

HARTS CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

CHAPTER XIII

THE SECOND ARTICLE OF THE CREED *(continued)*

"And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord."

As it was to redeem us from sin and hell and to teach us how to gain heaven, the end of our creation, that God the Son became man, we shall next consider how admirably the sacred name Jesus Christ, the name of the Saviour sent to accomplish this work, expresses the office which He came on earth to fulfil.

The Holy Name Jesus

The holy name Jesus means Saviour, and was the name brought down from heaven by the Angel Gabriel when he came to announce to the Blessed Virgin the mystery of the Incarnation: "*Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus*" (Luke i. 31). Again, in the words of the Angel to St. Joseph, we are told: "*That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. She shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins*" (Matt. i. 20, 21). Before the coming of Christ, the expectations of both Jews and Gentiles were directed towards a Saviour, and the characteristic name of Saviour was peculiar to the Messiah.

A name of power and confidence

To show our deep respect for this holy name, it is a pious custom to bow the head whenever we either repeat it ourselves, or hear it pronounced by others. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, speaking of our Saviour, says: "*God hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all other names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father*" (ii. 9, 10). It is moreover a name of great **power** to be called upon in time of temptation and danger: "*For there is no other name under heaven given to men, we must be saved*" (Acts iv. 12). And it is a name of **confidence**, since, through it, God has promised to grant all our requests: "*Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you... Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full*" (John xvi. 23, 24).

Christ

The name Christ signifies "Anointed," and is also applied to God the Son made Man for us: "*The Messiah cometh who is called Christ*" (John iv. 25); and this because of His threefold character of **Priest, Prophet, and King**. In the Old Law the High-Priest, and Prophets and Kings were anointed with oil, and specially set apart for the dignity and office to which they were called: "*Jesus of Nazareth: you know how God anointed Him with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil*" (Acts x. 38). Yet it was not with material oil that our Lord was anointed, or received His consecration, but His anointing is the fulness of the Divinity that dwells in Him.

Priest

Jesus Christ is a **Priest** in once having offered Himself on Calvary for the atonement of sin, and in continuing to offer Himself daily in the Mass, through the ministry of His priests, in order to apply

to our souls the merits of His Passion and Death: "*Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech*" (Heb.v.6).

Prophet

He is a *Prophet* in the twofold meaning of the word— as a teacher of the truth and guide to eternal life, and that not only as one foretelling things, but as knowing all things. He has revealed to us the mysteries of God; He has taught us what we are to do to be saved: "*A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you out of your brethren. . . . Him you shall hear, according to all things whatsoever He shall speak to you*" (Acts iii. 22).

King

Not only is He a **King**, but He is the "*King of kings and Lord of lords*" (Apoc. xix. 16). He is our King because He came down on earth to establish the Church, a spiritual Kingdom, to which we belong, and over which He rules, and of which He will continue to be Head throughout all eternity: "*Thou sayest that I am a King: for this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. . . . My kingdom is not of this world*" (John xviii. 36, 37).

His only Son

As the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, Jesus Christ is the only true and real Son of God, born of the Father from all eternity: "*In the beginning was the Word, . . . and the Word was God*" (John i. 1). He is co-eternal with the Father and has one and the same substance with Him, proceeding from Him by an eternal generation: "*Thou art My Son, to-day [i.e., the day of eternity] have I begotten Thee*" (Heb. i. 5). Jesus Christ, then, is the only Son of God by nature, whereas we are His children by adoption through grace; but not by nature, nor from all eternity.

Our Lord

The term "our Lord," which we commonly use in reference to God the Son made Man, though equally to be referred to all the Divine Persons by reason of the sovereign dominion which God, as our Creator, possesses over all the works of His hands, is especially applicable to the Second Person, since as God He created us, and is therefore Lord of all; and as God made Man He redeemed us "at a great price," and restored us to liberty after we had become the slaves of the devil by sin. He is our Lord, too, in a special manner by His Incarnation, and as such was given to us by His eternal Father: "*By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent His Only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him*" (1 John iv. 9).

How great then should our love, respect, and obedience for so good a Lord, seeing that to Him we owe all we possess, whether it be in the order of nature or of grace!