

fundamental idea of God. The Church so long and still so largely conceived of as a hierarchy had for its underlying idea the thought of God as king, as absolute monarch.¹¹ But this as we have seen is not the fundamental idea of God which is that of Fatherhood. Very naturally and very beautifully there springs from this source the idea of the Church as the Family of God. When we clearly grasp this idea then the hierarchical idea is seen to be false and injurious. The notion of a priesthood as a class of men standing in closer relation to God than others in virtue of ordination, and as endowed by that ordination with powers either in word or sacrament, which gives them alone the inherent power of the distribution of God's grace, is clearly incompatible with the thought of the Church as a family of brothers and sisters. But hitherto, as I have said, the idea of the Fatherhood of God has not been the fundamental idea of Theology, out of which all other doctrines grow, and by which they must be tested. And hence the Church

(11) And this thought of God as a kind of emperor gave shape to the ritual of the Eucharist, as Gregory of Nyssa in a highly illuminating passage from his treatise on the Holy Spirit plainly declares: "Inasmuch as men when approaching emperors and potentates for the objects which they wish in some way to obtain from those rulers, do not bring to them their mere petition only, but employ every possible means to induce them to feel pity and favour toward themselves, clasping their knees, prostrating themselves on the ground, and putting forward to plead for their petition all sorts of pathetic signs to wake that pity, so it is that those who recognize the true Potentate . . . when they are supplicating for that which they have at heart, some lowly in spirit because of pitiable conditions in this world, some with their thoughts lifted up because of their eternal mysterious hopes, seeing that they know not how to ask and that their humanity is not capable of displaying any reverence that can reach to the grandeur of that glory, they carry the ceremonial used in the case of men into the service of the Deity. And this is what worship is, that worship I mean, which is offered for objects we have at heart along with supplication and humiliation." (Cf. Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 539). Let alongside of this elaborate comparison between the ceremonial court of a Greek Emperor and the ritual of the Eucharist, set the words of Jesus: "When ye pray, say, Our Father," and we see what a gulf separates the theology of the fifth century from the "mind of Christ."