

QUESTION 2

The Mode of Union of the Incarnate Word as regards the Union Itself

Next we have to consider the mode of union of the Incarnate Word: first, as regards the union itself (question 2); second, as regards the person doing the assuming (question 3); and, third, as regards the nature that is assumed (question 4).

On the first topic there are twelve questions: (1) Was the union of the Word Incarnate effected in a nature? (2) Was it effected in a person? (3) Was it effected in a suppositum or *hypostasis*? (4) Is the person or *hypostasis* of Christ composite after the Incarnation? (5) Is some sort of union effected between the soul and the body in Christ? (6) Was the human nature united to the Word accidentally? (7) Is the union itself something created? (8) Is the union the same as the assumption? (9) Is the union the greatest of all unions? (10) Was the union of the two natures in Christ effected through grace? (11) Did any merits precede the union? (12) Was any sort of grace natural to the man Christ?

Article 1

Was the union of the Word Incarnate effected in one nature?

It seems that the union of the Word Incarnate was effected in one nature:

Objection 1: Cyril says, and this is cited in the acts of the Council of Chalcedon, “One should not understand two natures, but the one incarnate nature of the Word of God.” But this cannot be the case unless the union exists within a nature. Therefore, the union of the Word Incarnate was effected in a nature.

Objection 2: Athanasius says: “Just as the rational soul and flesh come together in the constitution of a human nature, so God and man come together in the constitution of some one nature.” Therefore, the union was effected in a nature.

Objection 3: One of two natures is denominated from the other only if they are in some sense changed into one another. But in Christ the divine nature and the human nature are denominated from one another; for Cyril says that the divine nature is “incarnated,” and, as is clear from Damascene, Gregory Nazianzus says that the human nature is “deified.” Therefore, it seems that one nature was made from two natures.

But contrary to this: In the determination of the Council of Chalcedon it says, “We confess that in these last days that the only-begotten Son of God is to be recognized—without confusion (*inconfuse*), without change (*immutabiliter*), without division (*indivise*), without separation (*inseparabiliter*)—in* two* natures*, where the distinction between the natures has not been destroyed because of the union.” Therefore, the union was not effected in a nature.

I respond: In order to make this question clear, one must think about what a nature is. Thus, one should know that the name ‘*natura*’ (‘nature’) is said or taken from ‘*nascendus*’ (‘to be generated’). Hence, the name is first imposed to signify the generation of living things, which is called their nativity or sprouting forth (*nativitas vel pullulatio*), so that ‘*nature*’ (‘nature’) has the sense of ‘*nascitura*’ (‘about to be born’). From there the name ‘*nature*’ (‘nature’) is transferred to signify the principle of such a generation. And since the principle of generation in living things is intrinsic, the name ‘*nature*’ (‘nature’) is transferred further to signify any intrinsic principle of change (*quodlibet principium intrinsecum motus*)—this according to the Philosopher in *Physics 2* (“A nature is a principle of change in that in which it exists in its own right and not as an accident (*in eo in quo est per se et non secundum accidens*)”). But this principle is either the form or the matter. Hence, sometimes the form is called the nature and sometimes the matter. And since the end of natural generation, in that which is generated, is the essence of the species, which is signified by the definition, it turns out that the essence of this sort of species is likewise called the nature. And that is the way in which Boethius defines the nature in *De*

Duabus Naturis when he says, “The nature is the specific difference that informs each thing”—that is, the nature is what completes the definition of the species. So, then, in the present context we are speaking of nature insofar as ‘*natura*’ (‘nature’) signifies the essence or the what-it-is, i.e., the what-ness of the species (*secundum quod nature significat essentiam vel quod quid est, sive quidditatem speciei*).

However, if we take ‘nature’ in this sense, then it is impossible for the union of the Word Incarnate to have been effected in a nature. For there are three ways in which something that has oneness is constituted out of two or more things.

In one way, [something that has oneness] is constituted *out of two complete things that remain whole* (*ex duobus perfectis integris remanentibus*). This can happen only in the case of things whose form is a composition or an ordering or a shape. For instance, a heap is made, by composition alone, out of many rocks adjoined to one another without any ordering, whereas a house is made out of stones and wood arranged in some order and also made to some shape. Accordingly, some have claimed that the union [of the Incarnation] is either (a) in the manner of a *lumping together* (*per modum confusionis*), which is a union without any ordering, or (b) in the manner of a *measuring* (*per modum commensurationis*), which involves an ordering. But this cannot be the case. First, because a composition, an ordering, or a shape is an accidental form and not a substantial form. And so it would follow that the union of the Incarnation exists accidentally (*per accidens*) and not in its own right (*non per se*)—something that will be disproved below (a. 6). Second, because what is effected by a union of this sort does not have *oneness absolutely speaking* (*ex unione huiusmodi non fit unum simpliciter*), but *oneness in a certain respect* (*unum secundum quid*), since in actuality *many* things remain. Third, because the form of the things in question is not a *nature* but rather a *contrivance of art* (*non est natura sed magis ars*), like the form of a house. And, as a result, it would not be the case, as they wish to claim, that one *nature* is constituted in Christ.

In the second way, something [that has oneness] is made *out of complete but transmuted things* (*ex perfectis sed transmutatis*), in the way that a mixed thing or mixture (*mixtum*) is made out of its elements. And on this score some have claimed that the union of the Incarnation was made in the manner of a *combination* (*per modum complexionis*). But this cannot be the case. First, because, as was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 9, aa. 1-2), the divine nature is altogether immutable. Hence, it is true both that (a) the divine nature itself is unable to be converted into anything else, since it is incorruptible, and that (b) nothing else is able to be converted into it, since it itself is unable to be generated. Second, because that which is mixed together is not the same in species as any of the things that enter into the mixture (*nulli miscibilium est idem specie*); for instance, flesh differs in species from each of its elements. And so Christ would not be the same in species with either His Father or His mother. Third, because a mixture cannot be made out of things that are far distant from one another. For the species of one of them will be dissolved—as, for instance, if one were to add a drop of water to a flagon of wine. And, accordingly, since the divine nature infinitely exceeds the human nature, there cannot be a mixture, but instead only the divine nature will remain.

In the third way, something [that has oneness] is made not out of things that are changed, but *out of things that are incomplete* (*fit ex aliquibus non permutatis sed imperfectis*), in the way that a human being is made out of a soul and a body, and, similarly, a* human* body* out of diverse members. But this cannot be said of the mystery of the Incarnation. First, because each of the natures, viz., divine and human, is complete according to its own character (*est secundum suam rationem perfecta*). Second, because the divine nature and the human nature *cannot constitute one thing in the manner of quantitative parts*, in the way that its members constitute one [human] body, since the divine nature is incorporeal. Neither can they constitute one thing in the manner of form and matter, since the divine nature cannot be the form of anything, especially of a body. Also, it would follow that the resultant species is communicable to many, and so there would be many Christs. Third, because Christ would belong neither to human nature nor to divine nature, since an added difference changes the species—as with the unit in

the case of numbers, in the way explained in *Metaphysics* 8.

Reply to objection 1: This passage from Cyril is explained in the following way by the Fifth Synod: “If anyone proclaiming one incarnate nature of the Word of God does not understand this in the way the Fathers taught it, viz., that a union with respect to subsistence was made from the divine nature and the human nature, but instead tries, on the basis of these words, to introduce one nature or one substance composed of the divine nature and the flesh of Christ, then let him be anathema.” Therefore, the passage does not mean that in the Incarnation one nature is constituted out of two natures; instead, it means that the one nature of the Word of God united the flesh to* itself* in a person.

Reply to objection 2: Two sorts of oneness are constituted in each of us out of the soul and the body, viz., a oneness of *nature* and a oneness of *person*.

A oneness of *nature* is constituted insofar as the soul is united to the body, bringing it to completion formally, so that one nature comes to be from two as from actuality and potentiality, or as from form and matter. And on this score there is no similarity, since, as was established in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 3, a. 8), the divine nature cannot be the form of a body.

By contrast, a oneness of *person* is constituted from the soul and the body insofar as there is some one thing that subsists in the flesh and the soul. And on this score there is a similarity, since the one Christ subsists in the divine nature and in the human nature.

Reply to objection 3: As Damascene points out, the divine nature is said to be incarnated because it is united to the flesh *in a person* (*unita carni personaliter*), and not because it is changed into the nature of flesh.

Again, similarly, the flesh is said to be deified, as he puts it, not through a *conversion* [into the divine nature], but through its being *united* to the Word, with all the flesh’s properties preserved. So what is meant is that the flesh is deified because it becomes the flesh of the Son of God, and not because it becomes God.

Article 2

Was the union of the Word Incarnate effected in a person?

It seems that the union of the Word Incarnate was not effected in a person:

Objection 1: As was established in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 39, a. 1), a person in God is not other than His nature. Therefore, if the union is not in a nature, it follows that it was not effected in a person.

Objection 2: The human nature has no less dignity in Christ than in us. But as was established in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 29, a. 3), personhood (*personalitas*) pertains to dignity. Therefore, since the human nature in us has its own personhood, *a fortiori* it had its own personhood in Christ.

Objection 3: As Boethius says in *De Duabus Naturis*, “A person is an individual substance in a rational nature.” But the Word of God assumed an individual human nature, since, as Damascene says, “A nature as a universal does not subsist in its own right (*non sistit secundum se*), but is thought of in contemplation alone.” Therefore, a human nature has its own personhood. Therefore, it does not seem that the union was effected in a person.

But contrary to this: The Synod of Chalcedon writes, “We confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is not partitioned or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son.” Therefore, the union of the Word was effected in a person.

I respond: ‘Person’ signifies something different from ‘nature’. For ‘nature’ signifies the essence of the species, which is signified by the definition. And, to be sure, if one could not find anything else adjoined to what belongs to the notion of the species, there would be no need to distinguish the nature from the nature’s suppositum—i.e., from the individual that subsists in that nature—since every

individual that subsists in a nature would be altogether the same as its nature. But in certain things something *can* be found that does not belong to the notion of the species, viz., accidents and individuating principles such as are apparent especially in the case of things that are composed of matter and form. And so in things of this sort the nature and the suppositum are distinct in reality (*secundum rem differt natura et suppositum*), not in the sense that they are altogether separate things, but because the suppositum includes the very nature of the species and has added to it certain other things that lie outside the notion of the species (*quaedam alia quae praeter rationem speciei*). Hence, the suppositum is signified as a whole that has the nature as a formal part which completes it. And because of this, in those things that are composed of matter and form the nature is not predicated of the suppositum; for we do not say that this man is his humanity.

On the other hand, if there is a thing in which there is nothing beyond the notion of the species or of its nature, as is the case with God, then in such a case the *suppositum* and the *nature* are not different in reality but only according to our manner of understanding (*secundum rationem intelligendi*), since the same thing is called a *nature* insofar as it is a certain essence, whereas it is called a *suppositum* insofar as it is a subsisting thing. And what is said here of the *suppositum* should be understood to apply to the *person* in a rational or intellectual creature, since, according to Boethius, a person is nothing other than “an individual in a rational nature.”

Thus, everything that exists in a person, whether or not it belongs to his nature, is united to him in the person. Therefore, if the human nature is not united to the Word of God in His person, then it is not united to Him in any way at all, and so faith in the Incarnation is completely destroyed—which amounts to undermining the Christian Faith as a whole. Therefore, since the Word has a human nature united to Himself, whereas the human nature does not belong to His divine nature, it follows that the union is effected in the person of the Word and not in a nature.

Reply to objection 1: Even though, in God, *nature* and *person* do not differ in reality (*non sit aliud secundum rem natura et persona*), they nonetheless do differ in their mode of signifying, since, as has been explained, *person* signifies in the manner of something subsistent. And since the human nature is united to the Word in such a way that the Word subsists in it—but not in the sense that something is added to Him with respect to the character of His own nature, or in the sense that His nature is changed into something—it follows that the union was effected in His person and not in His nature.

Reply to objection 2: Personhood necessarily pertains to a thing’s dignity and perfection to the extent that a thing’s existing in its own right, which is what is understood by the name ‘person’, pertains to its dignity and perfection. Now it is more dignified for a thing to exist in something more dignified than itself than to exist in its own right. And so by this very fact the human nature is more dignified in Christ than in us, since in us it has its own personhood in the sense that it exists in its own right, whereas in Christ it exists in the person of the Word. In the same way, it likewise belongs to the form of the species to be that which completes the species, and yet the sentient is more noble in us, because of its connection with a more noble completing form, than it is in a non-rational animal, in which [the sentient soul] is the completing form.

Reply to objection 3: As Damascene puts it, “The Word of God assumes human nature in an atom (*in atomo*)”—i.e., in an individual—“and not in a universal.” Otherwise, each man would be the Word of God in the way that Christ is.

Yet notice that not every individual in the genus of substance—not even every individual in a rational nature—has the character of a person; instead, it is only an individual that exists in its own right (*per se existit*) and not one that exists in another, more perfect, thing. Hence, even though Socrates’s hand is a certain individual, it is nonetheless not a person, because it does not exist in its own right but instead exists in something more perfect, viz., in the whole Socrates (*scilicet in suo toto*). And this can also be signified by the fact that a person is said to be an individual *substance*, since a hand is a part of a substance and not a complete substance. Therefore, even though the human nature is a certain individual

in the genus of substance, nevertheless, since it *does not exist in its own right separately (non per se separatim existit)*, but instead *exists in something more perfect, viz., in the person of the Word of God*, it follows that it does not have its own personhood. And so the union was effected in a person.

Article 3

Was the union of the Incarnate Word effected in a suppositum or hypostasis?

It seems that the union of the Incarnate Word was not effected in a suppositum or *hypostasis*:

Objection 1: In *Enchiridion* Augustine says, “The divine substance and the human substance (*divina substantia et humana*) are both the one Son of God, but the one because of the Word and the other because of the man (*sed aliud propter verbum et aliud propter hominem*).” Again, in *Epistola ad Flavianum* Pope Leo says, “The one of them brandishes miracles, the other succumbs to injuries.” But everything that is ‘the one and the other’ (*aliud vel aliud*) contains a difference in supposita (*omne quod est aliud et aliud differt supposito*). Therefore, the union of the Incarnate word was not effected in a suppositum.

Objection 2: As Boethius says in *De Duabus Naturis*, a *hypostasis* is nothing other than “a particular substance.” But it is clear that in Christ there is another particular substance besides the *hypostasis* of the Word, viz., the body and soul and what is composed of them. Therefore, in Christ there is another *hypostasis* besides the *hypostasis* of the Word of God.

Objection 3: As is clear from what was said in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 3, a. 5 and q. 30, a. 4), the *hypostasis* of the Word is not contained within any genus or under any species. But Christ, insofar as He has been made man, is contained under the species *human*; for in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 1 Dionysius says, “He who super-substantially surpasses the whole order with respect to every nature has come within our order.” But the only thing contained under the species *human* is a *hypostasis* of the human species. Therefore, in Christ there is another *hypostasis* besides the *hypostasis* of the Word of God. Therefore, the same thing follows as above.

But contrary to this: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 3 Damascene says, “In our Lord Jesus Christ we recognize two natures and one *hypostasis*.”

I respond: Certain individuals, ignorant of the relationship of *hypostasis* to *person*, even though they conceded that there is only one *person* in Christ, nonetheless claimed that the *hypostasis* of God is one thing and the *hypostasis* of the man is something else—as if the union had been effected in a *person* but not in a *hypostasis*. There are three ways in which it is clear that this position is erroneous:

First, from the fact that *person* adds only a determinate nature to *hypostasis*, viz., a rational nature—this according to what Boethius says in *De Duabus Naturis*, viz., that “a person is an individual substance in a rational nature.” And so attributing its own *hypostasis* to the human nature in Christ is the same as attributing its own *person* to it. And understanding this, the saintly Fathers condemned both these attributions in the Fifth Council, held at Constantinople, when they said, “If anyone tries to introduce into the mystery of Christ two *subsistents*, or two *persons*, let him be anathema. For the Holy Trinity received the addition of neither a *person* nor a *subsistence* when one of the Holy Trinity, God the Word, was incarnated.” Now as is clear from Boethius in *De Duabus Naturis*, a *subsistence* (*subsistentia*) is the same as a *subsistent thing* (*res subsistens*), i.e., a proper *hypostasis*.

Second, because if it were granted that *person* adds something to *hypostasis* in which there could be a union, this would be nothing other than a property involving dignity—in the way that some claim that a *person* is a *hypostasis* with a distinct property involving dignity. Therefore, if the union were effected in the *person* and not in the *hypostasis*, it would follow that no union was effected except with respect to some sort of dignity. And this claim was, with the approval of the Synod of Ephesus, condemned by

Cyril in the following words: “If, in the one Christ, anyone divides the *subsistences* after the union, joining them only by a conjunction involving *dignity* or *authority* or *power*, and not instead by the concurrence of a *natural union*, let him be anathema.”

Third, because it is only to the *hypostasis* that the operations and properties of the nature are attributed, along with those things that belong to the notion of the nature in the concrete (*ea etiam quae ad naturae rationem pertinent in concreto*); for instance, we claim that it is *this* man who reasons and is risible and is a rational animal. And this is the reason why *this* man is said to be a *suppositum*, viz., that he underlies (*supponitur*) those things that belong to a man and receives the predication of those things. Therefore, if there were a second *hypostasis* in Christ in addition to the *hypostasis* of the Word, then it would follow that the things belonging to the man—for instance, his being born of a virgin, his suffering, his being crucified, his being buried—are true of someone other than the Word. And this result was likewise condemned, with the approval of the Council of Ephesus, in the following words: “If anyone ascribes to two *persons* or *subsistences* those words that are found in the Gospels and the apostolic Scriptures, having been said of Christ by the saints or having been said of Him by Himself; and if, moreover, anyone applies some of these words to the man, understood as distinct in species from the Word that comes from God, and applies others of them, as if appropriate for God, only to the Word that comes from God the Father, let him be anathema.”

So, then, it is clear that it is a heresy, condemned from of old, to claim that in Christ there are two *supposita* or two *hypostases*, or to claim that the union was not effected in the *hypostasis* or *suppositum*. Hence, in the same Synod we read, “If anyone does not confess that the Word that comes from God the Father is united to the flesh according to the [Word’s] subsistence and that Christ is one with His flesh, more specifically, that the same Christ is God and man, let him be anathema.”

Reply to objection 1: Just as an accidental difference makes a thing different, so an essential difference makes for a different thing (*sicut accidentalis differentia facit alterum, ita differentia essentialis facit aliud*). Now it is clear that being different (*alteritas*), which stems from an accidental difference, can belong to the same *hypostasis* or *suppositum* among created things, because numerically the same thing can stand under diverse *accidents*. But it cannot happen among created things that numerically the same thing can stand under diverse *essences* or *natures*. Hence, just as, among creatures, saying ‘this way and a different way’ (*alterum et alterum*) signifies only a diversity of accidental forms and not a diversity of *supposita*, so, in the case of Christ, saying ‘this thing and a different thing’ (*aliud et aliud*) implies a diversity of *natures* and not a diversity of *supposita* or *hypostases*. Hence, in *Epistola ad Chelidonium* Gregory Nazianzus says, “‘This thing and another thing’ (*aliud et aliud*) are what our Savior is composed of, but not ‘this person and another person’ (*non alius et alius*). Here I say ‘this thing and another thing’ (*aliud et aliud*)—just the opposite of what one has in the case of the Trinity. For in that case we say ‘this person and another person’ (*alius et alius*) in order not to confound the subsistences, but not ‘this thing and another thing’ (*aliud et aliud*).”

Reply to objection 2: ‘*Hypostasis*’ signifies a particular substance not in just any way at all, but insofar as it exists in its completeness (*in suo complemento*). By contrast, insofar as [a particular substance] enters into a union with something more complete, as a hand or a foot does, it is not called a *hypostasis*.

Similarly, even though the human nature in Christ is a particular substance, still, because it enters into a union with something complete—viz., with the *whole Christ* insofar as He is God and man—it cannot be called a *hypostasis* or *suppositum*; instead, what is said to be a *hypostasis* or *suppositum* is the complete thing to which it is joined.

Reply to objection 3: Even among created things a singular entity is placed in a genus or species by reason of its nature, which is determined by its form, and not by reason of what pertains to its individuation. For among composite things, individuation has more to do with the matter. So, then, one

should claim that Christ is in the species *human being* by reason of His assumed nature and not by reason of His *hypostasis*.

Article 4

Is the person of Christ composite?

It seems that the person of Christ is not composite:

Objection 1: As is clear from what has been said (a. 2), the person of Christ is nothing other than the person or *hypostasis* of the Word. But as is clear from what was said in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 39, a. 1), in the Word there is nothing other than the person and the nature. Therefore, since, as was shown in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 3, a. 7), the nature of the Word is simple, it is impossible for the person of Christ to be composite.

Objection 2: Every composition seems to be out of parts. But the divine nature cannot play the role of a part, since every part has the character of something incomplete (*habet rationem imperfecti*). Therefore, it is impossible for the person of Christ to be composed of two natures.

Objection 3: Whatever is composed of certain things seems to be homogeneous with those things, in the way that only a bodily thing is composed of bodily things. Therefore, if there is something in Christ composed of two natures, it will follow that this thing will be a nature and not a person. And the union in Christ will be effected in a nature—which is contrary to what was said above (a. 1).

But contrary to this: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 3 Damascene says, “In the Lord Jesus Christ we acknowledge two natures and one *hypostasis* composed of the two (*duas naturas, unam autem hypostasim, ex utrisque compositam*).”

I respond: There are two ways in which to think of the person or *hypostasis* in Christ:

In one way, *as it exists in its own right*. And on this score it is altogether simple, just as the nature of the Word is simple.

In the second way, *according to its character as a person or hypostasis*, which involves its subsisting in some nature. And on this score, the person in Christ subsists in two natures. Hence, even though in this case there is one thing that subsists, there is one and another notion of subsisting. And in this sense the person is called ‘composite’, insofar as one thing subsists in two things.

Reply to objection 1: The reply to the first objection is clear from what has been said.

Reply to objection 2: This composition of the person out of the natures is said to be a ‘composition’ not by reason of *parts*, but by reason of *number*, in the sense that anything in which two things come together is said to be ‘composed’ of them.

Reply to objection 3: It is not true in the case of every composition that the thing which is composed is homogeneous with the components; instead, this is true only in the case of the parts of a continuum. For a continuum is composed only of what is continuous. By contrast, an animal is composed of a soul and a body, neither of which is an animal.

Article 5

Was there a union of soul and body in Christ?

It seems that there was not a union of soul and body in Christ:

Objection 1: The person or *hypostasis* of a man is caused by the union of the soul and the body in us. Therefore, if the soul and body were united in Christ, it would follow that a *hypostasis* was

constituted by their union. But not the *hypostasis* of the Word of God, which is eternal. Therefore, in Christ there will be a person or *hypostasis* in addition to the *hypostasis* of the Word—which is contrary to what was said above (a. 2).

Objection 2: The nature of the human species is constituted from the union of the soul and the body. But in *De Fide Orthodoxa* 3 Damascene says, “In the Lord Jesus Christ there is nothing to receive the common species.” Therefore, in Him no composition of soul and body was effected.

Objection 3: The soul is joined to the body only in order to vivify the body. But the body of Christ was able to be vivified by the Word of God Himself, who is the fount and principle of life. Therefore, in Christ there was no union of soul and body.

But contrary to this: The body is not called alive except because of its union with the soul. But the body of Christ is called alive—this according to what the Church sings (“Taking on a living body, He deigned to be born of a virgin”). Therefore, in Christ there was a union of soul and body.

I respond: Christ is called a man univocally with other men, in the sense that He is of the same species—this according to the Apostle in Philippians 2:7 (“... made in the likeness of men”). But the notion of the human species involves the soul’s being united to the body, since a form constitutes a species only by actualizing its matter (*per hoc quod sit actus materiae*), and this is what terminates the generation through which nature tends toward the species. Hence, it is necessary to claim that in Christ the soul was united to the body, and that the contrary position is heretical, since it detracts from the truth of Christ’s humanity.

Reply to objection 1: Moved by this argument, there were those who denied the union of soul and body in Christ, in order not to be forced thereby to introduce a new person or *hypostasis* in Christ. For they saw that in mere human beings a person is constituted by the soul’s union with the body. But the reason why this occurs in mere human beings is that in them the soul and body are joined in such a way that they exist on their own (*per se existant*). By contrast, in Christ the soul and body are united to each other while adjoined to another, more principal, thing that subsists in the nature that is composed of them. And because of this, a new *hypostasis*, i.e., person, is not constituted by the union of the soul and the body in Christ; instead, this conjoined being comes to a preexisting person or *hypostasis*.

Nor does it follow because of this that the union of soul and body has less efficacy in Christ than in us. For being joined to something more noble *increases* a thing’s power or dignity and does not reduce it. In the same way, the sentient soul constitutes the species in [non-rational] animals, because it is thought of as the *final* form (*ut ultima forma*), but it does not constitute the species in *human beings*, even though it is more noble and more powerful in human beings—and this, as was likewise explained above (a. 2, ad 2), is because of the sentient soul’s being joined to the further and more noble perfection of the rational soul.

Reply to objection 2: There are two ways in which this passage from Damascene can be understood:

In one way, *insofar as it is referring to human nature*, which has the character of a *common species* not insofar as it exists in just one individual, but insofar as it is abstracted from every individual and is thought of in pure contemplation, or insofar as it exists in all individuals. Now the Son of God did not assume human nature insofar as it exists in the intellect’s pure contemplation, since in that case He would not have assumed the very reality of human nature—unless, perhaps, it were claimed that *human nature* is a certain separated idea, in the sense in which the Platonists posited [the separated idea] *Man* without matter. But in that case the Son of God would not have assumed flesh, contrary to what Luke 24:39 says, “A spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have.” Similarly, it cannot be claimed that the Son of God assumed human nature insofar as human nature exists in all individuals of the same species, since in that case He would have assumed *all men*. Therefore, what remains is that, as Damascene says later in the same book, He assumed human nature “in an atom” (*in atomo*), i.e., in an individual—not, to be sure, in another individual that is a suppositum or *hypostasis* of that nature, but rather in the person of

the Son of God.

In the second way, the passage from Damascene can be understood not as referring to human nature and claiming that a common nature, which is human, would not result from the union of soul and body, but instead as referring to the union of the two natures, viz., the divine nature and the human nature, of which no third thing is composed that is some sort of common nature. For in that case the third thing in question would be apt to be predicated of many things. And this is what Damascene means. Hence, he adds, “For there was not generated, nor will there ever be generated, another Christ, from deity and humanity and in deity and humanity, who is perfect God and perfect man.”

Reply to objection 3: There are two principles of corporeal life. One is an *effective* principle. And on this score the Word of God is the principle of all life. In a second mode, something is a principle of life *formally*. For since, as the Philosopher says in *De Anima* 2, to live is to be (*esse*) for living things, it follows that just as each thing *exists* through its form, so a body *lives* through its soul. And in this mode a body could not live through the Word, which cannot be the form of a body.

Article 6

Was the human nature united to the Word of God accidentally?

It seems that the human nature was united to the word of God accidentally (*accidentaliter*):

Objection 1: In Philippians 2:7 the Apostle says of the Son of God, “In habit He was found as a man (*habitu inventus es ut homo*).” But *habit* comes accidentally to the one who has it, regardless of whether *habit* is taken as one of the ten categories or as a species of quality. Therefore, human nature was united to the Son of God accidentally.

Objection 2: What comes to an individual after its *esse* has been completed (*post esse completum*) comes to it accidentally; for what we call an accident is able to be present to or absent from a subject without the subject’s being corrupted. But the human nature came at a time when the Son of God had had completed *esse* (*esse perfectum*) from eternity. Therefore, it came to Him accidentally.

Objection 3: Anything that does not belong to the nature or essence of a given thing is an accident of it, since everything that exists is either a substance or an accident. But human nature does not belong to the divine essence or nature of the Son of God, since, as was explained above (a. 1), the union was not effected in a nature. Therefore, the human nature must have come to the Son of God accidentally.

Objection 4: An instrument comes accidentally. But the human nature in Christ was an instrument of His divine nature (*fuit divinitatis instrumentum*); for in *De Fide Orthodoxa* 3 Damascene says, “The flesh of Christ is an instrument of His divine nature.” Therefore, it seems that the human nature was united accidentally to the Son of God.

But contrary to this: What is predicated accidentally is predicated not as a substance (*aliquid*) but as a quantity (*quantum*) or as a quality (*quale*) or as some mode of being (*aliquo modo se habens*). Therefore, if the human nature came accidentally when we say that Christ is a man, then what is predicated would not be a substance, but a quantity, or a quality, or a mode of being. But this is contrary to the decretal of Pope Alexander, who declared, “Since Christ is perfect God and perfect man, with what temerity do certain individuals claim that Christ, insofar as He is a man, is not a substance (*non est aliquid*)?”

I respond: To make this question clear, notice that two heresies have arisen concerning the mystery of the union of the two natures in Christ.

One of the heresies belongs to those who confounded the natures, e.g., Eutyches and Dioscorus, who claimed that a single nature is constituted from the two natures, with the result that they professed that Christ is *from* two natures, because the natures were distinct *before* the union, but is not *in* two

natures, because the distinction between the natures disappears *after* the union.

The other heresy belongs to Nestorius and Theodore of Mopsuestia, who separated the persons. For they claimed that the person of the Son of God is different from the person of the Son of Man. They claimed that these two persons are united with one another as follows:

First, *by inhabitation*, viz., insofar as the Word of God lived in the man in question as in a temple.

Second, *by a oneness of affection*, viz., insofar as the will of the man in question is always conformed to the will of God.

In the third way, *with respect to operation*, viz., insofar as they claimed that the man in question is the instrument of the Word of God.

Fourth, *with respect to a dignity of honor*, insofar as every honor that is shown to the Son of God is shown to the Son of Man because of the latter's connection with the Son of God.

Fifth, *according to equivocation*, i.e., according to the sharing of names (*secundum communicationem nominum*), viz., insofar as we say that the man is God and the Son of God.

However, it is clear that all these modes of union involve an *accidental* union.

Now some later teachers, seeking to reject these heresies, fell into them through ignorance. For instance, some of them conceded one *person* in Christ, but posited two *hypostases*, i.e., two *supposita*, claiming that a certain man, composed of soul and body, was assumed by the Word of God at the beginning of his conception. And this is the first opinion that the Master of the *Sentences* sets forth in *Sentences* 3, dist. 6.

By contrast, others, wishing to preserve the oneness of the person, claimed that the soul of Christ was not united to His body, but that the soul and the body, separated from one another, were united to the Word accidentally, so that the number of persons would not increase. And this is the third opinion that the Master sets forth in the same place.

However, both of these opinions fall into the heresy of Nestorius:

The first does so because, as was explained above (a. 3), positing two *hypostases* or two *supposita* in Christ is the same as positing two *persons*. And if stress is being put on the name 'person', keep in mind that even Nestorius made use of oneness of person in conjunction with the oneness of dignity and honor. Hence, the Fifth Synod defines as condemned anyone who claims that "there is one person according to dignity, honor, and adoration, as the foolish Theodore and Nestorius wrote."

By contrast, the other opinion fell into the error of Nestorius with respect to positing an accidental union. For there is no difference between claiming that the Word of God is united to the man Christ because He lives in him as in His temple, as Nestorius said, and claiming that the Word was united to the man because He put him on like His vestment, as the third opinion says. And it also says something worse than Nestorius, viz., that the soul and body were not united.

Now the Catholic Faith, which holds the middle between the positions explained above, does not claim either (a) that the union effected between God and man is with respect to their essence or nature or, again, (b) that the union is accidental (*secundum accidens*). Instead, the Catholic Faith claims, in a middle way, that the union is with respect to the *subsistence* or *hypostasis*. Hence, in the Fifth Synod we read, "Given that the oneness is understood in many ways, those who follow the impiety of Apollinaris and Eutyches, cultivating the destruction of what had come together"—i.e., destroying both natures—"claim that there is a union that involves fusing the natures together, whereas the followers of Theodore and Nestorius, rejoicing in the division between the natures, introduce an affective union. By contrast, the holy Church of God, rejecting the wickedness of both sorts of infidelity, confesses a union of the Word of God with flesh in a composition, i.e., in a subsistence."

So, then, it is clear that the second of the three opinions set forth by the Master, which asserts a single *hypostasis* belonging to God and the man (*unam hypostasim Dei et hominis*), should not be called an opinion but should instead be called the position of the Catholic Faith. By the same token, the first opinion, which posits two *hypostases*, and the third opinion, which posits an accidental union, should not

be called opinions, but instead should be called heresies that have been condemned by the Church in the Councils.

Reply to objection 1: As Damascene says in *De Fide Orthodoxa* 3, “It is not necessary for examples to be similar in all respects without exception; for what is wholly similar is the same thing and not an example. And this is especially true in the case of divine things, since it is impossible to find a similar example in Theology”—i.e., in the Godhead of Persons—“or in the Dispensation”—i.e., in the mystery of the Incarnation.

Thus, the human nature in Christ is assimilated to a habit, i.e., to a vestment, not with respect to an accidental union, but with respect to the Word’s being seen by means of His human nature in the way that a man is seen by means of his clothes. And as Augustine explains in *83 Quaestiones*, the similarity also has to do with the fact that a vestment changes because it is given form by the shape of the one who puts it on and whose own form is not changed by the vestment; similarly, the human nature assumed by the Word of God is made better, whereas the Word of God Himself is not changed.

Reply to objection 2: What comes after completed *esse* comes accidentally unless it is taken up into union with that completed *esse*. For instance, in the resurrection a body will come to a preexisting soul, but not accidentally, because it will be taken up into the same *esse*, with the result that the body has its *being alive* (*vitale esse*) through the soul. It is not the same with whiteness, since the *esse* which belongs to whiteness (*esse albi*) is different from the *esse* which belongs to the man and to which the whiteness comes.

Now the Word of God had completed *esse* from eternity with respect to His *hypostasis* or person, but in time a human nature came to Him, not in the sense that it was taken up into the one *esse* insofar as that *esse* belongs to the *nature*, in the way that a body is taken up into the *esse* of the soul, but in the sense that it was taken up into the one *esse* insofar as that *esse* belongs to the *hypostasis* or *person*. And this is why the human nature is not united accidentally to the Son God.

Reply to objection 3: *Accident* is divided off from *substance*. But as is clear from *Metaphysics* 5, *substance* is said in two senses: in one sense, it is the *essence* or *nature*; in the other sense, *substance* is used for the *suppositum* or *hypostasis*. Therefore, in order for the union not to be *accidental*, it is enough for the union to be effected with respect to the *suppositum*, even if the union is not effected with respect to the *nature*.

Reply to objection 4: As is clear from the case of a sword or an axe, not everything that is taken up as an instrument belongs to the *hypostasis* of what does the taking up; however, nothing prevents what is taken up into a oneness with a *hypostasis* from behaving as an instrument, as in the case of the body of a man or of the members of that body.

Thus, Nestorius claimed that the human nature was assumed by the Word solely in the manner of an instrument, but that it was not assumed into a oneness with the *hypostasis*. And so he conceded that the man in question was *an instrument of* the Word of God, but *not* that He was the Son of God. This is why, in *Epistola ad Monachos Aegypti*, Cyril says, “Scripture says that this Emmanuel”—i.e., Christ—“was assumed not in the role of an instrument, but as God truly humanized”—i.e., as made man. On the other hand, Damascene claimed that Christ’s human nature is like an instrument that belongs to the oneness of the *hypostasis*.

Article 7

Is the union of the divine and human natures itself something created?

It seems that the union of the divine and human natures is not itself something created:

Objection 1: Nothing within God can be created, since whatever is within God is God. But the

union exists within God, since God Himself is united to the human nature. Therefore, it seems that the union is not itself something created.

Objection 2: The end is what is most powerful in each thing. But the end of the union is the divine *hypostasis* or person that the union terminates in. Therefore, it seems that a union of the sort in question should be judged by the condition of the divine *hypostasis*. But the divine *hypostasis* is not something created. Therefore, the union something created is not something created, either.

Objection 3: That because of which a thing exists is greater than that thing. But it is because of the union that a man is said to be the creator. Therefore, *a fortiori*, the union itself is the creator and not something created.

But contrary to this: Whatever begins to exist at a given time is something created. But the union in question did not exist from eternity, but instead began to exist at a certain time. Therefore, the union is itself something created.

I respond: The union about which we are talking is a certain relation which is thought of as obtaining between the divine nature and the human nature insofar as they come together in the one person of the Son of God.

Now as was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 13, a. 7), every relation that is thought of as obtaining between God and a creature exists *as a reality* in the creature (*realiter est in creatura*), through a change in which such a relation comes to exist, but it does not exist as a reality in God and instead exists in Him *only according to reason*, since it does not come to exist through a change in God.

So, then, one should reply that this union of which we are speaking does not exist as a reality in God but exists in God only according to reason, whereas in the human nature, which is a certain creature, it exists as a reality. And so one must claim that this union is something created.

Reply to objection 1: The union in question does not exist as a reality in God, but instead exists in Him only according to reason. For God is said to be united to a creature from the fact that the creature is united to Him, without any change in God.

Reply to objection 2: The character of a relation, like the character of a movement, depends on the end or terminus, but the *esse* of a relation depends on a subject. And since, as has been explained, a union of the sort in question has real *esse* only in the created nature, it follows that it has created *esse*.

Reply to objection 3: The man is said to be, and is, God because of the union insofar as the union is terminated in a divine *hypostasis*. However, it does not follow that the union itself is the creator or God, since the fact that something is said to be created has to do with its *esse* rather than with the relation.

Article 8

Is union the same as the assumption?

It seems that the union is the same as the assumption (*idem sit unio quod assumptio*):

Objection 1: Relations, like movements, are specified by their terminus. But the terminus of the assuming is the same as the terminus of the uniting, viz., the divine *hypostasis*. Therefore, it seems that the union does not differ from the assumption.

Objection 2: In the mystery of the Incarnation, what unites seems to be the same as what assumes, and what is united seems to be the same as what is assumed. But the union and the assumption seem to follow upon the action of the thing that unites and the passion of the thing that is united, or the action of the thing that is assuming and the passion of the thing that is assumed. Therefore, it seems that the uniting is the same as the assuming.

Objection 3: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* Damascene says, “The union is one thing, the Incarnation is

another.” For *union* points only to a joining and does not yet point to what has been joined, whereas *becoming incarnate* and *becoming human* determine what the joining has been made to. But, similarly, *assuming* does not determine what the joining has been made to. Therefore, it seems that the union is the same as the assumption.

But contrary to this: The divine nature is said to be united, but it is not said to be assumed.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 7), *union* implies a relation between the divine nature and the human nature insofar as they come together in one person. Now every relation that begins to exist in time results from some change (*ex aliqua mutatione causatur*), and a change consists in an instance of acting and an instance of being acted upon, i.e., a passion (*mutatio consistit in actione et passione*).

So, then, one should reply that the *first* and principal difference between the union and the assumption is that *union* implies *the relation itself*, whereas *assumption* implies (a) an *action* insofar as someone is said to be assuming or (b) a *passion* insofar as something is said to be assumed.

But, in the *second* place, from this difference there arises another difference. For *assumption* is predicated as something that is *being done*, whereas *union* is predicated as something that *has been done* (*assumptio dicitur sicut in fieri, unio autem sicut in facto esse*). And this is why someone who is in a union is said to be united, whereas someone who is assuming is not said to be assumed. For the human nature is being signified as at the *terminus* of being assumed into the divine *hypostasis* when it is called a man. Hence, we say truly that the Son of God, who is uniting the human nature to Himself, is a man. By contrast, the human nature considered in itself (*in se*), i.e., in the abstract, is signified as *being in the process of being assumed*, but we do not say that the Son of God is a human nature.

From this same thing there also follows a *third* difference, viz., that a relation, especially one that is symmetrical (*praecipue aequiparantiae*), does not have a bearing to one of the extremes more than to the other, whereas an action and a passion have diverse bearings to the agent and the patient and are directed toward diverse termini. And so *assumption* determines both the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem*, since *assumption* is said to be an act of taking something else to oneself, whereas *union* determines neither of these. Hence, we say indifferently that the human nature is united to the divine nature, and that the divine nature is united to the human nature. By contrast, the divine nature is not said to be assumed by the human nature; instead, the converse is true, because the human nature is adjoined to a divine personhood, with the result that a divine person subsists in the human nature.

Reply to objection 1: As has been explained, *union* and *assumption* are related to their termini in different ways and not in the same way.

Reply to objection 2: The thing that unites and the thing that assumes are not altogether the same. For every person who is assuming is uniting, but not vice versa. For instance, the person of the Father united the human nature to His Son, but not to Himself, and so He is said to be uniting but not assuming. And, similarly, being united is not the same as being assumed, since the divine nature is said to be united, but it is not said to be assumed.

Reply to objection 3: *Assumption* determines that with which a union is effected on the part of the one assuming—insofar as ‘assumption’ means, as it were, a taking up into oneself—whereas *becoming incarnate* and *becoming human* determine that with which a union is effected on the part of what is being assumed, i.e., flesh or human nature. And so *assumption* differs conceptually both from *union* and from *becoming incarnate* or *becoming human*.

Article 9

Is the union of the two natures the greatest of unions?

It seems that the union of the two natures is not the greatest of unions (*unio duarum naturarum non sit maxima unio*):

Objection 1: *Unio* falls short in the character of *oneness* from that which is *one* (*unitum deficit in ratione unitatis ab eo quod est unum*), because *unio* is predicated through participation [in something else], whereas *one* is predicated through [a thing's] essence. But among created things something is said to be *one* absolutely speaking, as is especially clear in the case of that *oneness* which is the principle of number. Therefore, a union of the sort we are talking about does not involve the greatest sort of oneness (*non importat maximam unitatem*).

Objection 2: The more distant the things united are from one another, the lesser the union. But the things that are united by the union in question are maximally distant from one another, viz., divine nature and human nature; for they are infinitely distant from one another. Therefore, a union of the sort in question is the least of unions.

Objection 3: Through a union something is made one. But from the union of the soul and the body in us there comes to be something that is one in person and in nature, whereas from the union of the divine nature and human nature there comes to be something that is one only in person. Therefore, the union of soul and body is a greater union than the union of the divine nature to the human nature. And so the union of which we are speaking does not involve the greatest oneness of all.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 1 Augustine says, "Man is in the Son more than the Son is in the Father." But the Son is in the Father by a oneness of essence, whereas man is in the Son by the union of the Incarnation. Therefore, the union of the Incarnation is greater than the oneness of the divine essence. But the latter is the greatest of all instances of oneness. And so, as a result, the union of the Incarnation involves the greatest oneness of all.

I respond: *Unio* implies the conjoining of certain things into something that is *one*. Therefore, there are two ways in which the union that belongs to the Incarnation can be understood: (a) in one way, *on the part of those things that are conjoined*, and (b) *on the part of that in which they are conjoined*.

And on this latter score, a union of the sort in question has preeminence over other unions. For the oneness of the divine person in whom the two natures are united is the greatest of all.

However, the union does *not* have this preeminence on the part of the things that are joined together.

Reply to objection 1: The *oneness of a divine person* is greater than *numerical oneness*, which is the principle of number. For the oneness of a divine person is a oneness that subsists in its own right (*per se subsistens*) and that is not received in anything through participation. In addition, it is complete in its own right, having within itself that which involves the character of oneness. And so the character of a part does not belong to it, in the way it belongs to numerical oneness, which is a part of number and which participates in the things that are numbered. And so on this score the union of the Incarnation is preeminent over numerical oneness, viz., by reason of the oneness of the person, but not by reason of the human nature, which is not itself the oneness of the divine person, but is instead united to it.

Reply to objection 2: This argument goes through on the part of things joined, but not on the part of the person in whom the union is effected.

Reply to objection 3: The oneness of a divine person is a greater oneness than the oneness of the person and nature in us. And so the union of the Incarnation is greater than the union of soul and body in us.

Reply to the argument for the contrary: The argument for the contrary presupposes something false, viz., that the union of the Incarnation is greater than the oneness of the divine persons within the

divine essence.

As for the passage from Augustine, one should reply that the human nature is not in the Son of God more than the Son of God is in the Father, but much less. However, the man himself is in a certain respect more in the Son than the Son is in the Father, viz., insofar as the same suppositum is present in what I call the man, insofar as this is taken for Christ, and in what I call the Son of God, whereas the suppositum of the Father is not the same as the suppositum of the Son.

Article 10

Is the union of the Incarnation effected through grace?

It seems that the union of the Incarnation is not effected through grace:

Objection 1: As was established in the Second Part (*ST* 1-2, q. 112, a. 2), grace is an accident. But as was shown above (a. 6), the union of the human nature to the divine nature was not effected accidentally (*non est facta per accidens*). Therefore, it seems that the union of the Incarnation was not effected through grace.

Objection 2: The subject of grace is the soul. But as Colossians 2:9 says, “In Christ the plenitude of divinity dwelt corporeally.” Therefore, it seems that the union in question was not effected through grace.

Objection 3: Everyone who is holy is united to God through grace. Therefore, if the union of the Incarnation took place through grace, then it seems Christ would not be called God in any way differently from other holy men.

But contrary to this: In *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* Augustine says, “Every man, from the beginning of his faith, becomes a Christian by the grace by which that man, from His beginning, became Christ.” But that man became Christ through His union to the divine nature. Therefore, that union was effected by grace.

I respond: As was explained in the Second Part (*ST* 1-2, q. 110, a. 1), ‘grace’ is said in two ways: in one way, for *the very will of God, who gives something gratuitously*; in the second way, for *God’s gratuitously given gift itself*.

Now a human nature needs God’s gratuitous will to be elevated into God, since this lies beyond the power of its nature. But there are two ways in which a human nature is elevated into God. In one way, *through an operation* by which holy individuals come to know and love God (*per operationem qua sancti cognoscunt et amant Deum*). In the other way, *through the esse that belongs to a person (per esse personale)*, which is the way that is peculiar to Christ, in whom the human nature has been taken up to belong to the person of the Son of God (*qui modus est singularis Christo, in quo humana nature assumpta est ad hoc quod sit personae filii Dei*).

Now it is clear that what is required for the perfection of an operation is that the *power* be perfected by a *habit*, but that the *nature* have *esse* in its own suppositum, without this having been brought about by the mediation of any habit.

So, then, one should reply that if ‘grace’ is understood as God’s will itself doing something gratuitously (*gratis aliquid faciens*) or holding someone to be pleasing or acceptable (*gratum seu acceptum aliquem habere*), then the union of the Incarnation is effected through grace, as is likewise the union of holy individuals to God through cognition and love. On the other hand, if ‘grace’ means God’s gratuitous gift itself, then on this score the very fact that the human nature is united to a divine person can be called a sort of grace in the sense that it was effected without any previous merits, but *not* in the sense that it is a certain *habitual* grace by the mediation of which a union such as this is effected.

Reply to objection 1: The grace which is an accident is a certain participated likeness of the

divine nature found in a man. However, it is not the case that through the Incarnation the human nature is said to have participated in some likeness of the divine nature; instead, through the Incarnation the human nature is said to have been conjoined to the divine nature itself in the person of the Son, and the very thing itself is greater than any participated likeness of it.

Reply to objection 2: Habitual grace exists only in the soul, but the grace [of union], i.e., God's gratuitous gift of being united to a divine person, belongs to the whole human nature, which is composed of the soul and the body. And this is the sense in which the plenitude of divinity is said to have dwelt corporeally, since the divine nature was united not only to the soul, but also to the body.

However, it could also be claimed that the plenitude of divinity is said to have dwelt in Christ *corporeally*, i.e., *not in the shadowy way* in which it dwelt in the sacraments of the Old Law, concerning which it is added in the same place (Colossians 2:17) that "they are shadows of future things, but the body is Christ"—viz., insofar as 'body' is here being contrasted with 'shadow'.

Again, some authors claim that just as a body has three dimensions, there are three ways in which the divinity is said to have dwelt corporeally in Christ: (a) through the divinity's essence, presence, and power, in the way that it dwells in other creatures (cf. *ST* 1, q. 8); (b) through habitual grace (*per gratiam gratum facientem*), in the way that the divinity dwells in holy individuals; and (c) through personal union, which is peculiar to Christ.

Reply to objection 3: From this the reply to the third objection is clear. More specifically, the union of the Incarnation was effected not just through habitual grace, in the way that other holy individuals are united to God, but also with respect to the subsistence, i.e., the person.

Article 11

Did the union of the Incarnation follow upon any merits?

It seems that the union of the Incarnation followed upon certain merits:

Objection 1: A Gloss on Psalm 32:22 ("Let your mercy, Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in You") says, "Here the prophet's desire for the Incarnation, and the merit for its fulfilment, are hinted at." Therefore, the Incarnation falls under merit.

Objection 2: If an individual merits something, he merits everything without which that thing cannot be had. But the ancient patriarchs merited eternal life, which they could not arrive at except through the Incarnation; for in *Moralia* Gregory says, "Those who came before Christ's advent into this world, no matter how much of the virtue of justice they had, could not in any way, upon being led out of their bodies, be received immediately into the heart of their heavenly homeland, because He had not as yet come Who would place the souls of the just in their everlasting seat." Therefore, it seems that they merited the Incarnation.

Objection 3: We sing of the Blessed Virgin that "she merited to carry the Lord of all"—something that came about through the Incarnation. Therefore, the Incarnation falls under merit.

But contrary to this: In *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* Augustine says, "If, in our Head, anyone finds preceding merits for His singular generation, let him look for preceding merits in the multiple regenerations among us, His members." But no merits have preceded our regeneration—this according to Titus 3:5 ("Not by works of justice that we had done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the water of regeneration"). Therefore, neither did any merits precede the generation of Christ.

I respond: With respect to Christ Himself, it is clear from what has been said (aa. 2, 3, and 6) that no merit on His part could have preceded the union. For we do not claim, as Photinus did, that He was a mere man beforehand and that afterwards, through the merits of a good life, He attained the status of being the Son of God. Instead, we claim that from the beginning of His conception this man was truly the

Son of God, without having any other *hypostasis* than the Son of God—this according to Luke 1:35 (“... the one who will be born of you will be called holy, the Son of God”). And so every action of the man in question followed upon the union. Hence, no operation of His could have merited the union.

But neither could the works of any other man have merited this union *by their own worthiness* (*non potuerunt esse meritoria huius unionis ex condigno*):

First, because a man’s meritorious works are properly ordered toward beatitude, which is the reward of virtue and consists in fully enjoying God. But since the union of the Incarnation exists in personal *esse*, it transcends the union of the beatified mind with God, which consists in fully enjoying God. And so the union of the Incarnation cannot fall under merit.

Second, because grace cannot fall under merit, since it is the *principle of meriting*. Hence, *a fortiori*, the Incarnation, which is the *principle of grace*, does not fall under merit—this according to John 1:17 (“... grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”).

Third, because the Incarnation of Christ reforms the whole of human nature. And so the Incarnation does not fall under the merit of any one human being, since the good of a mere man cannot be a cause of the good of the whole nature.

However, the holy patriarchs did merit the Incarnation *by a sort of fittingness* (*ex congruo tamen meruerunt*), because they desired it and asked for it. For it was fitting that God should listen to those who obeyed Him.

Reply to objection 1: This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

Reply to objection 2: It is false that what falls under merit is everything without which the reward is impossible. For there are certain things which are not only required for the reward but which are also prerequisites for merit, e.g., God’s goodness and His grace, and human nature itself. And, similarly, the mystery of the Incarnation is a principle of merit, since, as John 1:16 says, “Of the fullness of Christ we have all received.”

Reply to objection 3: The Blessed Virgin is said to have merited carrying our Lord Jesus Christ not because she merited that God should be incarnated, but because she merited, by the grace given to her, that level of purity and holiness with which she could fittingly be the mother of God.

Article 12

Was the grace of union natural to the man Christ?

It seems that the grace of union was not natural to the man Christ:

Objection 1: As was explained above (aa. 1-2), the union of the Incarnation was effected in a person and not in a nature. But each thing is denominated from its end. Therefore, the grace of union should be called *personal* rather than *natural*.

Objection 2: Grace is divided off from nature in the way that gratuitous things, which are from God, are distinguished from natural things, which are from an intrinsic principle. But among things that are divided off from one another by opposition, the one is not denominated from the other. Therefore, the grace that belongs to Christ is not natural to Him.

Objection 3: What is called natural is that which is in accord with nature. But the grace of union is not natural to Christ in accord with His divine nature, since in that case it would belong to the other [divine] persons as well. Nor is it natural to Him in accord with His human nature, since in that case it would belong to all men, who share the same nature with Him. Therefore, it seems that there is no way in which the grace of union is natural to Christ.

But contrary to this: In *Enchiridion* Augustine says, “In His reception of the human nature, the grace by which He could not admit of any sin was in some sense natural to that man.”

I respond: According to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* 5, ‘nature’ is said in one way for the generation itself (*ipsa nativitas*) and in another way for the essence of the thing (*essentia rei*). Hence, ‘natural’ can be said in two ways:

In one way, ‘natural’ is said only of what proceeds from the essential principles of the thing, in the way that it is natural for fire to be carried upward.

In the second way, what is natural to a man is what he has from his generation itself (*quod ab ipsa nativitate habet*)—this according to Ephesians 2:2 (“We were by nature children of wrath”) and according to Wisdom 12:10 (“Their nation is corrupt, and their malice is natural”).

Therefore, the grace of Christ—whether His grace of union or His habitual grace—cannot be called ‘natural’ in the sense of being caused by the principles of the human nature in Him, though it could be called ‘natural’ in the sense that it came into the human nature of Christ from His divine nature as a cause. On the other hand, both graces are called ‘natural’ in Christ because He had them from the time He was generated (*a nativitate habuit*). For from the beginning of its conception the human nature was united to a divine person and His soul was filled with the gift of grace.

Reply to objection 1: Even though the union was not effected in a nature, it is nonetheless caused by the power of the divine nature, which is truly the nature of Christ. And, also, the union belongs to Christ from the beginning of His generation (*a principio nativitatis*).

Reply to objection 2: ‘Grace’ and ‘natural’ are not being used here with respect to the same thing. Instead, ‘grace’ is being used for what is not from merit, whereas ‘natural’ is being used for what is from the power of the divine nature and is in Christ’s human nature from the time of its generation.

Reply to objection 3: The grace of union is not natural to Christ according to His human nature in the sense of *being caused by the principles of His human nature*. And so it does not have to belong to all men. However, the grace of union is natural to Him according to His human nature because of the peculiarity of His generation, since He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in such a way that the same [person] was the natural Son of God and the natural Son of Man.

On the other hand, [the grace of union] is natural to Him according to His divine nature, insofar as the divine nature is the active principle of this grace. And this belongs to the whole Trinity, viz., to be the active principle of this grace.