
The Mediation of Christ

The (natural) Son makes us sons by grace

Those who have attained adoption as sons of God through faith in Christ are baptized not into anything belonging to the created order but into the Holy Trinity itself, through the mediation of the Word, who on the one hand joined what is human to himself by means of the flesh that was united to him, and on the other was joined by nature to him who had begotten him, since he was by nature God. Thus what is servile [i.e. our humanity] rises up to the level of sonship through participation in him who is Son in reality, called and, as it were, promoted to the rank which the Son possesses by nature. That is why we are called offspring of God and are such, for we have experienced a rebirth by faith through the Spirit.¹

Christ is raised up by his Divinity and drawn down by his self-emptying

For [Christ] is God who has become man, occupying, as it were a middle position by an ineffable and indescribable union, since he has neither left the sphere of the truly divine nor has he entirely abandoned that of the human. For his ineffable generation from God the Father raises him up, in that he is Word and Only-begotten, to the divine essence and to the glory that naturally accompanies it, while his self-emptying draws him down somewhat to our world.

Not that this self-emptying is sufficient to overwhelm by force, so to speak, him who with the Father is king of the universe, for the Only-begotten is never forced against his will. Rather, it was of his own accord, out of his love for us, that he accepted the self-emptying and persevered with it. That is to say, he humiliated himself voluntarily, not as a result of any compulsion.

For he would have been convicted of not having undergone the suffering of his humiliation willingly, if there had been anyone at all powerful enough to have had an advantage over him and with the ability to order him to undergo this against his will. Therefore he humbled himself willingly for our sake. For we ourselves would never have been called sons by grace and gods (cf. Ps. 82:6) if the Only-begotten had not undergone humiliation for us and on our behalf.²

How to understand the self-emptying of the Word (Phil. 2:6-8)

We worship One Lord Jesus Christ, for the Word born of God and the man born completely of the holy virgin, come together in unity. We do not exclude him from the terms of the divinity because of the flesh, nor do we reduce him to the level of a simple man because of his likeness to us. This is how you should think that the Word born of God willingly underwent his voluntary self-emptying; and this is how he humbled himself, assuming the form of a slave, even though in his own nature he is free.³

¹ *Commentary on John* 1.9 (Russell, pp.102-3)

² *Commentary on John* 11.9 (Russell, pp.125-6)

³ *Letter to the Monks* 17 (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, p.255)