

XXIII.

The Holy Spirit in the Glorified Christ.

“Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”—*Rom. i. 4.*

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From the foregoing studies it appears that the Holy Spirit performed a work in the human nature of Christ as He descended the several steps of His humiliation to the death of the cross.

The question now arises, whether He had also a work in the several steps of Christ’s exaltation to the excellent glory, *i.e.*, in *His resurrection, ascension, royal dignity, and second coming.*

Before we answer this question let us first consider the nature of this work in the exaltation. For it is evident that it must greatly differ from that in His humiliation. In the latter His human nature suffered *violence*. His sufferings antagonized not only His divine nature, but also His human nature. To suffer pain, insult, and mockery, to be scourged and crucified, goes against human nature. The effort to resist such sufferings and to escape from them is perfectly natural. Christ’s groaning in Gethsemane is the natural utterance of the human feeling. He was burdened with the curse and wrath of God against the sin of the race. Then human nature struggled against the burden, and the cry, “Father, let this cup pass from Me,” was the sincere and natural cry of horror which human nature could not repress.

And not in Gethsemane alone; through His whole humiliation He experienced the same, tho in less degree. His self-emptying was not a single loss or bereavement, but a growing poorer and poorer, until at last nothing was left Him but a piece of ground where He could weep and a cross whereon He could die. He renounced all that heart and flesh hold dear, until, without friend or brother, without one tone of love, amid the mocking laughter of His slanderers, He gave up the ghost. Surely He trod the winepress alone.

His humiliation being so deep and real, it is not surprising that the Holy Spirit succored and comforted His human nature so that it was not overwhelmed. For it is the proper work of the Holy Spirit by gifts of grace to enable human nature, tempted by sorrow to sin, to stand firm and overcome. He animated Adam before the fall; He comforts and supports all the children of God today; and He did the same in the human nature of Jesus. What air is to man’s physical nature, the Holy Spirit is to his spiritual nature. Without air there is death in our bodies; without the Holy Spirit there is death in our souls. And as Jesus had to die, tho He was the Son, when breath failed Him, so He could not live according to His human nature, tho He was the Son, except the Holy Spirit dwelt in that nature. Since, according to the spiritual side of His human nature, He was not dead as we are, but was *born* possessed of the life of God, so it was impossible for His human nature for a single moment to be without the Holy Spirit.

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But how different in the state of His exaltation! Honor and glory are *not* against human nature, but satisfy it. It covets them and longs for them with all its energy of desire. Hence this exaltation created no conflict in the soul of Jesus. His human nature needed no support to bear it. Hence the question: What, then, could the Holy Spirit do for the human nature in the state of glory?

Regarding the resurrection, the Scripture teaches more than once that it was connected with a work of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul says ([Rom. i. 4](#)) that Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God, by the *Spirit of holiness* with power; by the *resurrection* from the dead.” And St. Peter says ([1 Peter iii. 18](#)) that Christ “being put to death in the flesh, was quickened by the Spirit,” which evidently refers to the resurrection, as the context shows: “For Christ once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” His death points to the crucifixion, and His quickening, being the opposite of the latter, undoubtedly refers to His resurrection.

In [Rom. viii. 11](#), speaking of our resurrection, St. Paul explains these more or less puzzling utterances, affirming that “if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” This passage tells three things concerning our resurrection:

First, that the Triune God shall raise us up.

Second, that this shall be wrought by a special work of the Holy Spirit.

Third, that it shall be effected by the Spirit that dwelleth in us.

St. Paul induces us to apply these three to Christ; for He compares our resurrection with His, not only as regards the fact, but also as regards the working whereby it was effected. Hence with reference to the latter it must be confessed:

First, that the Triune God raised Him from the dead, St. Peter stated this clearly on the day of Pentecost: “Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death”; St. Paul repeated it in [Ephes. i. 20](#), where he speaks of “His mighty power” which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.

Second, that God the Holy Spirit performed a peculiar work in the resurrection.

Third, that He wrought this work in Christ *from within*, dwelling in Him: “Which dwelleth in you.”

The nature of this work is apparent from the Holy Spirit’s part in Adam’s *creation* and in *our birth*. If the Spirit kindles and brings forth all life, especially in man, then it was He who rekindled the spark quenched by sin and death. He did so in Jesus; He will do so in us.

The only remaining difficulty is on the third point: “Which dwelleth in you.” The work of the Holy Spirit in our creation, and therefore in that of Christ’s human nature, came *from without*; in the resurrection it works *from within*. Of course persons dying without being temples of the Holy Spirit are excluded. St. Paul speaks exclusively of men whose hearts are His temples. Hence, representing Him as dwelling in them, he speaks of Him as the *Spirit*

of holiness, and Peter as the “*Spirit*,” indicating that they do not refer to a work of the Holy Spirit in *opposition* to the spirit of Jesus, but in which His spirit agreed and cooperated. And this harmonizes with Christ’s own words, that in the resurrection He would not be passive, but active: “I have power to lay down life and I have power to take it again. This commandment I have received of My Father.” The apostles declare again and again not only that Jesus *was raised* from the dead, but that He has *risen*. He had thus foretold it, and the angels said: “Behold, He is risen.”

Hence we reach this conclusion, that the work of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection was different from that in the humiliation; was similar to that in the creation; and was performed from *within* by the Spirit *who dwelt in Him* without measure, who continued with Him *through His death*, and in whose work His *own spirit* fully concurred.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the *exaltation* of Christ is not so easily defined. The Scripture never speaks of it in connection with His ascension, His sitting at the right hand of the Father, nor with the Lord’s second coming. Its connection with the descent at Pentecost will be treated in its proper place. Light upon these points can be obtained only from the scattered statements concerning the work of the Holy Spirit upon human nature in general. According to Scripture, the Holy Spirit belongs to our nature as the light to the eye; not only in its sinful condition, but also in the sinless state. From this we infer that Adam, before he fell was not without His inworking; hence that in the heavenly Jerusalem our human nature will possess Him in richer, fuller, more glorious measure. For our sanctified nature is a habitation of God through the Spirit—[Ephes. ii. 22](#).

If, therefore, our blessedness in heaven consists in the enjoyment of the pleasures of God, and it is the Holy Spirit who comes into contact with our innermost being, it follows that in heaven He can not leave us. And upon this ground we confess, that not only the elect, but the glorified Christ also, who continues to be a true man in heaven, must therefore forever continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This our churches have always confessed in the Liturgy: “The same Spirit which dwelleth in Christ as the Head and in us as His members.”

The same Holy Spirit who performed His work in the conception of our Lord, who attended the unfolding of His human nature, who brought into activity every gift and power in Him, who consecrated Him to His office as the Messiah, who qualified Him for every conflict and temptation, who enabled Him to cast out devils, and who supported Him in His humiliation, passion, and bitter death, was the same Spirit who performed His work in His resurrection, so that Jesus was justified in the Spirit ([1 Tim. iii. 16](#)), and who dwells now in the glorified human nature of the Redeemer in the heavenly Jerusalem.

In this connection it should be noticed that Jesus said of His body: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Temple was God’s habitation on Zion; hence it was

a symbol of that habitation of God that was to be set up in our hearts. Hence this saying refers not to the indwelling of the Son in our flesh, but to that of the Holy Spirit in the human nature of Jesus. Wherefore St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" If the apostle calls our bodies temples of the Holy Ghost, why should we take it in another sense with reference to Jesus?

If Christ dwelt in our *flesh*, *i.e.*, in our human nature, body and soul, and if the Holy Ghost dwells, on the contrary, in the temple of our *body*, we see that Jesus Himself considered His death and resurrection an awful process of suffering through which He must enter into glory, but without being for a single moment separated from the Holy Spirit.



Seventh Chapter.

THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

