

On the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This festival is celebrated by the church on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi; and the first Friday of each month in the year is kept as a day of particular devotion by the members of the Association of the Sacred Heart. Perhaps, the history of the church does not furnish an instance in which any devotion was so rapidly extended throughout the Christian world, or so eagerly embraced by numerous bodies of the faithful, as this. It encountered, for a long time, great opposition, both from those who understood and those who were ignorant of its nature. The former alleged, that it tended to superstition, whilst many of the latter considered it wholly unlawful and unauthorised. But it is, at the present day, triumphantly vindicated by the solemn and formal sanction of the Holy See, and the approbation of every part of the Catholic Church. At the same time, it may be useful to state, in a few words, the nature and objects of this much misrepresented devotion, as well as to notice a few of the objections which have been urged against it. These will be much better understood, by premising some principles of faith on which all Catholics must necessarily agree.—The Catholic Church, then, teaches that there are two natures—the divine and human—in the one adorable person of our Redeemer, the God-man, Christ Jesus, the second person of the adorable Trinity; that those two natures are united in him without being confounded; that this union is mysterious, inexplicable, and incomprehensible with regard to the manner in which it takes place; that this union of the di-

vinity exists in all and every part of the human frame and human nature of Christ; so that, for instance, there is not the smallest part of his sacred body which does not contain all his divine and human nature. It is also of faith, that the divinity and humanity do not separately but unitedly exist in the person of Christ, and that neither the one nor the other exclusively exists in any part of his glorious person, the union of the two natures being a real indissoluble and eternal union. According, therefore, to the rigid canons of faith, no one part of the sacred humanity of Christ (thus united to his divinity) is more worthy of adoration and love than another, the divinity being in the whole and every part of the human nature.—The hand or the foot, the head or the sacred heart, possesses in itself no exclusive title to our gratitude or homage. Nevertheless, at the same time, we may separately consider them in pious meditation; and they may separately excite various affections of divine love. The head of Christ crowned with thorns, and bleeding for our sins, his hands tied to the pillar, his feet nailed to the cross, his side pierced with a spear, his heart burning with love, may each furnish salutary subjects of reflection to the understanding, and powerful motives of love to the heart of man. Though each is equally worthy of adoration from its union with the divinity, yet our hearts and minds will sometimes be more powerfully affected by the contemplation of one than that of the other. According to our human notions and forms of expression, the heart is said to be the seat of the affections. We suppose that the soul operates principally on the heart; and we thus ascribe to the heart, in a figurative sense, the various feelings and emotions.