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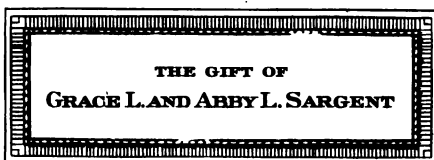
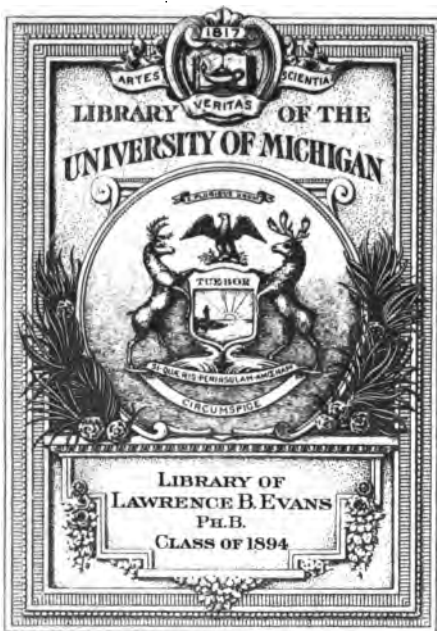
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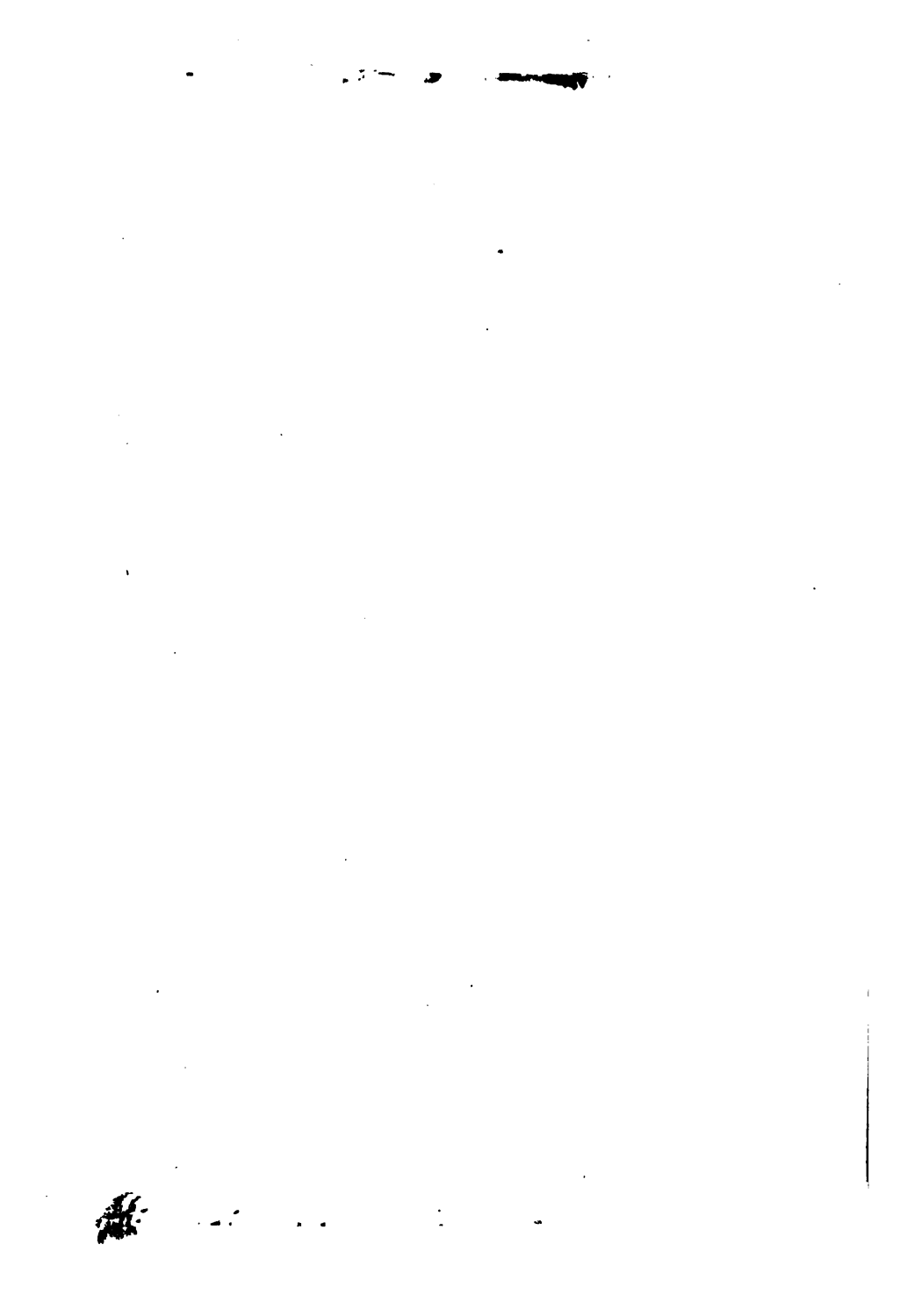
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# THE SEVENFOLD UNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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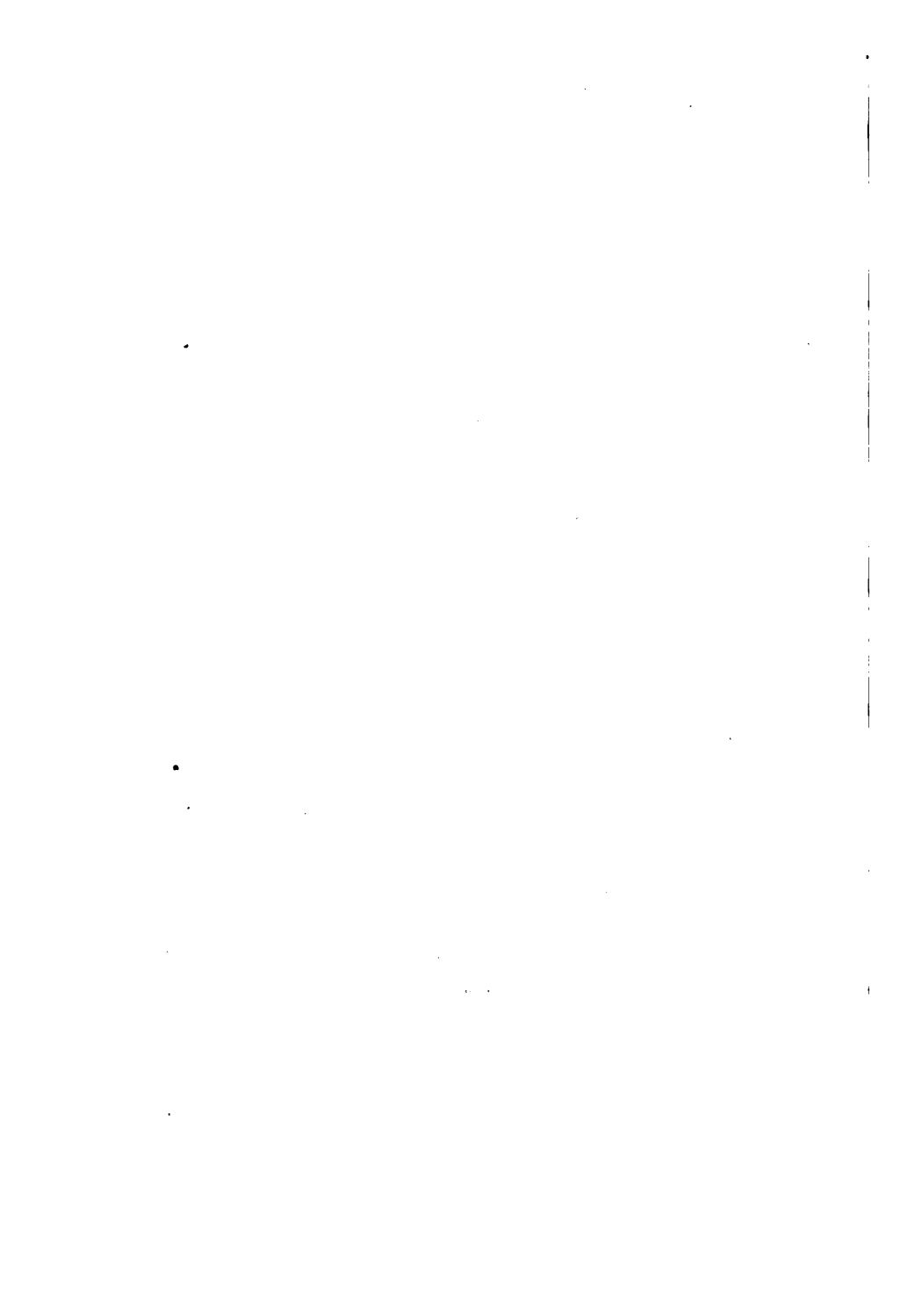


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## PREFACE

THIS book contains the substance of Addresses given at Retreats in the Autumn of 1910. The notes are written out and published for the reason given at the beginning of the first Address.

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# I

## ONE BODY

THE subject of the reunion of Christendom is at this time much in people's minds and hearts and prayers. It is very important to consider the matter on its spiritual side. This is what is here attempted. The subject is not treated controversially, but devotionally; not with any thought of plans and schemes for reunion, nor as giving heads for a theological treatise, but with the intention of getting behind ecclesiastical points of difference or agreement, and of seeing what are the *real spiritual principles* involved in the unity of the Church. We can then enquire how far we are *bringing these spiritual principles to bear* on our life and cultivating the temper which they enjoin. These principles, this temper, we must cherish and practise among ourselves — in family and social life, as well as in the ecclesiastical life of our parish and diocese — if we are to call others into the unity of Christ's Church.

It is proposed to consider St. Paul's Seven Unities, or the Sevenfold Unity of the Church, described in the opening verses of the fourth chapter of the

Epistle to the Ephesians. It would be well to read through the whole Epistle, which is in one view an expansion of these verses, insisting throughout on the idea of fellowship in the body of Christ. The Epistle was probably sent as a circular letter to Churches in what we now call Asia Minor, of which the Church at Ephesus was one. It was written at Rome during St. Paul's first imprisonment there. At the centre of the great and almost world-embracing Roman empire, the thought of the unity of the Christian Church, which was to spread throughout the world, was naturally prominent in the Apostle's mind. The Christian Church was to weld together all nations and peoples in a higher unity than that of the empire. Let us look for a moment at the context of the passage. Verses 4 to 6, which we are to consider more minutely, are really parenthetical.

In v. 1 the Apostle pleads from his prison, with all the authority of one who is suffering for Jesus Christ: I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the vocation wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness (towards all), with longsuffering and forbearance (where there may be any difference or ground of complaint). Mental dispositions which promote the right relation of the parts to the whole and to each other in the whole, — these are what the Apostle first enjoins.

In v. 3 "endeavouring" (A. V.) is a very weak

word, according to its modern use, and suggests too much the possibility of failure. "Giving diligence" (R. V.) or "taking pains" would better represent the Greek word used. "The unity of the Spirit" is that real objective unity which is the gift of the Spirit, the result of His indwelling in all the members of the Body; this is to be kept and subjectively realised by them "in the bond of peace."

This exhortation the Apostle urges for the reason that "there is one Body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one Hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."

These seven unities we are to consider one by one. And first the One Body. "There is one Body and one Spirit." The Christian Church is one in its visible constitution and one in its informing Spirit; one Body, not several bodies with one Spirit, as we are often asked to think of it.

I. *The unity is external as well as internal.* According to our Lord's intention<sup>1</sup> and the Apostle's teaching it is a visible unity, so as to impress the world, to bring to bear the influence and witness, the frown or approval of the Christian Church. Think what a power the united Christian society should and would be — in a nation or in a village —

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 23.

to support what is good, to put down evil. *Man is a complex being*, material and spiritual, with body as well as soul. So it is with the Church, which is to be his home, and with the Christian religion, which is intended to be his guide. Christianity is not a philosophy, scattering seed thoughts. Christ founded a society, a kingdom, a body. The Church is a society among other societies, though different from them. It is an object of faith, not because it is altogether invisible, but because it has an invisible side, because it is more than it seems to be.

Accordingly the Christian religion and the Christian Church *have to do with outward life*, both in the individual and in society. Inward life is expressed in outward form, character in conduct, the spirit through the body, more and more, in gait and manner and countenance.

This is *the law of the Incarnation*. "The Word was made *flesh*"; He took all of human nature, down to its very lowest elements.<sup>1</sup> In this God was manifested. The very life of God becomes subject to touch and sight, is seen, heard, and handled.<sup>2</sup> Therefore whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we can do all to the glory of God, because we can do all in the name, and after the example, of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John i. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John i. 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. x. 31, Col. iii. 17.



The spiritual, we learn, is not that which gets as far as possible away from the material, but that which penetrates and transfigures it.

Accordingly the Christian religion has its outward ceremonies and sacraments, all informed with spiritual power. Man, we may say, in his two-fold nature, is a sacrament, having an outward visible, and an inward spiritual side; Christ, both God and man, is a sacrament; the links between Christ and man are sacramental, outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace.

From such consideration we learn (1) the importance of purity of the body, disciplined and controlled by reason, of modesty and restraint in manner and life; (2) that the Church must not stand aloof from temporal and civic interests and social questions; the Christian Church cannot be content with the betterment of ordinary human life, but she should be eager to promote it, as a part of the restoration of human nature in all its parts to its true dignity.

II. The Christian Church is a *body, not a collection of fragments*. All the parts are fitted together, with a great variety of members and organs, each having its own proper function. The higher we rise in the scale of creation, the more highly developed and the more complex life becomes.

Picture for a moment the human body — its beauty, strength, and harmony; the adjustment, subordination, and inter-relation of all its parts; the brain, lungs, and heart, the nerves and muscles — the flow of life through all. Any obstruction or congestion of blood causes pain and disease, perhaps death.

All the members and organs have their function assigned to them, not by human device, but by divine appointment. One cannot therefore be substituted for another.

So is Christ and His body, the Church. (1) There can be no room for rivalry or jealousy between members of the body, whatever position any may occupy. The clergy and laity, those specially dedicated to God and those serving Him in ordinary life, different sets and ranks, with their varied gifts, all are to seek the common good, all are necessary one to another. Those which occupy a lowly and inconspicuous place may be the most necessary to the body. See 1 Cor. xii. 12-25.

(2) As there is no room for rivalry, so there is no excuse for sloth. We must each seek to be our best, in order to give our best. Even if, so far as we ourselves are concerned, we might neglect to cultivate some gift, we must remember that it was bestowed not for ourselves alone; we are stewards of God's

manifold gifts and are bound to cultivate and exercise them, as we have opportunity, for the good of our brethren.<sup>1</sup>

(3) *Unity not uniformity*, variety with harmony, we see to be the law for Christ's Church. Lines of caste or colour have no place therein. The Catholic or Universal Church must find room for all races — and classes and ages and temperaments. These lessons of humility and subordination, and of inclusive catholicity, are pressed upon us by three texts from other Epistles of St. Paul.

1 Cor. xii. 12. As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members, many though they be, are one body; so also is the Christ.

Rom. xii. 4. Even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same function; so we, who are many, make one body in Christ, and severally are members one of another.

Gal. iii. 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bondman nor free man, there is no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus.

III. The oneness of the body is intended *for great moral purposes* of discipline and training, not merely for economy of money and force. The waste of moral strength is worse and greater than failure here.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 10, 1 Cor. xii. 7.

(1) We are to learn from one another;

(2) To be kept large-minded;

(3) To bear with one another, as in married life, or as in a large family. This discipline of "give and take" is forfeited where there are only one or two children in a family.

We should welcome (not merely tolerate) diversity or manifoldness in gifts, powers, offices, views, — so that they be not contradictory but supplementary. Manifoldness belongs to finiteness, and finiteness belongs to created life. Other races, persons of other habits and temperament and education from our own, have their contributions to bring to the common treasury.

"The individual must know his place in the body, and fill it with deference and self-restraint. He must recognise that others are as necessary to the body, though they do not serve it with a gift like his. The life of the body is one, though its manifestations are various. It takes all members to make a body, and no member is anything at all apart from the whole body. The body is Christ. That is true unity. It unites all classes and all nationalities. It finds a place for every one, and keeps every one in his place. It destroys not individuals, but individualism. It transmutes self-assertion into self-devotion. It counts charity, that

is, the spirit of membership, above all other spiritual gifts. It creates an efficiency and generates a force which transcends all efforts of all individuals, and which in the end will be irresistible. It presents a living Christ to the world, a living and growing Christ, embodied in the lives of His members; gathering up in one all the individuals of humanity into the ultimate unity of God's One Man. And so it offers a new philosophy of human life, and with it a new hope, as certain of fulfilment as is the purpose of God."<sup>1</sup>

Let us ask ourselves

Are we *aiming* thus to live the life of fellowship?

How am I acting in the light of this teaching — in home and family, in society and community, in parish and Church?

Is it in independence or in subordination, in selfish isolation or in glad association and fellowship?

Am I doing my part, contributing my share?

Am I welcoming others' help?

WE PRAY THEE, O LORD

That we may come with open minds to receive Thy word;

That we may put away pride, prejudice, and self-interest which hinder recognition of Thy truth;

That Thy design for Thy Church may be made more clearly known to us;

That what we understand we may act upon and seek to carry out;

<sup>1</sup> J. Armitage Robinson, *The Vision of Unity*, p. 10.

That loyalty and charity may go hand in hand;  
That truth and love may together grow, and in their growth  
our life be built up;

That in the use of all the means of grace we may set before  
us the forming of the character of Christ within us;

That we may humble ourselves before Thee for all our sins and  
the sins of our people whereby we have marred and hindered Thy  
design — pride, prejudice, self-will, impatience, worldliness;

That we may perceive the spiritual side of the truths for which  
we contend — the lessons of fellowship, sympathy, and consid-  
eration, of humility, subordination, and co-operation, of forbear-  
ance, forgiveness, and carefulness to avoid causing others hurt  
or pain;

That we may not be deceived by plausible inducements of  
immediate good, so as to forfeit or forsake principles of Thy  
revelation or institution;

That we may be eager to make our contribution to the treasury  
of Thy Church in knowledge, in holiness and spiritual experi-  
ence, by prayer and spiritual exercises, by labour, alms, influ-  
ence, by the use of all our talents, cultivated and exercised for  
Thy glory and our brethren's good.

## II

### ONE SPIRIT

THE Church is one in its visible constitution and one in its informing Spirit — “one Body and one Spirit.”

The spiritual, as we have seen, is not the obliteration of the material but its penetration and transfiguration.

I. *The spirit holds together and informs the body with all its members*, enabling each member and organ to perform its proper function. Any part of the body is dead which is not informed by the spirit.

This is shown by the *place of the Church in the Creed*.

(a) It immediately follows the Holy Spirit. All the third part of the Creed belongs to our belief in God the Holy Ghost, our Sanctifier, as all the second part belongs to our belief in God the Son, our Redeemer. The Church is the home in which the Spirit of God dwells.

(b) The sentence, “The Holy Catholic Church,

the Communion of Saints," forms not two articles of belief, but two clauses of one article, one object of faith. (This is shown by the punctuation. A colon divides one article from another; a lesser stop, whether comma or semicolon, separates clauses within one article.)

The Holy Catholic Church and the Communion of Saints tell of the same thing viewed on different sides; the Church is the collective society, the Communion of Saints tells of the fellowship which all the members have one with another. "The Saints," here as in the New Testament, it need hardly be said, are not the pre-eminent servants of God, nor only those who have entered into their rest; the word stands for all the consecrated people of God, who are "called to be saints,"<sup>1</sup> as members of the holy body, partakers of the Holy Spirit. Of all the Holy Spirit is the life, the One Spirit with His many gifts, producing varied virtues, fitting for manifold works, binding all together, both those on earth and those in Paradise. "If any have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"<sup>2</sup>— whatever may be his profession or his external and federal relation.

II. We have an illustration at Pentecost of the one Spirit quickening the body and distributing

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 9.



gifts to all its various members. (Acts ii.) The cloven tongues as of fire lighting upon each of the disciples are not to be understood as if a split tongue like an inverted mitre lighted on each head. We are to see rather the one flame from heaven dividing itself into many streamlets. This is an exact figure of the one Spirit, with His many gifts, dividing to every one severally as He wills.<sup>1</sup> More than the twelve apostles probably were present; perhaps the whole company numbering a hundred and twenty mentioned a little earlier at Jerusalem, which included beside the twelve, the brethren of the Lord, and the women and the Blessed Virgin. How different their needs! The Spirit came upon them with varying gifts for personal life and for official work, enabling the apostles to carry out their ministerial commissions, and empowering all for Christian life and witness.

Within the circle of the twelve how different the needs of Peter and of Thomas, of John and of Philip; among the women, the needs of the Virgin Mother and of Mary Magdalene!

What (let me ask) do *I* need for my life and work? A priest receives the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God. This gift creates a special link of fellowship with Christ, enabling the priest to do Christ's work in Christ's

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 11.

way. That is what should be its result. But others receive His gift for other lines of service. We must stir up the gift that is bestowed upon us, call forth that which is pledged. It is a continual gift, not once for all bestowed, whether in Confirmation or in Ordination, but then pledged that we may continually draw upon His inexhaustible treasury according to our need and desire.

III. *The One Spirit is the giver at once of truth and purity and love.* Holiness is manifested in different virtues, they are rays from one source. We cannot reckon on the Spirit's help for one purpose unless we are submitting to His control in every point. He is at once the Spirit of truth and purity and love. If we quench the Spirit of love, we shall find ourselves without the guidance of the Spirit of truth. The Spirit's aid in prayer may be forfeited by disobedience to His promptings in other respects. This is often the secret of what seem startling falls. A lapse from faith may be really due to self-indulgence. A fall into schism may be the consequence of failing to cultivate a temper of love and of subordination.

We must put away at once whatever would displease Him, if we would gain in spiritual insight as to God's mind and will concerning His Church. We must banish self-will and bitterness in contro-

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versy, with all that is contrary to meekness and lowliness, to long-suffering and forbearance.

IV. *The One Spirit binds together all in whom He dwells*, however irregular their ecclesiastical organisation. God is not tied to the means of grace to which He ties us. We must seek His help through the channels which He has appointed: He is not bound to use none other, where persons are approaching Him in good faith, while ignorant, through no or but little fault of their own, concerning His appointed institutions. The Spirit's influence extends beyond the body in which the Spirit dwells. It is so with a person, a nation, a guild, or society; we may believe it to be so with the Church of God.

(1) We would never deny the work of the Spirit, however we may seek to supplement and safeguard it. We *deny nothing*, while contending that this or that (sacrament or ministry) is a part of God's design for His Church, necessary to its integrity. We cannot consent for the sake of reunion to omit or neglect anything which we believe to be Christ's ordinance. No lasting union could be built on any such concession or compromise. But we gladly recognise inner spiritual life amongst those who are separated from the regular fellowship of the Church.

(2) We should *cherish this inner fellowship* in faith and hope and love; we must rejoice wherever the fruits of the Spirit are manifest — love, joy, and peace, marking the soul's true relation to God; long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness, in our relation to one another, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control in personal life. In proportion as we become more spiritual, more under the control of the Spirit of God, we shall be drawn more closely to one another. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.<sup>1</sup>

V. *This spiritual unity extends to the unseen world.* The disembodied spirit, freed from the entanglements of the flesh and withdrawn from the distractions of the world, we may believe to be more open to the hallowing touch of the Spirit of God. Now we have the first-fruits of the Spirit.<sup>2</sup> His guidance and control and inspiration that we experience in this world is but a foretaste of the fuller possession of our whole being by His indwelling to which we look forward. The cleansing, enlightening, and strengthening of our faculties which He increasingly bestows in this world is carried on, we cannot doubt, in the intermediate state, until it issues in the perfected sanctification of the world to come. Meanwhile all who are under His in-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 14, Gal. v. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 23.

spiration are united in common hopes and aspirations. We pray for the consummation of their bliss. They pray for our steadfastness and perseverance. As we think of the bond of love and interest between those on earth and those in Paradise, we may well ask ourselves what they chiefly desire for us. Not earthly success or freedom from trial, surely; rather faithfulness in whatever position or condition we may be, and the grace to turn all to account for our highest good whatever our outward circumstances of joy or sorrow. We would maintain a real fellowship with those who have gone before by cherishing the same desire and spirit which we know must animate them. Thus are we most truly and deeply one with them.

VI. We have considered the One Spirit, the life of the whole Body, with His many gifts and varied virtues, binding together all in whom He dwells on earth and in Paradise; we may still further consider Him as binding in oneness of life *Christ and His Church*. The indwelling presence of the Spirit of God is the distinctive gift of the Christian religion. Great as is the benefit of the Incarnation of the Son of God, that by itself, as something in the past, would be valueless for us. We do not simply *look back* to Christ in the past for His teaching or His example or His sacrifice; we *look up* to

Him now glorified at God's right hand and breathing upon us His Spirit, that by His Spirit He may come and dwell in us.

The work of the Spirit of God is always *internal*. It was so in Creation and in the Incarnation, it is so in the Sacraments and in the life of grace. He comes not to do anything instead of us, not to supersede but to supplement our energies, helping us to become and to do our best. Our mind He would guide, our affections He would expand and rightly direct, our conscience He would render delicate and sensitive, our will He would strengthen. But we must not allow any of our faculties to be idle; we must seek to have them all quickened by the Spirit's inspiration.

In all this operation of the Spirit of God there is involved no loss of individuality on our part, or of personal distinctness. That would involve the loss of love, for love is a relation between persons, which could not exist if we were really merged in a common substance, human or divine. The life of God is communicated to us in Christ by His Spirit, that we, distinct beings whom He has made in His own image, may live not less but more truly. "I live, yet not I (by myself), but Christ liveth in me."<sup>1</sup> At the same time this sharing in the common gift of grace binds us in fellowship one with another,

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

so that our individual powers and gifts are supplemented by the gifts and powers of others.

We have an illustration of all this in the Council at Jerusalem gathered together to discuss the question of the admission of Gentile converts to the Christian Church; must they be circumcised and become subject to the requirements of the Jewish Law?<sup>1</sup> This would be to limit entrance to the sanctuary to the Jewish portal.

The question was decided in favour of real catholicity. Jew and Gentile were to be admitted to the Church on perfectly equal terms. The Law had been the mode of preparation for Jews; Gentiles had been trained by God in other ways. The function of the Law was past. It was not now to be imposed on any. Its meaning was fulfilled in Christ. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," so the Council wrote to the Church at Antioch, where the question had arisen.<sup>2</sup> But this was not a decision, or two decisions, given by two authorities. The question had been argued, facts had been stated, appeal made to Old Testament Scriptures, and finally the apostles reach a conclusion, which they are sure is by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, who has presided in their council and guided their deliberations.

So in every council of the Church, in proportion

<sup>1</sup> Acts xv.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xv. 28.

as it gathers together the testimony of the whole Body of Christ, we may trust that a decision, arrived at after the careful weighing of all the contributions of thought and experience which are made, is the voice of the Spirit speaking in and through the inspired Body. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," this is the rule.<sup>1</sup> We are to check and supplement our individual thoughts which we believe to be the teaching of the Spirit, by what He has said and says to others. So are we led by degrees into all truth of faith and life.

Come, Thou holy Paraclete,  
And from Thy celestial seat  
Send Thy light and brilliancy:

Father of the poor, draw near;  
Giver of all gifts, be here;  
Come, the soul's true radiancy.

Come, of comforters the best,  
Of the soul the sweetest guest,  
Come in toil refreshingly:

Thou in labour rest most sweet,  
Thou art shadow from the heat,  
Comfort in adversity.

O Thou light, most pure and blest,  
Shine within the inmost breast  
Of Thy faithful company.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 7, etc.



Where Thou art not, man hath nought;  
Every holy deed and thought  
Comes from Thy Divinity.

What is soiled, make Thou pure;  
What is wounded, work its cure;  
What is parched fructify;

What is rigid, gently bend;  
What is frozen, warmly tend;  
Strengthen what goes erringly.

Fill Thy faithful, who confide  
In Thy power to guard and guide,  
With Thy sevenfold mystery.

Here Thy grace and virtue send;  
Grant salvation in the end,  
And in Heaven felicity.

### III

#### ONE HOPE

"THE one Body, vitalised by one Spirit, presses towards the goal of one Hope."

We are to consider what the hope of the Christian calling is.

I. *The individual hope.* For this we may refer to the passage at the beginning of the third chapter of St. John's First Epistle. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be (not anything different from children of God, but what our condition as such shall be). We know that when He (our Lord, the incarnate Son of God) shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is. And every one that hath this hope set on Him (*i.e.* Christ) purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

This is the Christian hope, not mere forgiveness and acquittal, to be let off the punishment or consequences of our sins. The consequences, so far as possible, we would rather bear, that thus our restoration may be worked out.

The consequence of sin God's justice makes to be its penalty, and its penalty, if rightly borne, His mercy overrules to be its remedy.

It is not mere forgiveness that we hope for, but *restoration*, restoration to our true dignity, as made in God's image and capable of fellowship with our Creator;<sup>1</sup> restoration to a true harmony within ourselves, the flesh being subject to the spirit, the heart and its affections rightly directed, the will at one with the will of God. "For us men and for our salvation" in this sense the eternal Son of God came forth from heaven and took our nature, that He might live our life, and shoulder our burden, and fight out our battle, and by His own struggle with temptation win our freedom from the power of evil. This is the angel's explanation of the name given to the Holy Child,<sup>2</sup> "His name shall be called Jesus (the Lord our Saviour), for He shall save His people" — from what? From God's wrath? But it was God's love which sent Him. From Hell? No, the angel said not from the consequences of their sins, but "from their sins," their pride and hate, and lust and greed, from all that mars their manhood and spoils their womanhood, from all that forfeits their own self-respect and necessarily deprives them of the love and favour of a good and holy God. Saved from sin's power and guilt, we are saved of course

<sup>1</sup> Gen. i. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. i. 21.

from sin's consequences. But none can hope to be saved from spiritual death in whom the spiritual sickness that ends in death is not remedied. That is a delusion of the Father of lies — another gospel which is no gospel.

God's desire is not to surround Himself with a crowd of acquitted criminals, but to gather round Him a family of adopted children.

This is what St. Paul rejoices in. "Ye were washed, ye were sanctified, ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God."<sup>1</sup> This is "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" that we receive — the cleansing away of evil, the new birth from above, which the Spirit of God bestows in Baptism.<sup>2</sup>

(1) Are we really looking for this renewal of our life in the Sacraments, as the pledged channels of God's grace? Are we stirring up this gift of a new life which is in us by virtue of our Baptism and Confirmation?<sup>3</sup> In Holy Communion are we really seeking that our sinful bodies, with all their corrupt and downward tendencies, may be made more and more clean by contact with Christ's holy Body, in which all is in perfect order and harmony, and that our sin-stained souls may be washed in His most

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Titus iii. 5, John iii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. i. 6.

precious Blood, which represents His life; that we may dwell in Him by our faith and love and obedience, and He in us by His grace and power? In Absolution do we look for a putting forth of spiritual power to enable us to break away from the bondage of evil habits? This — freedom and not mere pardon — is the meaning of the Remission of sins in which we profess our belief. Our confessions and repentance should be with a view to a real fresh start, not merely with the thought of “turning over a new leaf” — through which the old blots may show.

(2) Are we accepting for the sake of this restoration the discipline and training that are necessary for its accomplishment?

If Christ our Lord in His sinless manhood was “perfected through sufferings,” and “learned obedience by the things which He suffered,”<sup>1</sup> for us, in our fallen and disordered state, many struggles and much self-discipline must be needed. Forasmuch as Christ suffered in the flesh, we must arm ourselves also with the same mind.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Are we really *hoping* for this restoration of our nature — for ourselves and for others; are we working for this, that we and they may more and

<sup>1</sup> Heb. iii. 10, v. 8.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 1.

more become true and pure, gentle and enduring, brave and prayerful — like Jesus Christ? We must be content with nothing less than this gradual transformation of character and conduct into the likeness of Christ.

This is the realisation of God's purpose in creating man in His image. Man should shew a created correspondence with his Maker, reflecting His character, His truth and love and purity. Thus are we made "children of God," not as a mere term of endearment, but by the communication of our Father's moral nature. This Christ, the incarnate Son, acted out in our nature; this the Holy Spirit, who made Him what He was, imparts to us.

In spite of past falls and present weakness, notwithstanding manifold temptations and obstacles, this is the hope of our vocation. It is to this God calls us. "Faithful is He who calleth, who also will do it."<sup>1</sup> While patient with slow advance, we can be content with nothing less as an end to be hoped and striven for. Hope must combine aspiration and patience.

With this thought and hope, we should *examine ourselves by virtues*, — by the Beatitudes at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, in which our Lord sketched out the character He would form in

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. v. 14.

His disciples;<sup>1</sup> by the Fruits of the Spirit at the end of the Epistle to the Galatians,<sup>2</sup> the intended and proper results of the means of grace. Scripture and Sacraments and prayer and Church fellowship and discipline should have these "fruits."

To examine ourselves by virtues, to see how far the true Christian character is being formed within us, will be quite as humbling as to examine ourselves by sins into which we may have fallen, — and it will be far more inspiring.

## II. *The collective hope.*

(1) There are many kinds of saints, reproducing different sides of our Lord's life. Some specially reflect one virtue, others another of His perfect character. We are called at different times to imitate His example in the various departments of human life, — domestic, social, ministerial, devotional, and suffering. There are many occupations and forms of service, to which Christian people may be called, all of them good, though not all equally good for each of us. We must seek each to be our best, to be perfected according to our kind, each in his own vocation, whether this be the priesthood or missionary service, a single life of dedication, or married and family life, in one or other of the many

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 22, 23.

professions and occupations in which men and women are called to serve God and their fellows.

There should be no narrowness in our regard of the varied forms of Christian life. We must not be imitators one of another, nor seek to stamp ourselves on others. The particular vocation, or rule, or aim, set before us, may not be that in which another is to be trained and perfected. As priest, or teacher, or friend, it is ours rather to follow after those whom we would help, encouraging and inciting them to be true to Christ as He goes before and bids each follow Him.<sup>1</sup>

(2) We are not to be perfected in solitude. We are trained in fellowship. The heathen philosopher recognised that man is a social being.<sup>2</sup> The declaration at the beginning of Genesis is ever true, "It is not good for man to be alone."<sup>3</sup> Save in obedience to a distinct vocation, and for high purposes, marriage and family life provide the ordinary training for men and women. It is not only that we need others to minister to us, but also that we need others to whom we may minister, if we would be our best, and have our powers drawn out and our character developed. Of this law we have continual experience. This law of mutual dependence and service

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 9, John xxi. 19-22.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, i. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. ii. 18.



is recognised by the institution of the Christian Church in which human life is called back to its true fellowship. God's purpose for mankind is represented as realised in a City, with its multitude of inhabitants and their various occupations.<sup>1</sup> English versions have rarely dared to give the true translation in Bernard's description of Jerusalem the Golden, "I know not, oh, I know not, what *social joys* are there" — in perfected fellowship, all rejoicing in the gifts of each, and each contributing to the common good.

III. Prayer is the expression of Hope, and collective prayer of our common Hope.

(1) The *words* of prayer ordained by our Lord emphasise this. "When ye pray, say *Our* Father. . . . Give *us our* daily bread, Forgive *us our* trespasses . . . Lead *us* not into temptation, but deliver *us* from evil." The whole prayer is said in the plural.<sup>2</sup> We are to *associate others with ourselves* in prayer: what we desire for ourselves we ask for others, what we value for ourselves we are to share with others. And we are to *associate ourselves with others* in prayer, as fellow suppliants, fellow penitents, and fellow strugglers: what we dread for ourselves we must do all in our power to ward off from others.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. vi. 9.

(2) The great *act* of prayer and worship ordained by our Lord teaches the same lesson. Its most common name in the New Testament is "The Breaking of the Bread."<sup>1</sup> The Eucharist is thus named not only or chiefly from the symbolic breaking of the bread as a figure of the breaking of our Lord's Body in the Passion, but more especially from the breaking of the bread for distribution that all may be sharers in the one loaf, partakers from the one plate, as all share in the same spiritual gift. "We, who are many, are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of the one loaf."<sup>2</sup> The common sacred meal tells of the corporate life and hope of Christ's disciples.

IV. If there is one hope before all, we must call all to share it, and shew to all the way to its realisation. "The Way" was a common term among the earliest disciples for the Christian religion. It is the way of life, the way toward our hope.

All men must be helped to realise the hope of our calling. Man has conquered in the person of Jesus Christ; men and women can conquer after His example and by His aid. This is the gospel, the good

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 42, xx. 7.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. x. 17. It is obvious that this symbolism is lost by the use of separate round wafers, as it would be by "individual Communion cups."

<sup>3</sup> Acts ix. 2, xix. 9, 23, xxiv. 14, 22.

news of hope which we are to proclaim. There is no room for despair concerning humanity, when we remember the victory that has been won by the Son of man.

This is the meaning of the passage read as the Epistle for Michaelmas-day concerning the angelic warfare.<sup>1</sup> It does not refer (as is sometimes supposed) to the original fall of the angels. This vision follows on the vision of the Incarnation. Satan's power is now broken. The picture tells of the pushing on of Christ's conquest. Since He has conquered, none need despair. The victory has been won. It only has to be claimed and followed up. Christ's Church is militant on earth. Its warfare is not merely defensive, to maintain our position against attack and uphold the faith; our warfare is to be aggressive, to make war on the world, the flesh, and the devil, to claim mankind for Christ, to extend the limits of His kingdom, to set up the reign of truth and purity and love. "Go and make disciples of all the nations."<sup>2</sup>

One hope is set before all. It is to be variously realised, as we have varying needs and aspirations. The hope for all is in Christ. He is the Light that, coming into the world, lighteneth every man;<sup>3</sup> leading on, it may be, through dim and fragmentary

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xii. 7-10.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> John i. 9.

revelations to the fulness of grace and truth: Christ in you the hope of glory.<sup>1</sup> Let us cling to this hope; neither despairing of any, since we know Christ will lose none whom He can save without doing violence to their own free will; nor presuming on His mercy in disregarding the laws He has laid down or the means of grace He has ordained, but working out our own salvation with fear and reverence, since it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.<sup>2</sup>

O my God, I hope in Thee for the forgiveness of my sins, for my cleansing from all stain of evil, for power to resist temptation, for help to fulfil every duty, and bear every trial, to which Thou dost call me, for perfected restoration and happiness hereafter. All this I hope not for any worthiness of my own, but because of Thy goodness, Thy promises in Christ Jesus, and the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. Perfect in me, I pray thee, the good work which Thou hast begun. Grant that I may never cast away my trust in Thee, nor put my trust in any save in Thee. Let me not presume on Thy mercy while neglecting Thy commands or the means of grace which Thou hast ordained.

O Lord, in Thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded.

<sup>1</sup> Col. i. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. ii. 12, 13.

## IV

### ONE LORD

I. THE One Lord (that is, of course, Jesus Christ) is the central of the seven unities.

"The one Body, vitalised by one Spirit, progresses towards the goal of one Hope. This Body depends for its existence upon one Lord, its divine Head, to whom it is united by one Faith and one Baptism. Its ultimate source of being is to be found in one God the all-Father, supreme over all, operative through all, immanent in all."<sup>1</sup>

We recall St. Paul's contrast elsewhere with the many lords of the heathen, ruling over different nations, or departments of life, or localities. "Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as there are gods many and lords many; yet to us (Christians, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, learned or simple, rich or poor) there is one God of (or from) whom are all things, and we unto Him, and one Lord, Jesus

<sup>1</sup> J. Armitage Robinson, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 93.

Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.”<sup>1</sup>

“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”<sup>2</sup> We should learn to say our Creed with a note of personal allegiance. In the second article (with which we are now concerned) there is a fourfold description: I believe in (1) Jesus — this is His proper name, telling of the work He came to accomplish; (2) Christ — this is a title, telling of His office, marking Him out as the fulfilment of all the promises in the Old Testament Scriptures; (3) God’s only Son — this declares His true nature, and His relation to God; (4) our Lord — this is the relation in which He stands to us.

II. We go on to enquire in what sense we acknowledge Him as “our Lord.” First, *by virtue of His supreme moral excellence, as Man*. While (as we shall see) there is a deeper truth, this must never be lost sight of. It was in this sense that the original disciples first acknowledged Him as Lord. All through His earthly ministry, until after the Resurrection, this was all they knew of Him. He was the Lord and Master of their life by virtue of His commanding personality, as the Man of men, Holiest among the mighty, and Mightiest among the holy.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 5.

As a Teacher they recognised that He had the words of life, and spoke as none other, He became their guide and model, who made life quite different to them from what it had been before. Gradually their conception of Him must have risen from the best of men, a messenger and prophet from God, to the recognition of Him as the Christ, the great promised Messenger and Deliverer — and so on to the conviction that this could be none other than the incarnate Son of God. They learned by slow degrees His true dignity.

(1) See that we pay homage to our Lord as the Son of man, entitled to leadership by virtue of His human perfection. Thus He is indeed God shewn in manhood, the divine character shewn in human life. "Christ is entirely without the defects of His qualities — that sad limitation of all characters: He is strong but never rough; He is gentle but never weak."

(2) We learn to welcome all who acknowledge Jesus as Lord, even though they may not realise all that is involved in this. As they obey they will come to know more, whereas orthodox belief without obedience or love or imitation, how dreadful! Remember His own word of warning: Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall

sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob (perhaps we might venture to add, with Chrysostom and Athanasius and Augustine) in the kingdom of God, while the children of the kingdom are cast out. To some of those He will say, I never knew you, and you never really knew Me, whatever your professions or your covenant privileges, since you were "workers of iniquity."<sup>1</sup>

Scorn no honest belief, however imperfect it may be. Rather seek to lead the person on, and to shew how much more is involved in the belief already held. The case is very different, let us remember, of one who is working up to a fuller faith, from that of one who is falling away from a higher to a lower conception of Christ and of His revelation.

(3) The result of Catholic belief as to our Lord's person should be more absolute surrender and obedience, more implicit trust in the acceptance of trial and temptation.

"I believe whate'er the Son of God hath spoken,  
Than truth's own word there is no surer token."

Do not those who profess only a humanitarian belief sometimes shew this real discipleship to Christ more fully than some of us whose theoretical conception of His dignity is higher? Let

<sup>1</sup> Luke xiii. 25-30.



us take shame to ourselves for the unfruitfulness of our faith, and pray that what we say with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and that what we believe in our hearts we may shew forth in our lives.

III. We know that Jesus is more than perfect man; we worship Him as God in man's nature. What Jesus was, God is. This we have learned from His own declaration. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."<sup>1</sup> While none hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath made Him known, not only by His teaching but by acting out God's life and character in our nature and amid our circumstances. The Word made flesh has translated the divine perfections into language which we can understand, the language of human conduct.<sup>2</sup>

On account of the knowledge of God which is thus assured to us, we rejoice in the Incarnation and in the Church's clear-cut definitions of the doctrine.

That the Son is "of one substance (or inner essence) with the Father" we see to be involved in His claim to judge the world, to satisfy all needs, and give rest to all who come to Him, in His claim of absolute and undivided allegiance to Himself.<sup>3</sup> Such claims would be entirely inconsistent with

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 14, 18.

<sup>3</sup> e.g., Matt. xxv. 31, xi. 28, x. 37.

moral goodness in any created being however exalted. We should refuse at once to listen to any one professing to speak in God's name who failed in this fashion to recognise and make plain the distinction between himself, as the messenger, and the supreme Being whom he represented.

Because we recognise Christ's perfect human goodness, we are forced to go behind this and worship Him as the incarnate Son of God. "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ: Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father."

This is *His Lordship on the divine side*, to the acceptance of which we would lead on those who at present fail to recognise it. In making the most of all they do believe, we make no surrender of further truth. Because we recognise God's working and gifts beyond the limits of the Church's Faith and Order, we do not sacrifice either Faith or Order. There is no question of giving up, but of leading on.

IV. In the "One Lord" we acknowledge *the righteous sovereign over the whole of life*.

(1) For Him we renounce all other masters — honour, pleasure, place, and wealth. Other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us, but henceforth we will make mention of Thy name only.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxvi. 13.

This should lead to purity of intention in all our work. If only His name be hallowed, His kingdom set up and extended, His will done, what matter whether it be by our instrumentality, in accordance with our plans, to our credit, or not?

(2) The "One Lord" must be supreme over all departments of life — in the home and in society, in business and politics, in art and literature, as well as in definitely ecclesiastical or religious matters. The Christian religion is to penetrate through the whole of life. We cannot allow different standards in various departments of life. Christ must be King of kings and Lord of lords.<sup>1</sup>

V. We see what the acknowledgment of the "One Lord" stands for.

(1) It means looking up and not merely looking back. We do not look back merely to a teacher or example in the past, like Socrates, or Plato, or Emerson. We look up to a living Lord at God's right hand — at the highest place, that is, of honour and of power — giving allegiance to Him and receiving help from Him.

(2) This perception and surrender is only possible by the aid of the Holy Spirit. "No man can say

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xix. 16.

Jesus is Lord, or Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost,"<sup>1</sup> so different is the revelation of God in Christ from what the Jews expected, from what the untrained and unilluminated heart desires.<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.<sup>3</sup> He makes the same demands, offers the same rewards, requires the same conditions in disciples now as of old. The stumbling-block of the cross has not ceased.<sup>4</sup> To own Jesus as Lord involves a crucifixion of the flesh, a withstanding of the world, from which the natural heart shrinks.

What, we may each of us ask ourselves, does He demand of me now? To what is He calling me? How does He bid me follow Him?

Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?<sup>5</sup>

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ;  
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst humble Thyself to be born of a Virgin.

When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.

We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge;

We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood;

Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. xiii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. v. 11.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Sam. iii. 9, Acts ix. 6.

## V

### ONE FAITH

"ONE Lord, one Faith, one Baptism" form a triplet within the sevenfold unity.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the central figure. Faith is the expression of our belief in Him. Baptism is the sacrament by which He lifts us out of a state of nature and takes us into fellowship with Himself. We are to consider the relation of the One Faith to the One Lord.

I. "*Jesus is Lord,*" that is the great central profession of Christian faith. Before a longer creed was elaborated, this would have been required of those who desired to be admitted to the Christian society. This involves all the rest, since it tells of His relation to God and to ourselves. On His authority we accept the great truths He taught. Remember how few and simple are these fundamental truths of the Christian religion — (1) concerning God, who and what He is; (2) concerning man, his origin and destiny, the true standard of his life, his relation to God, and the means of approach-

ing Him. All in Scripture and Creed and Sacrament falls under these great heads.

These great truths Christ taught, as the Son of God and the Son of man, not only by word, but by His life. "What Jesus was, God is; what Jesus was, man should be, and by His help may gradually become."

We prize the clear statements of the Creed, guarding with equal care the truth of Christ's Godhead and the reality of His Manhood. We learn how by degrees the full doctrine was thought out, as questions were raised, and different elements of the truth had to be harmonised. We should be hopeful about other and present controversies, that they likewise will be overruled for the greater confirmation of the faith, and the fuller elucidation of the truth. Only let us cling tenaciously to all of which we are certain. Let us pity, not scorn, those who have not the privileges and advantages which we possess. Persons who disbelieve or misbelieve any truth that God has revealed are the poorer thereby. They are without something on which to build up their life, by which they might shield themselves from temptation.<sup>1</sup>

II. *This faith is one;* for the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds (and the Athanasian hymn too) are exposi-

<sup>1</sup> Jude 20, Eph. vi. 16.

tions, expressing and guarding the simpler faith. Remember we are to love God with our minds as well as with our hearts; we owe to Him the homage of our intellectual powers.<sup>1</sup> We should *think things out* as we are able, so as to gain clear ideas and an intelligent belief, and to be able to state our belief intelligibly to others. So many heresies and queer fantastic theories are accepted because people had previously been given no explanation of Christian truths. Are we slothful and indolent about this, content to have our thinking done for us, relying on little manuals and partisan text-books, instead of undertaking serious study for ourselves?

III. On the other hand there is a danger to be guarded against, of curious intellectual speculations, of indulging in, or imposing upon others, over-refinements and puzzling definitions, as, for instance, concerning the exact *mode* of union between the divine and human natures in the Incarnation, or between the outward and the inward parts in the Sacraments. We must be content to leave many questions open. In particular we must beware of imposing our *negations* upon other people.

We should learn to distinguish (a) between what is of faith, and what may be true and which we would persuade others to accept, but which we have no

<sup>1</sup> Mark xii. 30, Phil. i. 9.

right to impose upon them; and again (b) between facts, and opinions or theories and explanations about those facts.

The Trinity is a fact, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are each God, and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God existing in a three-fold manner. But various illustrations and explanations may be held; no theory of the Trinity is stated in the creeds. So with regard to the Atonement; that Christ "died for our sins" is a fact.<sup>1</sup> All sorts of theories about the Atonement have been held at different times, taking colour from the thought of the age or people. Thus we distinguish between the Catholic creeds which rehearse the great facts of our faith, and formularies like the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, which may be true and helpful for their time and purpose, but are not intended or suited for every age and country.

(c) The unchanging truths of the Christian revelation must be stated in the language of every age as of every country. It is not enough to use the tongue of each people; the thought of each age must be employed and utilised in the declaration of God's word. The same facts will mean more to one age than to another, and will be understood and expressed in a somewhat different manner. The same truth will be increasingly realised by us in

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3.



different stages of education and experience. We should rejoice in the growing understanding of the truth, as we add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, coming to know for ourselves what at first we accepted on the authority of teachers.<sup>1</sup>

IV. The revelation given by Jesus Christ *concerns morals as well as belief*. When St. Jude speaks of "contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints," he has in mind moral offences by which Christ is practically repudiated and denied rather than theological errors.<sup>2</sup> The Christian law of marriage (the lifelong union of one man with one woman to the exclusion of all others on either side<sup>3</sup>), the blessedness of poverty, and of mourning, the power of meekness, the necessity of sacrifice, or the law of life through death, the solidarity of human life — all these are elements of the Christian revelation just as much as the doctrine of the Trinity or the Incarnation.<sup>4</sup> It is with reference to loose living that the apostle says, "Ye did not so learn Christ."<sup>5</sup>

V. Consider what the Creed stands for, "What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?"

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. i. 5, 2 Tim. i. 12, Phil. iv. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Jude 3, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Mark x. 6-9, 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. v. 3-5, John xii. 24, 25, Rom. xiv. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. iv. 20.

is the question of the Catechism. And the answer is, "First, I learn to *believe in* God the Father, who made me and all the world; secondly, *in* God the Son, who redeemed me and all mankind; thirdly, *in* God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the people of God."

To believe *in* a person means much more than to believe that the person exists, or to believe the person's word. It involves the surrender of ourselves to the person in whom we believe. It is this kind of belief to which the great promises are attached, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," "He that believeth on Me hath eternal life."<sup>1</sup> To believe in Jesus Christ is to set ourselves not only to accept His word, but to obey His commands, to imitate His example, to seek His help.<sup>2</sup>

We see a legitimate distinction between believing this or that truth about our Lord, this or that fact of His life — important as this is — and believing in Him about whom the things are told, — who was born in our nature of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, who rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven.

We ought to say our Creed (1) as a glad declaration of facts in which we rejoice, which bring cheer

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 31, John vi. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Reference may be made to the author's *Bedell Lectures, The relations of faith and life*, especially pp. 49-52, and Note C.

to human life; (2) as a profession of allegiance and personal loyalty to God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

Three duties we owe to our faith: first, to think about it; second, to act upon it; third, to spread it, communicating to others what has brought light and strength to ourselves.

What is my faith, we may each ask ourselves, doing for me? how shall I recommend it to others?

O my God, I believe in Thee, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, my Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, One only God, perfect in power and wisdom and goodness.

And I believe all that thou dost teach in Thy Word and by Thy Church. Take from me, I pray Thee, all that hinders my perception and acceptance of the truth—all pride and prejudice, disobedience or wilfulness, sensuality, cowardice, and worldliness. Bring home to me as Thou wilt whatever Thou wouldest have me believe and practise for Thy glory, for the good of my brethren, for my own soul's welfare. Correct what is amiss, supply what is wanting, strengthen what is weak, enlighten what is dim in my belief. Save me from unworthy conceptions of Thee and of Thy ways. Let Thy Holy Spirit lead me more and more into all truth. Grant that I may faithfully and bravely bear witness to Thee before men, and that what I profess with my lips I may believe in my heart, and shew forth in my life, building up myself continually on the foundation of my most holy faith.

Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.

## VI

### ONE BAPTISM

**BAPTISM** is the rite of initiation into the Christian society; on our part a profession of faith and discipleship, on God's part the pledge of our acceptance by Him and of the gift of a new life. The Sacrament follows on the Creed.

*I. Grace as well as Truth is a gift of the Gospel.* Christ is not merely a Teacher or an Example. That alone would be to our condemnation, as the higher standard was set before us and our own want of correspondence therewith more clearly shewn. This is the contrast which is continually insisted on between the old covenant and the new, between the Law and the Gospel. The former was a system of external enactments, the latter bestows empowering grace, to enable us to correspond with the Law. The Christian Church is the minister not of the letter (of an outward command) which killeth, but of the Spirit (of enabling grace) which quickeneth.<sup>1</sup>

We most of us know what we should be, at least

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 6, Heb. viii. 8 ff, x. 16, 17.

that we should be different from what we are, more brave and patient, more gentle and considerate, more prayerful and reverent and self-controlled. The difficulty is in realising our ideals. Here comes in our belief in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit which made our Lord in His manhood what He was,<sup>1</sup> and that He breathes forth on us to enable us to become more and more such as He was. This is the distinctive gift of the Christian religion. This it is which distinguishes it from Eastern philosophies and modern systems of ethical culture—the gift of spiritual power. No other religion offers this. “Christ in us the hope of glory” is the Christian’s boast.<sup>2</sup> We learn the place and value of Sacraments, as communicating to us one by one the virtue of our Lord’s Incarnation and victorious sacrifice.

II. *Baptism is an outward ceremony.* God meets our need with outward means and pledges of spiritual gifts, suitable to our complex being, spiritual and material. This follows the law of the Incarnation, “the Word was made flesh.” So on the day of Pentecost, at the setting up of the spiritual dispensation, the inward gift of the Spirit of God was accompanied by outward signs appealing to the ear and eye. The sound of the mighty wind and the

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 14, 18, Acts x. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 27.



appearance of the tongues of fire were tokens of the Spirit's presence.<sup>1</sup> We will not seek to be more spiritual in our religion than God has shewn Himself to be; rather will we praise Him for His loving condescension to our needs, in ordaining outward signs as means whereby we may receive His inner gifts and as pledges to assure us thereof.

III. *Baptism is One — on God's side, as His gift.* "The death unto sin and the new birth unto righteousness" can never be repeated, while it is to be realised more and more through life, year after year, by experience after experience. This is continually set before us in the collects for the great commemorations of our Lord's life, *e.g.* for Christmas Day and Easter Even.

So the Sacrament of Baptism, once duly administered, is not to be repeated. It is ratified and perfected in Confirmation; Baptism in the full sense is not complete without this.<sup>2</sup> The new life bestowed in Baptism is nourished in Holy Communion; it may be restored or set free, when necessary, by Absolution. But Baptism is the foundation of all subsequent sacramental ministrations, it is the warrant for our daily petition for Forgiveness.

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 2, 3.

<sup>2</sup> See *Confirmation in the Apostolic Age*, by F. H. Chase, Bishop Ely.

Having been bathed, we should need only to wash our feet from the stains and dust of earth.<sup>1</sup> We enjoy "the everlasting benediction of the heavenly washing."

Baptism alone of the sacraments is mentioned in the Creed, because it is the foundation of the sacramental life. In this sense it is constantly insisted on in the New Testament, *e.g.* 1 Cor. xii. 13, Gal. iii. 17, Rom. vi.

Holy Communion is the feeding of the new life imparted to us in Baptism. Christ does not first come to us at our first Communion, as we may sometimes read; it is the Christ nature within us by our Baptism that is nourished by our feeding on His body and blood in Holy Communion. We see how we must come to Holy Communion in the strength of our regenerate life. We are bidden examine ourselves, not so much as to what we have done as to where we stand, "whether we be in the faith" — measurably true to our baptismal promises and gifts.<sup>2</sup> Partaking of the one loaf follows on sharing the one birth, the one cleansing. Some Puritan sects in ancient times denied the possibility of restoration from grievous sin after Baptism. We should not lose sight of the element of truth in this exaggeration. It emphasised the great seriousness of sin after Baptism, against light

<sup>1</sup> John xiii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 28, 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

and in spite of grace. This does indeed make it increasingly difficult — until it may become morally impossible — to renew men to repentance. This is the meaning of the awful warning in Heb. vi.

The difficulty, remember, is not on God's side, but on man's. God will at any time forgive any sin of which man truly repents; but the sinner's repentance and change of mind may become impossible. With regard to future loss, we should think of irremediable ruin which man may bring upon himself, rather than of unending punishment inflicted upon him by another.

Let us praise God for our covenant relation to Him, for the right to call Him Father, for all the privileges to which our Baptism admits us.

Let us seek to deepen our repentance for all our sins against our regenerate nature, wasting grace, breaking through barriers, dulling the conscience, weakening the will.

IV. *Baptism is One* — *on our side*, one in what it involves, all that is represented by the three Vows. These form the condition of admission into the Christian society and of abiding therein. The promises of renunciation of evil, of belief in God's word, of obedience to His commandments are required of all. The requirement of Sponsors for infants who are brought to Baptism is no arbitrary



arrangement, which we are at liberty to disregard. The promiscuous administration of the Sacrament of Baptism without any guarantee that children shall be taught the obligations incurred and the gifts bestowed, without provision for their being trained in The Way of Christian life, would be not merely in contradiction of the plain rules of the Church, but a violation of essential principles of sacramental grace. It betrays moreover a distrust of God, by taking things into our own hands, and ignoring conditions, as if where the rightful administration of means of grace in accordance with prescribed conditions was impossible — God could use no other means. He binds us to seek His grace in ways of His appointment; He does not bind Himself to use none other.

The spiritual enemies which we renounce are the same for all; the Flesh is not a source of temptation only to persons in unfortunate surroundings, nor the World only for the wealthy and prosperous.

As life advances the special forms of temptation may vary; but the root evils against which we have to guard remain unchanged: sensuality, covetousness, and pride, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are ever seeking to seduce us from the love of the Father.<sup>1</sup>

We learn by experience more of what the promises

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 15, 16.

of our Baptism mean for ourselves individually and in detail. Our renunciation will be more definite, our belief more intelligent, our obedience more specific.

(1) Even those who through ignorance or prejudice have not received Holy Baptism may be regarded as united with us in the service of Christ, as they are true to all that Baptism stands for; while, of course, in admitting this we would by no means ignore the means that God has graciously designed to bring home to men both the dedication of ourselves to God and His acceptance of us with His gifts of cleansing and new life.

(2) We should earnestly pray for the restoration of Discipline in the Church, that those who are not living reasonably true to their Baptismal obligations may be suspended from the privileges which belong to Church membership. This is needed both for their own good, that they may be brought to book and helped to a better mind; and to free the Church from the scandal of at any rate seeming to condone evil and inconsistency. Such a restoration of discipline we should use all our legitimate influence to bring about.

O God, who by the ministry of Thy blessed apostles didst cause Thy holy religion to be acknowledged throughout the world, give grace unto Thy Church devoutly to exercise that holy discipline which from them it has received, for Thy honour and the salvation of souls; through Christ our Lord.

## VII

### ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL

WE come last to what is really the foundation of all. The deepest things are not learned first. "Oneness is characteristic of the Gospel. Consider *its present working and its predestined issue*: There is one Body, animated by one Spirit, cherishing one Hope. Look back to *its immediate origin*: There is one Lord, to whom we are united by one Faith in Him, by one Baptism in His name. Rise to *its ultimate source*: There is one God the Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all."<sup>1</sup>

In the last clause we should omit "*you*." The declaration is absolutely general [*i.e.* from the ordinary Bible].

I. This is the first article of the Christian creed, "We believe in One God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible."

*Satan, remember, is no second God. He is only a rebel angel, however powerful and subtle. Dual-*

<sup>1</sup> J. Armitage Robinson, *Ep. to Ephesians*, p. 177.

ism (whatever form it takes) is not only a false intellectual conception, it is ruinous to life and morals, as every false belief tends to be. The faith is not only true but helpful; heresy is not only false but mischievous. We must allow no despair, however conscious we may be of our frailty, and of the formidable character of our spiritual foes. "Though an host of men should rise up against me, yet will I not be afraid."<sup>1</sup> I will put my trust in God. The gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ's Church, however severe the struggle. The Lord of hosts, of all the armies of heaven, is with us. He always wins who sides with God. What is right always can be done. Christ's resurrection, after all the indignities of the Passion, is the pledge of the triumph of truth, of the vindication of righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

II. *Jesus is no second God.* This is what Athanasius contended for against Arianism. The Arians gave to our Lord all sorts of high titles, they paid Him worship; but they denied that He was really of one nature with the Father. That, said Athanasius, is to lapse into idolatry. Christians know no second God, no inferior deity. The only justification of our allegiance and prayer to Jesus Christ is that we believe Him to be in His inmost being of one essence with the Father, from all eternity

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxvii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 18, Ps. xlvii, 1 Pet. i. 21.

God the Son of God, Light proceeding forth from Light, Very God the Son of Very God.

(1) In thinking of the Trinity we must always begin with the conception of the oneness of God, His absolute and indivisible unity. It was not until this truth had been hammered into the Jewish mind, by all the teaching of the Old Testament and by the discipline of the Captivity, that God ventured to disclose the doctrine of the Trinity, that within this absolute oneness of the divine Being there is a threefold distinction, which for want of better terminology we speak of as a distinction of persons. The One God exists in a threefold manner.

(2) The title "The Word of God" by which St. John speaks of our Lord guards this truth. The title "Son" by itself might suggest a separate individuality, and a later origin. This the title "Word" corrects, pointing to our Lord as always and essentially one with God, the eternal utterance of His mind. "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."<sup>1</sup> "Thou art the king of glory, O Christ; Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father." The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your minds in the knowledge and your hearts in the love of

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 3.

God, and of Jesus Christ His Son — not as a separate object of devotion, but as the revelation of the Father.

(3) Thus we see how we are to regard Jesus Christ our Lord as the Way to the Father, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (He said). No one cometh unto the Father but through me."<sup>1</sup> We must not stop on the ladder. Through Christ we know God. We are to press on through the manhood of Christ to recognise the Godhead which is therein reflected. God is not some one in any way different in character from Jesus Christ. What Jesus was, God is. We must not parcel out the divine attributes among the persons of the Trinity. Christ acts out God's nature and character before our eyes; the Holy Spirit reproduces that character in Christ's disciples.

III. *One God, the Father of all, that is, the Source of all life.*

(1) He is the Father of whom all fatherhood, physical or spiritual, is named. Earthly parentage is a shadow and figure of God's supreme fatherhood.<sup>2</sup>

Parents are channels of life from God, fellow

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. iii. 15.

workers with Him in His creative work. Think of the dignity and sanctity of this relationship; and of its responsibility. Parents must reflect in their dealings with their children the gentleness and firmness of God's rule. There must be no weak indulgence, which is no true sign of love.

Children get their first idea of God from their parents. He is some one greater and wiser and better than the greatest and wisest and best they know. What if parents through indifference or arbitrariness give an altogether distorted reflection, a false impression of the heavenly Father!

(2) God is the Source of life of every kind. From Him all else that exists is derived, while He derives His being from none. He is the self-existent One.<sup>1</sup> The trees and birds and animals, as well as men and women, derive their being from God. There are various stages of life, degrees of the communication of God's life. The stone exists, the plant grows, the animal moves, man thinks and chooses; man is made in God's image and is intended to reflect God's moral character, of love and truth and holiness; so is He made partaker of God's inmost life. Each stage of life is intended to lead on to the next. We must never be content with resting in a share of a lower communication of life when we are called

<sup>1</sup> Ex. iii. 14.

to a higher. This is death, not the absence of life, but the loss of life, the absence of the kind of life which we have a right to look for. The pebble never grew or moved, but the absence of that life, for which it was not intended, causes no horror. You put it in a museum or wear it as a jewel. On the other hand, the withered plant or flower, which has lost the life it had, is dead and becomes corrupt; you throw it away. You make a pet of an animal, and wonder at the approach of its instinct to reason; but the idiot child, who has only instinct where there should be reason, — what sadder and more pitiable spectacle! So where there is a full development of natural gifts, physical and intellectual, but without moral character and the participation of God's life of love and truth and purity, there is spiritual death, the loss or absence of what should be the distinctive life of man made in God's image and capable of holding fellowship with his Creator. The irreligious man is not only untrue to God, he is failing in his duty to himself, in not cultivating and exercising the highest faculties of his nature. The religious man is the true man, as the saint is the true Christian, seeking to rise up to the dignity of his calling.<sup>1</sup>

IV. We learn *the dignity of human nature*. No

<sup>1</sup> James i. 18, 2 Pet. i. 4.



creature lower than man would be capable of being used as the instrument of the Incarnation. God *could not* reveal Himself in an inanimate or an irrational creature. There would not be the faculty to reflect His moral qualities of truth and love and justice. Herein of course is the absurdity of idolatry. "They made the glory of Israel like unto a calf that eateth hay."<sup>1</sup>

We are bidden to "honour all men" as such, irrespective of their station or talent or even of their moral condition.<sup>2</sup> They have capacities and possibilities, however little realized, which command reverence, and which call for our best endeavours for their development and training. If stained and disfigured, the divine image must be restored and cleansed.

Thus the universal Fatherhood of God will be at once the motive and the power of missionary activity. We can appeal to all men because in a true sense they *are* God's children.

V. The true human element should so dominate our thought as practically to *efface elements of diversity among men*, in the colour of their skin, their social rank, or wealth, their education, or temperament. Because there is one God and Father of all, therefore all men are linked together by their com-

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cvi. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 17.

mon relation to Him and their common dependence upon Him. The brotherhood of man follows on the fatherhood of God. And both are to be realised in the Christian Church.

The diversities of which we have spoken should be welcomed as contributing to the fulness of human life and character. Nations as well as individuals and religious bodies have their riches to bring into the City of God. The unity of which the Apostle speaks is no barren uniformity; it is a unity in diversity. It has been happily said, with reference to the three languages in which the title on the Saviour's cross was written, that the City of God was founded at the confluence of three streams, the stream of Greek language and philosophy, of Roman organization, and of Hebrew religious teaching. In the same way the Church of to-day is to claim for Christ the contributions of different races of men, too good to be wasted, and needing training and hallowing, the grace and delicacy of the Japanese, the wonderful patience and perseverance of the Chinaman, the intellectual subtlety of the Hindu, the affectionateness of the Negro.

Supreme over all, God moves through all, and rests in all. The Christian Church should be the home and school of all nations, and thus should knit them together in sure bonds of mutual respect and service.

If the Christian body had preserved its unity as it grew larger and larger, it might have united at last the whole of mankind in its holy and peaceable bond.<sup>1</sup>

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, look favourably on Thy whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; and by the tranquil operation of Thy perpetual Providence, carry out the work of man's salvation; and let the whole world feel and see that the things which were cast down are being built up, and the things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are returning to perfection through Him from whom they took their origin, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

<sup>1</sup> *Vision of Unity*, p. 47.



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