

hope, unless we firmly believe him to be a divine Person. But what cannot he do for us who is God?

USE II. *STAND still and contemplate the admirable condescendency of the Son of God, who, to bring about the Salvation of fallen man, caused time and eternity to meet in one.* The infinite Being to tabernacle in an house of clay: how highly hath he dignified our nature above that of Angels? And how gloriously hath he favoured us, that to do us good, he was pleased to become one of us? And because we could not else have been Redeemed, rather than to suffer us to lie and perish in our cursed state, put on the nature of man to do and in for us? Can we sufficiently celebrate this good will of his to such vile sinners? Let us then worship him because he is God, and yet draw near to him with holy confidence, because he is our brother, and hath taken part in our nature, that so he might have a fellow feeling of our miseries and succour us.

[JANUARY 22. 1694.]

SERMON LXXXI.

III. **WE** are now to look into the Assumption itself, under which the Nature of the Incarnation of the Son of God is to be observed. Concerning this we are told, *that he was and continues to be two distinct Natures in one Person forever.* Here then we may first inquire into the distinction, and then into the union, of these two natures in the Person of the Son of God, which will give us the best insight into this mysterious Incarnation that our shallow understandings are capable of apprehending in this Life.

First, *CONCERNING the distinction of these two natures.* It may be comprehended in this assertion, viz. *That in the Person of Christ each nature remains the same, perfect in essence & properties without any kind of change or the least mixture.* There is neither alteration in either of them, nor confusion in both of them, by reason of this assumption. They are as really the same as they were before the consideration of the union made between them. The Son of God is truly God, and the Son of Man is truly Man, though this constitutes but one Person. And here in particular,

(1.) *EACH Nature retains its Essence entire and perfect.*

1. *THE divine Nature remains in its Essence.* The whole entire Godhead is in the Person of Christ, Col. 2. 9. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* Our Redeemer is the most absolute first Being, Rev. 1. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* He who appeared in flesh is God. 1 Tim. 3. 16. *God manifest in the flesh.* He hath life in himself, Job. 5. 26. He is the true God, 1 Job. 5. 20.

These things are essential to the Deity, and were found in him who was incarnate.

2. *NEITHER doth the humane Nature of Christ lose its Essence.* But he is true and perfect man. He took the same form, shape, fashion with other men, Phil. 2. 7. The humane nature of Christ remains in itself a secondary Being, a reasonable creature, consisting of a Soul and Body, as will be afterwards more enlarged on. He is the Man Christ, 1 Tim. 2. 5. And on this account he so often calls himself the Son of Man.

(2.) *EACH Nature retains its essential Properties.* And this is necessary from the former.

1. *THE divine properties are not taken away or laid aside by this Assumption.* He put none of them off in his Incarnation. He abides eternal still, he could therefore say of himself as in, Job. 8. 58. *Before Abraham was, I am.* He is still infinite and omnipresent, Mat. 28. 20. He is still omniscient, knowing the very hearts and secrets of men, Job. 2. 24, 25. He hath a divine understanding, Job. 21. 17. and a divine Will; v. 22. yea, he is still God eternally blessed. Rom. 9. 5.

2. *HIS humane properties continue without being taken away.* Consider him in the nature assumed, and he is a compound, limited, timed Being. He is a finite creature, hath a Body that is circumscribed, and cannot be every where at once, Mat. 28. 6. hath an understanding that is bounded, a will that is subordinated, affections that might be excited or stirred, with joy or grief. He was capable of suffering, and being led to a created happiness, for he went in a path of life, Psal. 16. ult.

3. *THEY suffer not any the least change.* There is no transmutation that they are subjected to. The Godhead is not changed into the Manhood, nor is the Humanity transformed into the Deity. The *Essences* do not alter one into the other: nor yet their *properties*; neither of them ceaseth to be what it was, and become what it was not. The humane nature, having a derivative life, doth not change into the divine which hath one of it self: Eternity doth not begin to be; nor doth the finite humanity of Christ become infinite. And this must be a proper consectary from the premises.

4. *THEY are not mixt.* There is no confusion in them. There is not a compound confection made of them, as there is in the composition of several simples; as of the elements in the elementary bodies; nor as the essential parts of a being constitute a third being, by their being united together: But there meet in Christ, two natures, and these continue two as really as if they had never so met. And hence when Christ as God knew all things, yet as Son of man, there was a time when there was something which he knew not. Mat. 13. 32.

Secondly, *TOUCHING the union of these two Natures,* give me leave to premise, *That*

next to the adorable mystery of the Trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine Essence, I know no Gospel Doctrine more mysterious. Tho' nothing be more manifest upon divine testimony than that it is so; yet what more hard for our understanding to comprehend, than how it is? Let us then be sober in our enquiry into it, lest we darken counsel with words without knowledge.

I shall here content my self with a few short glances upon such a description of it as this, viz. *That the Second Person in the blessed Trinity, hath, after a wonderful manner, taken an individual humanity to subsist inseparably in his own Person for ever.* This is but a short description, far short of the thing that it aims at; but yet too long for us to be able to fathom, though it ought to command our belief; it not being against reason, though above our reasoning: and a certain truth because God hath said it. Here then,

(1.) *IT is a wonderful union.* And it is fitting that this *Epithet* be put into the description of it: for though all the works of God's efficiency are wonderful, yet this surpasseth all the rest. When therefore the Apostle would prove the doctrine of godliness to be a great mystery, this is the first Article by which he demonstrates it, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* And doubtless this was one reason why he had his name, *Wonderful* given him, *Isai. 9. 6.* A thing is then wonderful, when we apprehend it to be, but cannot comprehend the reason of it. We see or believe the effect, but the causes are too mysterious for us, and so our understanding is non-pluss'd in the contemplation of it. Now there are three things in which more especially this union is mysterious.

1. *THAT two natures so vastly different should meet together and unite in one.* That the word should be made flesh, *Joh. 1. 14.* that the Eternal Son of God should become a man, and tabernacle in an house of clay: that the Everlasting *Jehovah* should be made like to us, and he who is our Father by creation, should be our brother and near of kin to us by his Incarnation: that he should be both God and a creature, the Maker and the thing made. There cannot be a greater distance in nature than between God and a creature among beings: and that this infinite distance should be brought to meet in one is truly wonderful.

2. *THAT the Son of God should assume an humane nature, and not an humane person.* In all other men where there is an individual humanity, there is a distinct person: but in this assumption the union is so made, that though the humane nature abides, yet the personality is lost, or swallowed up in the person of the Son of God. Hence that, *Luk. 1. 35.* *And the angel answered and said unto her, The holy Ghost shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* If we speak of the nature, Christ is a man, but if we speak

of the person, the man Christ is God. And to see two such natures in Christ, entire in essence and properties, and yet but one person consisting in both, is truly mysterious.

3. *THAT the Second Person of the Trinity should alone assume this nature; and neither the Father, nor the Spirit.* When we consider all the Three Glorious Persons as enjoying one and the same undivided essence entirely; and hence that the whole essence is wholly in every one of these Sacred Persons, it must needs be a mystery beyond our grasping, to tell how the Son only was united personally to this nature: the over-curious enquiry into which hath made some to grow giddy, and turn *Hereticks.* That God should be manifested in the flesh, and yet this manifestation terminate in the Son, these things confound carnal reason, and surprize the humane understanding; it would lose it self in the speculation, did not faith come in and support it.

(2.) *IN the description it self,* observe,

1. *THE Son of God is in himself a complete Person, and hence receives no personal perfections by the assumption of the humane nature; nor hath any necessary dependance upon it.* He was *Son* before he was *Man*; nor doth his being the Son of God necessitate his being the Son of man. He was Son from Eternity, but he became man in time. And though the futurity of his Incarnation was eternal, being laid in the Covenant which was from everlasting, yet his Sonship was in order of nature before it; that futurity necessarily flowing from the Sons consent in that Covenant. And being a divine Person he could want nothing to complete his personality: nor be capable of being made better or more perfect by any addition; for all divine perfections are infinite, and to that which is infinite there can nothing be added. Hence this union was not natural, but voluntary: it was a free act of the Son of God.

2. *THE humanity of Christ was a complete individual humane nature.* The Incarnation of the Son of God was not an uniting him to the whole kind, or to all of it that are redeemed by him. It is true there is a mystical union between Christ and his Church, and every gracious member of it; but that is not the hypostolical union we are now considering of, as the *Familists* dream: but there was one distinct and particular humanity that was provided for him, and in which he tabernacled. Hence God is said to *prepare him a body*; *Heb. 10. 5.* And the parts of it were his own so as no other humane nature is, *Luk. 24. 39.* *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my self.* The Son of God did not only become a man, but *this man.* It was that humanity that was born of the *Virgin*, *Luk. 1. 35.* And it must be so, else he had not been capable of redeeming other men from the curse.

3. *THAT the individual Humanity of Christ is not this or that Man by itself.* Herein it differs from every other humanity in the World. Among men this humanity consti-

tutes this man, and so there results a person from it: but it is not so here. *Peter* is one man, and *Paul* is another, because they enjoy a distinct humanity each from other, though of the same kind; because individuation among intelligent subjects makes a person. But now the humanity of Christ belongs to the personality of the Son of God, and hereupon it hath none in itself. For it is certain that Christ is not two persons; for Scripture always makes him but one, and it is as certain that the Son who assumes the nature is a compleat person, and is not made another subsistence by this union.

4. *HENCE the individual Humanity of Christ, hath its entire subsistence in the Son of God.* And it always had so from the very first of its Being. It was never a separate humanity by itself, but was made with this dependance or inhering. It was not first produced and then united to him, but its union was made in the production of it: it was never a tree by itself, but it was at the first inoculated into his divine person and grew upon it. A graft indeed bears other manner of fruit from the stock it is grafted into, and grows upon; but yet it is not a tree by itself; but is a branch in the tree, and a piece of the tree into which it is inserted, having no root or stock but what it receives by this engraftment. The humane Nature of Christ produceth humane actions and effects; but it is sustained, upheld and influenced by the divine Person whose it is. Hence his blood is called *the blood of God*, in *Acts 20. 28.*

5. *THE union of these two natures in the Person of Christ is not only by divine approbation, or determination, but operation also.* If it were no other relation which that individual humanity bears to the Son of God than merely an acceptance of it, or the putting of such a title upon it, there would be no mystery in it, and any other humanity might be, without change on it, the Son of God: But there was a very great and secret work of the Spirit of God in fitting of this humanity for the Son in the assumption. *Heb. 10. 5. A Body hast thou prepared for me.* The word signifies to fit a thing compleatly in all respects for its use. So that here was infinite wisdom and power at work in making and disposing of this Body in its union, that it might be fit to be a sacrifice, *Luk. 1. 35.* and Body here intends an humane Nature.

6. *THE Second Person in the Trinity stands in a real relation to this Humanity, without any real change in his Person.* Immutability is one of the essential Perfections of the Deity, God challengeth it to himself, *Mal. 3. 6.* And it is ascribed to Christ as he is a divine Person, in *Heb. 13. 8.* So that though there is a new relation which the Son taketh on him to this nature, for it is the Lord's Body, as, *1 Cor. 11. 29.* Yet there is no real change wrought on him by it. It is hard to illustrate this by any suitable comparisons of

things among men, because all will come short of the mystery. But it is certain, that a man naked, and a man clothed, makes no real change in the man. And all Philosophy makes a manifest difference between real, relative, and imaginary; a relation is something less than real, and yet more than imaginary.

7. *THERE is a real change wrought in the humanity by this Union.* Though the divine nature of Christ undergoes no real alteration, yet the humane nature hath a very great one; there was therefore a great deal done to fit it for this service, *Heb. 10. 5.* It was made a meet tabernacle for the Son of God to dwell in, fitted to do and suffer for us, to go through the whole work of our Redemption, to make full satisfaction to the justice of God, &c. In all of which there must be a wonderful operation, for it was thus capacitated for that which no other humanity was ever made capable of. It was an astonishing change in lifting up this individual humanity above the rank of created Beings, by uniting it to the Person of the Son.

8. *THIS Union being made, there is God and man in one Person forever.* The subsistence of the eternal Son of God, is now become the subsistence of the man Christ Jesus. And now the man Jesus Christ is the Second Person in the glorious Trinity. The person of the manhood of Christ is a divine Person; and though we cannot say the humanity is the divinity, yet we must say that this Man is God. And so we have *Thomas's* confession concerning him, *Joh. 20. 28. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God.* And that of *Nathanael* amounts to as much, *Joh. 1. 49. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel.* These few observations may help to fortify our Faith, tho' not satisfy our curiosity; and let us wait patiently for more, till we come to stand in the light of Glory.

IV. *WE may now proceed to look into the Communion there is between the two natures in the Person of Christ.* For though it be not mentioned in the *Catechism*; yet it is naturally consequent upon it, for union is for, and the ground of communion; and it is certain that the Son of God took our nature into this union with his Person, that in it he might perform the great work of Redemption, which he could not have done without it. Hence there must be a co-operation of these two natures in this work, else the end of this union were lost. Touching this Communion then, observe these three things.

1. *THOUGH there be a communion between the two natures in Christ, yet the properties of one nature do not pass into the properties of the other.* Though there be a communion, yet there is no confusion, no commixture. We have already observed, that the two natures remain entire and distinct in the Person of Christ,

Christ, notwithstanding this union; the one of them is not swallowed up by the other, though they do both of them meet in one person. And, because the manner of communion must needs follow the manner of the union, it is necessary that there be two kinds of faculties, and properties, correspondent to these two natures, remaining in him. There cannot be a change of properties without a change of natures: he therefore must have two understandings distinct, *Mar. 13. 32.* and two distinct wills, *Mat. 26. 39.* If the properties cease, the nature will cease with them, i. e. to be the same it was; for the nature of a thing is seen in its properties. And hence also there must needs be two sorts of operations or effects wrought by these natures. It is impossible that two distinct natures should perform one and the same individual action formally; though they may joyn in the same work, yet each must have its distinct and individual activity in it. As the principles are distinct, so also must be the operations which flow from these principles. Divine actions are not humane, nor are humane actions divine. If there be in Christ two understandings, the one created, the other increas'd, there must then be two sorts of exerting them; the one infinite, the other finite; and so of the rest. For there is an infinite disproportion between a divine and an humane act.

2. *THOUGH* the actions of the two natures in Christ are distinct, yet in working they are conjoyned. There is a co-operation of these natures in the works that are done by Christ as Mediator. And here observe,

(1.) *THEY* do co-operate in the same Person. Though all things else considered in the person of Christ are twofold, viz. Divine and humane; yet the Person himself is but one. *1 Tim. 2. 5. For there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* Hence these distinct operations are not the actions of divers persons, but of one Mediator. The divine & humane nature are, according to our manner of conception, the parts of the Person of Christ; though the divine nature cannot properly be called a part, because it is infinite. Now that which is done by any part, is done by the whole in regard of that part; if the Soul meditates, the man meditates; if the Body sit or walk, the man doth so; and this flows from the union of the parts in one.

(2.) *THEY* co-operate for the same end. The divine nature hath not one design, and the humane another, but both together have one and the same work to do, viz. the Redemption and Salvation of fallen man; in the advancement whereof they do mutually joyn. Christ is therefore said to Redeem us, *Gal. 3. 13.* Divines do here warily observe a difference between an *action* and a *work* in Christ. A work is something done by action, and divers actions may concur in one work. Now the actions in Christ are distinct, but the work

is but one, to which each contributes according to its influence which it hath into the work.

(3.) *THE* actions of both natures are properly bounded upon the Person of the Son of God. Though some be referred to one nature, some to the other, as the principle of operation; as a tree may bear divers sorts of fruits, by reason of grafts in it; yet the person is the term of operation in which they are bounded. And therefore Christ is said to die, and to rise again, to heal the sick, &c.

(4.) *HENCE*, whatsover Mediatorial actions are performed by Christ in either nature, they are properly said to be Theandrical; i. e. the works of Christ God man: Because, though they are in nature distinct; yet they concur in the person and in the ends of them. And this we may observe in the discharge of every Office: His Priesthood, *Heb. 9. 14.* And so of the rest.

3. *FROM* this communion there flows a communication of properties in both natures, with respect to attribution or predication. Not that they do really exchange properties, but only there is such a nearness in them in the Person of Christ, that the Scripture doth frequently attribute them one to another. And there are three sorts of these attributions which Divines have taken notice of, and are to be found in the word of God.

(1.) *THE* properties of each nature are attributed to the whole Person of Christ, and accounted as personal. And as the properties are so, so also are the actions; because the Person of Christ performed these operations, or because they are properties and actions of those natures which meet together, and are conjoyned in one person. Thus are the properties and actions of the humane nature ascribed to Christ, *Phil. 2. 7. 8. 1 Pet. 3. 18.* And yet only the humane nature was capable of these. So also the properties & actions of the divine nature, *Joh. 8. 58, 59.*

(2.) *THE* properties and actions of one nature are assigned to the other, and that mutually. And the reason is because they both meet in the Person; for though there be one nature, and another nature, yet there is not one person and another person. Only here observe that they are attributed in the concrete and not in the abstract. The abstract is a nature considered in it self nakedly, the concrete denotes the person who hath the nature. And we have frequent expressions of this sort. *Mat. 9. 6. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed and walk.* *1 Cor. 2. 8. Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* But we never find it said in the abstract, that the God-head died, shed his blood, or that the manhood is the Lord of Glory. Hence the meaning is, that the same Person who is God shed his blood, though not as God, but as man, &c.

(3.) *SUCH*

(3.) *SUCH things as properly belong to the whole person are attributed to each nature.* And the reason is because each hath a relation or title to his Person. And what the person doth, that each nature may be said to do, so far forth as it hath an influence into his personal acts. Thus the *Man* Christ is called *Mediator*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. whereas, he is not Mediator either as God or as Man, but as *God-man*. Thus, God *purchased the Church with his own blood*, Act. 20. 28. which he did as *God-man*. Now it is very useful for us to observe these attributions, and the reasons of them, lest we should otherwise mistake, or not rightly apprehend the way and manner of the carrying on of the work of Redemption by Christ for us.

USE I. LEARN we hence how extremely miserable man was who stood in need of such a Redeemer. Doubtless it was man's necessity which occasioned Christ's Incarnation: & surely it must be very great, when nothing else would do for the remedying of it, but that the Lord of Glory, must put on our flesh; and He who was the eternal God become a man, that so he might go through that work

on which our Salvation depended. Let us then improve the consideration of this, to read to our selves a Lecture of our great infelicity, that so we may be the better fitted to celebrate the riches of that Grace which shines forth in our recovery.

USE II. LEARN hence how completely the work of Salvation must be carried on by such an one. And hence what strength faith may have to believe in him for life and Salvation. Well may he who is both God and Man in one, be said to be *mighty to save*, Mai. 63. 1. and to be *able to save to the uttermost*, Heb. 7. 25. Here is an object on whom we may lean our whole weight without fear or danger. Hence he is capable of doing & dying for us. Hence there is an infinite value and vertue in his obedience. Labour we then to have a real and true faith placed on him, and then let us with the greatest confidence expect an entire Redemption and Salvation at his hands. And to that end let us be much in the contemplation of the Person of Christ, and the natures united in his Person.

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SERMON LXXXVII.

QUESTION XXII.

1. THAT it was a true, real, substantial