

Faith of Our Fathers

[A WEEKLY INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD.]
THE INCARNATION.—(Continued.)

(3) The union of the two natures.—The human and divine natures are united together in the personality or the Person of the Word, which is called in Greek *hypostasis*, whence we have the expression *hypostatic union*, or personal union. The Person is the point or link that unites the two natures. United to the Person of the Word, the humanity became His own nature in time, as the divinity was essentially His own nature from all eternity.

Thus the Person of the Word, possessing both divinity and humanity, is at once both God and Man; and this God-Man is but one Jesus Christ, in the same way as the soul and the body constitute one man in us.

The hypostatic union is so intimate and indissoluble that death itself could not break it. The Person of the Word remained united to the sacred Body in the tomb, and to the sacred Soul in limbo.

(4) Consequences of the hypostatic union.—These consequences are the theandric actions of Jesus Christ—the double filiation, the dignity, the excellence, and all the graces and treasures of His Person.

Jesus Christ, the Man-God, having two natures, acted sometimes by one, sometimes by the other, and sometimes by both natures combined, according to the works He performed. For instance, when He ate or slept He acted by His human nature, for these were human actions; when He pardoned sinners He performed a divine act. The act of healing the sick was in part divine, in part human: the touching was a human act, the curing was a divine act.

As the Person of Jesus Christ comprises two natures, both really His own, all the actions produced and the properties possessed by both may be truly attributed to Him. In considering the Person of Christ, we may say of Him He is God and He is Man; He is mortal and He is immortal. In Him a God is Man, and a Man is God; in Him a God suffers, a God dies for men.

Jesus Christ has moreover a double filiation: a divine filiation, as born of the Father, and a human filiation, as born of the Virgin Mary. Therefore we must say of Him, Jesus Christ is the true Son of God, and at the same time the true Son of the Virgin Mary; and reciprocally Mary is truly the Mother of God, since Jesus, her Son, is true God, and one with the Father. We confess this in the Creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, born of the Virgin Mary."

The further consequences of the hypostatic union are:

(1) The Person of Jesus Christ possesses an infinite dignity, because it is divine.

(2) All that Jesus Christ does, all that He possesses, whether as God or as Man, must be attributed to God the Son; for it is always God the Son who acts and who possesses. Thus His words, His sufferings, His Blood, are the words and sufferings and Blood of the Son of God; consequently all these things are divine.

(3) All the actions of Jesus Christ are infinite in dignity, because they are the actions of a God; they are divine actions, and therefore they are of infinite value and of infinite merit.

(4) All the actions of Jesus Christ are infinitely holy, because, being the actions of a God, they are incapable of being tainted by the slightest shadow of sin. This is what is meant by the impeccability of Jesus Christ.

(5) All things belonging to Jesus Christ, even in His human nature, as His Flesh and Blood, are of an infinite dignity, are divine, and, as such, adorable, for the Flesh and the Blood are those of a God.

(6) Jesus Christ, being the only Son of God, was infinitely acceptable to His Heavenly Father.

(7) He was filled in His humanity with all the gifts of God—that is to say, with the plenitude of grace and of knowledge—the plenitude, as St. John says, from which we should all draw.

Third Article: The Work of Jesus Christ.

16. The work of Jesus Christ, the great work which He had to accomplish on earth, was the Redemption—the restoration of humanity fallen by sin, or its reconciliation

with God, offended by sin. He had therefore entirely to destroy sin and its effects, to deliver prevaricating man from the evils that weighed upon him, and to restore to him all the blessings that he had lost.

This was a work of mediation between sinful man and the God offended by his sins. Christ is called therefore the Mediator, or the representative of humanity, interposing between us and God in order to reconcile us to God.

17. In order fully to accomplish the work of our redemption, Christ had to pay the price to God, and to apply to each one of us the benefit. He had on the one hand to offer a worthy sacrifice to God, and on the other to teach men the true doctrine, and bring them under obedience to His Father in one kingdom—the kingdom of God. Hence the reason why Jesus Christ had the triple character of Priest, Prophet, and King. He was Priest in order to offer a sacrifice; Prophet so that He might instruct; and King that He might found and govern the kingdom of God, which is the Church. These three characters are expressed by the name Christ, which signifies anointed; because the Son of God, sent by His Father, had received from Him the mission and the divine anointing of Priest, Prophet, and King. We have only to speak of the Sacrifice.

18. He offered it on the altar of the cross, where He was both Priest and Victim, immolating Himself to His Heavenly Father for the salvation of the world.

His sacrifice was of an infinite price by reason of the infinite dignity of the Offerer and of the Victim. It was satisfactory, and at the same time meritorious, containing infinite satisfaction and infinite merit. It sufficed therefore, on the one hand, to expiate all sins, and on the other to merit all those privileges of grace and of glory which man had lost.

As all the actions of Christ were of infinite value in the eyes of God, He could, by a single tear, or by one drop of His Blood, have saved us all; but God the Father willed that our redemption should be effected by the death of the cross; and therefore all the other actions of Jesus Christ contributed only to the great end, in conjunction with His death and the effusion of His precious Blood.

19. Jesus Christ, dying upon the cross, was the representative of guilty and fallen humanity. He had taken our place: He was, as the prophet says, charged with our iniquities, and laden with all our sins on His cross. He suffered the penalty of them in our stead, and satisfied for us the divine justice of an offended God.

20. He merited also (1) for Himself, His glorious resurrection, the glory of His name, the adoration of the universe, though it was already due to Him as the Son of God; (2) for us, justification, eternal life, and all the gifts of grace that precede or follow justification.

In order that the satisfaction and the merits of our Redeemer may be applied to us, and that we may really obtain the pardon of the sins for which He has satisfied, and the eternal life which He has purchased for us, certain conditions must be complied with on our part. We must believe with all our heart, sincerely repent of our sins, practise good works, and partake in the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

While Church Unity is much discussed, many lose sight of the fact that there can be and must be no compromise in matters of faith and morals. Until all men recognise the supremacy of the Sovereign Pontiff and casting away error enrol themselves in the one fold and under the one Shepherd, conferences and the like will accomplish nothing. One great universal act of submission to Holy Church would make this glorious and perpetuate the ideal of nationhood.

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