

TRINITY XVIII (B)

CHRIST AS TRUTH

This morning I wish to explore aspects of Church doctrine in the context of today's Intent. It will be somewhat intellectual in approach, but occasionally we need to explore the Intent in this way. This week's theme "Christ as truth" is one that invites this approach.

"We believe that God is Love and Power and Truth and Light." These words you will recognise as those that are used at the beginning of the Act of Faith in our service of the Holy Eucharist, and they proclaim the nature of God in accordance with our understanding of Him. One of the attributes used is *Truth* - God as Truth, and in the terms of the Intent, *Christ as Truth*, for Christ is God, even as the Father is God and the Holy Spirit is God, but these three are One in their Eternal, Transcendent Reality. God as Truth, Christ as Truth, are really synonymous terms, as God is the very essence of all truth, and all truth is of the very essence of God. Truth therefore may be considered as that which at all times is in harmony with fundamental Reality, or in other words, with the basic Reality of the Universe, God in His own centre of Life and Being.

Christ as the Son of God, is One with God as the Eternal Unity, is what we sing in the Introit, and is expressed in the Athanasian Creed, "there are not three Lords, but One Lord". The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are, in the essence of their Transcendent Being, an Eternal Unity, without any sense of division or separation in any way. *They are One*. When God, as the One, or Unity, expresses Himself in His Universe, however, He does so in His three-fold nature.

In His transcendent nature, i.e., standing above His universe as it were, He is the one complete unassailable Unity, without any degree of variableness or of differentiation. It is in manifested expression within His Universe that differentiation occurs, through each of the three divisions or facets of the Godhead, referred to in Christian terminology as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit). The essence or substance of God the Holy Ghost is the first of the great life-streams to take effect in the building of a universe, and as the creative mind of God is responsible for the building, through chemical processes, of all the elements from which the basic atomic structure of the universe is formed, the foundation, or matter, from which all further creative processes are made possible.

At an appropriate time in relation to this creative activity of God the Holy Ghost, the second of the great life-streams is poured forth from God as Christ the Son, to mould and to build the forms, to activate these forms and give conscious life to them as centres, or units, of evolutionary progression. God the Holy Ghost as the Divine Mind, produces the atomic structure, or the matter required, from which the Universe can be built.

God the Son takes this matter of the atomic structure, moulds it into the forms needed and invests these forms with conscious life. There is therefore, an interaction of life and form, spirit and matter, first in a process of involution into matter, and then a process through evolution from matter. And so we have the life of Christ the Son crucified on the cross of matter, first, to provide for humanity the vital element of conscious life, and through the development of that life and consciousness, to reach the stage of Redemption or of Perfection, when the Christ in us becomes one with the Father. This helps us, I think, to understand a little better, the words of St. Paul, "Our life is hid with Christ in God". It is through the life of Christ the Son that we gain our inheritance to divinity, and it is through that life also that we gain our Redemption or Perfection.

We ourselves must earn what is gained, but the inheritance of our own divinity and the self-realisation of that divinity are made possible through the great outpouring of the life of Christ as God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. And so we have Christ as Truth - Christ as the ever-present divine life, through Whose sacrifice we owe our divinity and our own ultimate destiny. Remember, we are made in the image of God, and so our incarnation in this life, in this world, in order to evolve towards that spiritual perfection, by the grace of God, that is its purpose.

But what should we say in regard to the *person* of Jesus Christ, as the man of the Holy Gospels, in relation to Christ as Truth? At the fourth Ecumenical Council of the early Church, the Council of Chalcedon, held in the year 451, the following statement was adopted: "We all unanimously teach... one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in deity and perfect in humanity.... in two natures, without being mixed, transmuted, divided, or separated."

The conception outlined here is based on the thoughts of the late Bishop Charles Wicks of Adelaide, and would be unlikely to gain acceptance by the established churches. Whether such 'theosophical' ideas would have been in the minds of the Church Fathers who gathered at Chalcedon is also unlikely.

This question of the nature of Christ has always been one of controversy, and was especially so in the early Church. However, it is remarkable how the substance of truth appears to have been retained throughout the centuries, whereas the *interpretation* of the substance, revealed in the established dogmas of the Church, has created a situation which to so many is unacceptable. It is all a mystery, and the church does its best to explain this mystery to us.

Christ as man, once stood where we now stand, but he has become the first fruits of them that slept (cf Paul) -- he has not only become perfect man, but has reached a stage of perfected life where he is the embodiment and the example of perfection for all people. In this capacity he fulfils a unique function as the living embodiment in this world of ours, of God as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. There is here the most perfect union of Christ as man, with Christ as God. It is known as the *hypostatic union*, a union of the same essence or substance of the Godhead, with Christ in His manhood or His humanity. This is a wonderful and mystical union, and it is little wonder that so much has been misunderstood in relation to it. Christ as Truth: In the Gospel for today we have these words: "Jesus saith unto him: I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me". And as we declare in our Act of Faith, all will eventually find the way, the truth and the life of redemption in perfect union with the Father, through Christ the Son of God, both in His Godhead and in His humanity.

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