

The Divine words intimate to us that the unity of the Church was intended to be an

#### EVIDENCE TO THE WORLD

of Christ's mission. There cannot be a question about this; but do they not also appear to lay the foundations of the Church's unity in the Oneness of God?

Let us well consider the words. They are more fit for meditation and prayer than for argument.

They are these:

'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me' [John xvii. 20-1].

Does it not seem that the unity of the Church springs from the unity of the God-head; and that her oneness in faith, in morals, in visible charity, are to be a sign to the world that God is one?

'Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven, or on earth (as there be gods many and lords many); but to us there is but our God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.'

#### 2. The Church is one, because

##### HER HEAD IS ONE.

If the Head is one, so is the body.

This appears in the passage already taken from the Saviour's prayer. The unity of the Church was to be a proof to the world of her Lord's mission. Two Churches might imply two Redeemers.

The doctrine that the Church is the body of Christ signifies much more than I can express, and more than I can comprehend. It is plain, however, that it teaches not only the care of the Head for the body, intimate union with Him, and subjection to Him, but also its unity in itself; in fact, that there neither is nor can be more than one body, and that this one body is organically one, although not organically only, as we shall presently see. Thus we are told that God gave Christ to be 'Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all' (Ephes. i. 23). The Church is called His body again in the same Epistle [iv. 12-16].

In the next chapter Christ is called the Head of the Church and Saviour of the body, and we are termed 'members of His body, of his flesh and of His bones' [v. 23-30].

In the Epistle to the Colossians it is said: 'He is the Head of the body, the Church' [i. 18].

St. Paul describes himself as suffering for Christ's 'body's sake, which is the Church' [ver. 24].

Again, the Head and the Body are mentioned [ii. 19].

It is in these very Epistles that the oneness of the Body is strongly insisted upon.

So intimate is the union of the Body with the Head, that when the Church is meant Christ is mentioned as being so truly one with His Church that, to some extent, what is true of the one is true also of the other, on the ground of this mysterious union. 'As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one; so also is Christ' [1 Cor. xii. 12].

If this expression signifies Christ the Head, then He is spoken of as including the body and as one with it. If it means, however, the Church, as is more probable, and as was thought in old times, then what can express the unity of Christ and His Church more plainly? What can show more distinctly the impossibility of there being more bodies than one? What can signify the awful dignity of the Church more distinctly, and consequently the fearful sacrilege of laying violent hands on the Church, or rending her unity? In truth,

they who do so, sin, however unconsciously, like Ananias, not against man but against God; and resemble, although unintentionally, those who pierced His blessed hands, His feet, and His side.

#### 3. The

##### ONENESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

is the necessary source of unity in the Church. For thus the Apostle proceeds, after speaking of the body three times in a single verse, and ending by calling it Christ [1 Cor. xii. 12].

'For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body \* \* \* and have been made all to drink into one Spirit' [ver. 13].

Again: 'Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father' (Eph. ii. 18); 'Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body, and one Spirit' [iv. 3, 4].

The Church, then, is one, because there is only one Father; one, because she has only one Lord and Saviour; one, because there is only one Spirit.

And we may well believe that, since the Church is the work of the blessed Trinity, her unity is a witness to the unity in Trinity. Remember that it is the *visible Church* of which all this is said, not a secret impalpable body. We made up our minds upon this point before. The Bible knows nothing of an *invisible Church*, except so far as relates to that portion of her which once was visible, but is now no longer on earth, and that portion which has not yet been born, but which, when its time has come, will be visible during its day of probation, even as we are.

The ancient Creeds all contain an expression of faith in the Church. 'I believe,' they say, 'in the Holy Catholic Church'; or 'one Catholic Church'; or 'one Holy Catholic Church'; or 'one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church'; or 'one Catholic and Apostolic Church.'

What is there that can be made an article of faith in an *invisible* collection of unknown men? What is there to believe of such an abstraction? No. I believe, therefore, in one Church, in the sense in which that Church has delivered the Creed to me; in which she has always understood her nature and office; in which she is as discernible as her Divine Head was when He dwelt amongst men. According to the universal belief of that one Church, I profess to believe in that one Church, as the body of Christ, and one because He is one.—*Church Critic*.

#### THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

(BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.)

At his Consecration every Bishop is asked the question, 'Will you show yourself gentle and be merciful for Christ's sake to poor and needy people and to strangers?' This gentleness to the poor and needy is the very spirit of Christianity, and the tremendous social problems of to day only emphasize the Bishop's answer, 'I will so show myself, by God's help.' The answer is not conventional, but essential; it is meant to be as wide as Christendom and the Christian doctrine; it is a promise of love. It assumes that we can love if we will. Love of this kind is not spontaneous, but an act of the will, and as we will to love, our capacities of loving grow stronger, and the love itself becomes almost spontaneous. Every one that loveth perceiveth God, and becomes His instrument for letting the world see what He really is. These spiritual truths lie in the nature of things. God is an all imparting self in whom the Greeks saw Beauty; the Romans, Strength; the Jews, Law; and the disciple, Love. God imparts Himself unreservedly to us, and we must love as He did. But Christ laid down His life for us, and we should be ready to do so also. Yet now it is not life that we have to

give up as a rule, but some of life's good things, some of the sweets of this world. So may we show that we love not in word only, or even in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Christ has brought a new life into our minds which must be a form of force upon our wills. The contrast between Dives and Lazarus becomes now not only unpleasant to our feelings, but an injustice which must be set right. Christ's death has made us in debt, and we must pay it to the suffering and distressed ones. They must have not only money, but pure breath, fair light, space to be decent in, healthful food, order and peace, beautiful sights and sounds, knowledge and the power to appreciate it, time to consider, and a religion that can elevate them—some entrance into the bright regions which we inhabit, but which are fenced and walled from millions. Christianity has taught the breadth of interest that has been characteristic of our university and college missions, and will no doubt characterise the brotherhoods of the future. Men must learn more, as they have been learning a little already, to live in the midst of those they would help, that they may elevate them slowly by patience and an example of purity. For sanitation, accommodation, and even recreation are not *all*. Again, we are to be gentle to strangers. How wonderful might be the result if here it could be made clear what is the effect of a Christian Church and Gospel on the national habits in England.

#### PERVERTED CHRISTIANITY.

It is a very common temptation of controversialists to take an utterance from some author and, tearing it from its context, attribute to it a meaning which the original writer never contemplated and which may even be entirely opposed to his real intention. Thus we have recently seen more than once the words of Irenæus: *ubi Spiritus illic Ecclesia*, "where the Spirit is, there is the Church," turned to account as confirming the view that wherever the Spirit of God works in any sense, there is the Church, in nature, in history, in heresies and schisms. Thus the Church is made co extensive with the world, and the old Christian antithesis of Church and world, the latter not able to receive the spirit of truth, because it does not discern Him or know Him, (St. John xiv: 17), is abolished, and we are forbidden to speak any more, in the broad and liberal light of the nineteenth century, of such things as sects and schisms.

Let us see what Irenæus really said. The passage in question occurs in the work against Heresies, Book III., chap. 38. (Harvey's edition), and reads as follows: *Ubi enim Ecclesia, ibi et Spiritus Dei. et ubi Spiritus Dei illic Ecclesia et omnis gratia*, "where the Church is, there also is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace." This alone would suffice to show how wide of the mark they are who attempt to give to a part of the second clause taken alone such a sense as we have referred to above. But the blunder is still more evident when we observe that in the whole chapter in which these words occur, the writer is insisting that it is the Church alone which has the true Faith, and that it is the Church which has received the gift of the Holy Spirit, "whereof none are partakers, who run not unto the Church, rather they defraud themselves of life, by their evil views and intolerable doings." He speaks of the same persons as "being alienated from the truth," "tossed about as with a tempest," "judging of the same things according to the time, now one way, now another, and never having any settled view." These are words which might seem to be prophetic of the modern spirit which will not admit that there was any such thing as a "Faith once for all delivered," any