

Edward Irving, *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine Of Our Lord's Human Nature*
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Set Forth In Four Parts:

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(3.) Now the office of the Spirit they do in a still more remarkable manner subvert by their inventions. As the office of the Father is from his secret concealments, the unsearchable abode of his Godhead, to manifest himself unto sinful creatures; and as it is the office of the Son coming out of his bosom to sustain the fulness of the Father's Godhead, and render it into the comprehensible language of human thought, feeling, suffering, and action; so is it the part of the Holy Ghost to furnish him for such an undertaking. The person of the Son in coming into manhood must not bring with him Godhead properties, though he bring with him a Godhead person: that is, no action which he doth in the manhood must be ascribed to Godhead properties, or else Godhead and manhood are mixed and confused together; which were it allowed would introduce man-worship, creature-worship, and all forms of idolatry. With what then doth the Person of the Son serve himself in fulfilling this great work of bringing the fulness of the Godhead into a body, of manifesting God in the Flesh? He serveth himself with Holy-Ghost power which the Father bestows upon him. Inasmuch as it is besought from the Father by the believing Son, and is by the Father accorded to the faith of the Son, it is proved to be from God unto the Son of man: inasmuch as by the Son of man it is received, and by him appropriated, it is proved not to be in the form of Godhead; (for what should one in the form of man be able to do with that which is in the form of God?) so that power out of Godhead follows the faithful Son of

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God into the subsistence of the Son of man, and enables him there to do the work of rendering the incommunicable essence of Godhead into the forms of human thought, feeling, and passion. And thus, while all the power to redeem is proved to be from God in the person of the Father, and all the activity from God in the person of the Son, all the ability is proved to be from God in the person of the Holy Ghost; and yet no property of the Godhead is mingled with the properties of the manhood: they are kept as far distant as the orb of the invisible is from the orb of the visible, as the orb of the incomprehensible from the orb of the comprehensible, the orb of the uncreated from the orb of the created. One of two things the opposers of our Lord's true humanity do necessarily: either they mix the Divine nature of the Son with the human, or they mix the Divine nature of the Holy Ghost with the human nature of Christ. The greater part indeed of their argumentation, if so it may be called (but it is argumentation without argument) confuses the Divine and human natures of Christ, as did the Monothelites, and the Monophysites, and other varieties of the Eutychean Heresy. But those who make any use of the Holy Ghost, do it in the way of mixing him up, in the generation, with the virgin's substance. His body was not like our body, say they, because he was generated of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost added a something to his body which made it different. The difference is a thing derived from the Holy Ghost, and made to inhere in the body of Christ: which body they make - with reverence be it written, because it alone expresseth the truth - an amalgam of human nature and the Holy Ghost: they effectually mix the divine and the human substances. They confuse Godhead and manhood. I wish it had fallen to the lot of another man to deal with them; but I must go through with it. If they deny this, and say, that it is not after the manner of an amalgam or mixture, but after the way of a life, or energy of the Holy Ghost, with which he, the Son, actuateth his human nature pure and unmixed, then we are at one: for that is what I am maintaining. I am

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arguing for a human nature such as we find it every where else; and a Holy-Ghost life in it, which the Son continually useth, and acteth unto the regeneration of it after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. I am arguing for the human nature of a completely and thoroughly regenerated man; for creature substance sustained by a divine person, and of him informed with the power of a new life, which he receiveth out of the invisible Godhead; and useth as God's gift for the purpose of doing his will. Now behold what a wonder-working person is this Holy Ghost, who doth convey the infinite Godhead into the Son, acting with the limitations of manhood; and in his hands becomes a power capable of converting the creature from its state of rebelliousness and alienation and wickedness, into the state of holiness and love, and being at one with God (at-one-ment)! This office of the Holy Ghost, first to unite the invisible Godhead with the visible Son; and secondly, to furnish the Son for the work of bringing human nature into perfect reconciliation with, and obedience of, God: this, which is the essence of all sanctification of wicked men, is utterly undone upon their ruinous schemes of giving to Christ another substance than that of the virgin. Instead of holding this grand manifestation up before us, through the varieties of human life, from conception to death, they lose it in the first act of generation; and there in ignorant wonderment they lose themselves, and would lead others astray. They bring into existence their amalgam of human and divine natures; and say, Behold it, behold it, how wonderful it is, how unintelligible it is! This redeems us, this reveals God to us. This darkness is the light of God. - Oh it is a most strange delusion, it is a strong delusion. At length, O God, the church hath awaked; but let it not be to the mental impotence of the lunatic, or to the frenzied madness of the maniac. It seems more like the madness of the maniac among the schismatics; but, oh! suffer it not to be impotence of thought and paralysis of feeling in thy church. The Church of Scotland is awaking; her chains of sleep are breaking: O God! may it not be to destroy

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those her sons who have aroused her out of the sleep of death, in which she might have lain till the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.

I confess myself totally unable to see any part which the Holy Ghost had in this greatest work of the Trinity, - bringing the Son into the world, and by him redeeming all creation from the power of the devil, - if

either of these two errors we are contending against be maintained, namely, That Christ had an unfallen nature, or that he had a human nature rendered intrinsically and inherently holy of itself by the miraculous generation. On the last hypothesis, the Holy Ghost had a hand in the generation of the substance by mixing his Divine nature with it, which is heresy; or by a new work of creation, which I have shewn above to be little better. But was the work of redemption or incarnation finished in the act and instant of the miraculous generation? Certainly in the person of Christ it was not finished till his resurrection; in the church it is not finished yet; in the work it is not yet begun. Now what we want is such an intelligible and unquestionable statement of the acting of the Holy Ghost in this work from first to last; as shall shew him acting no subsidiary part, but that very part which is proper to him as a co-equal consubstantial person of the blessed Trinity. We have the Father ever active in supporting and glorifying his Son, and reducing all things to his dominion; we have the Son ever active in supporting the fallen creature; we must also have the Holy Ghost ever active in some equally continuous and necessary way of action. And this we exhibit from the first in his generation, which put Holy-Ghost life into the human substance; then in his holy life, which was the life of a regenerate man a continual Holy-Ghost life (Luke i.); in his miracles, and knowledge, and wisdom, which was by the anointing of the same Holy Ghost (Isai. xi. 1, lxii. 1, &c.); in his spotless, guiltless death, which was by the same Holy Ghost (Heb. ix.); in his resurrection and ascension unto glory, which was by the same Divine power (Eph. i); in

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his uniting to himself every one of the Father's election, and feeding him, and sanctifying him, and glorifying him, which is by the same Spirit, by the same life which he received of the Father. (John vi.) Throughout I see the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost acting to the redemption, sanctification, and eternal glorification of the substance of manhood, with all its dependencies of creation; and yet there is no mixture of the uncreated essence of Godhead with the creature, no confusion, nor conversion, nor change of any sort; and this I believe to be God's truth, and the contradiction of it to be the devil's lie, which cannot be held, nor favoured, nor borne with, save at the greatest risk and peril to immortal souls.