and miracles proceed from the Holy Spirit, and this, in connection with the statement that these powers worked in Jesus ([Mark vi. 14](#)), convinces us that these were the very powers of the Holy Spirit. Again, it is frequently said He rejoiced in the Spirit or was troubled in the Spirit, which may be interpreted as a rejoicing or being troubled in His own spirit; but this is not a complete explanation. When it refers to His own spirit it reads: “And He sighed deeply in His spirit” ([Mark viii. 12](#)). But in the other cases we interpret the expressions as pointing to those deeper and more glorious emotions of which our human nature is susceptible only when abiding in the Holy Spirit. For altho St. John states that Jesus groaned in Himself ([chap. xi. 38](#)), this is not contradictory, especially with reference to Jesus. If the Holy Spirit always abode in Him, the same emotion may be attributed both to Him and to the Holy Spirit.

Apart, however, from these passages and their interpretations, we have said enough to prove that that part of Christ’s work of mediation, beginning with His Baptism and closing



in the upper chamber, was marked by the operation, influence, and support of the Holy Spirit.

According to the divine counsel, human nature is adapted in creation to the inworking of the Holy Spirit, without which it can not unfold itself any more than the rosebud without the light and influence of the sun. As the ear can not hear without sound, and the eye can not see without light, so is our human nature incomplete without the light and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, when the Son assumed human nature He took it just as it is, *i.e.*, incapable of any holy action without the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, that from the beginning His human nature should be richly endowed with powers. The Holy Spirit developed these powers; and He was consecrated to His office by the communication to His human nature of the Messianic gifts by which He still intercedes for us as our High Priest, and rules us as our King. And for this reason He was guided, impelled, animated, and supported by the Holy Spirit at every step of His Messianic ministry.

There are three differences between this communication of the Holy Spirit to the human nature of Jesus and that in us:

First, the Holy Spirit always meets with the resistance of evil in our hearts. Jesus's heart was without sin and unrighteousness. Hence in His human nature the Holy Spirit met no resistance.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit's operation, influence, support, and guidance in our human nature is always individual, *i.e.*, in part, imperfect; in the human nature of Jesus it was central, perfect, leaving no void.

Thirdly, in our nature the Holy Spirit meets with an ego which in union with that nature opposes God; while the Person which He met in the human nature of Christ, partaking of the divine nature, was absolutely holy. For the Son having adopted the human nature in union with His Person, was cooperating with the Holy Spirit.



XXII.

**The Holy Spirit in the Passion of Christ.**

“Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself.”—*Heb. ix. 14.*

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Thirdly—Let us now trace the work of the Holy Spirit in the *suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ* (see “First” and “Second,” pp. 93 and 97).

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the apostle asks: “If the blood of goats and calves and the ashes of the heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works?” adding the words: “Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God.” The meaning of these words has been much disputed. Beza and Gomarus understood the Eternal Spirit to signify Christ’s *divine nature*. Calvin and the majority of reformers made it to refer to the Holy Spirit. Expositors of the present day, especially those of rationalistic tendencies, understand by it merely the tension of Christ’s human nature.

With the majority of orthodox expositors we adopt the view of Calvin. The difference between Beza and Calvin is that already referred to. The question is, whether as regards His human nature Christ substituted the inworking of the Son for that of the Holy Spirit; or did He have the ordinary operation of the Holy Spirit?

At the present time many have adopted the former view without clearly understanding the difference. They reason thus: “Are the two natures not united in the Person of Jesus? Why, then, should the Holy Spirit be added to qualify the human nature? Could the Son Himself not do this?” And so they reach the conclusion that since the Mediator is God, there could be no need of a work of the Holy Spirit in the human nature of Christ. And yet this view must be rejected, for—

First, God has so created human nature that without the Holy Spirit it can not have any virtue or holiness. Adam’s original, righteousness was the work and fruit of the Holy Spirit as truly as the new life in the regenerate is today. The shining-in of the Holy Spirit is as essential to holiness as the shining of light into the eye is essential to seeing.

Second, the work of the Son according to the distinction of three divine Persons is other than the work of the Holy Spirit with reference to the human nature. The Holy Spirit could not become flesh; this the Son alone could do. The Father has not delivered all things to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works from the Son but the Son depends upon the Holy Spirit for the application of redemption to individuals. The Son adopts our nature, thus relating Himself with the whole race; but the Holy Spirit alone can so enter into individual souls as to glorify the Son in the children of God.

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Applying these two principles to the Person of Christ, we see that His human nature could not dispense with the constant inshining of the Holy Spirit. For which reason Scripture declares: “He gave Him the Spirit without measure.” Nor could the Son according to His