

Perfect Oneness

by Thomas Bradbury

The sermon emphasizes the perfect oneness of the Church with Jehovah, highlighting the common bond of purest sympathy among the members of the Church and the eternal and spiritual union between the Redeemer and the redeemed.

Scripture: John 17:21, Romans 12:4, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 1:2, Ephesians 2:18, Ephesians 4:1-2, Ephesians 4:6, Colossians 1:24

Topics: "Church Unity", "Trinitarian Theology"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches on the perfect oneness of the Church with Jehovah, emphasizing the deep sense of identity and humility in apostolic injunctions. He highlights the need for believers to walk worthy of their calling, showing lowliness, meekness, and forbearance in love. The sermon delves into the 'Family Epistle' of Ephesians, revealing the eternal union of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with the elect children. It explores the unique revelation of a present Christ throughout the epistle, emphasizing the continuous communion and union between Christ and His Church.

Transcript

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:4-6)

A PRECIOUS declaration of the perfect oneness of the Church with JEHOVAH is given here, in the midst of spiritual commands and covenant unfoldings. The apostle commences the chapter by saying, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord," or, as you read in the margin, "The prisoner in the Lord." At the commencement of chapter 3, he styles himself "The prisoner of Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ was Warder, Custodian, and Guard, ay, and He was His Prison, defence, and Security. He was a prisoner in Jesus Christ. He was preserved in Jesus Christ. Kept in Jesus Christ. Shut up in Jesus Christ. Do what he would, it was impossible for him to escape from Jesus Christ. In Christ Jesus he was shut in from condemnation. A prisoner, yet a free man. From Christ Jesus he could find no separation. Precious security. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." (Eph. 4:1) Whence the necessity for such an appeal? Because there is much careless walking even amongst the saints of God; and those who know the most of themselves by the teaching of God the Spirit, are the most conscious of their failures and falls. The apostle speaks here, not from the pinnacle of self-assurance, but from the depths of self-abasement. Apostolic injunctions flowed not forth

with an air of conscious superiority; but from a deep sense of identity with the saints in their infirmities and necessities. He continues, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." (Eph. 4:2) We find a great lack of this in the present day amongst the living members of the body of Christ. There is a painful amount of the lynx-eye business, endeavouring to catch at the failings, falls, and follies of the weaklings in faith. Yes, we see much of that spirit with which Paul describes the heathen in Rom. 2:15: "Accusing or else excusing one another." What does that mean? Excusing in self that which is accused and condemned in another. A readiness to rebuke, and sit in judgment upon others, while there is a screening of personal sins. Now as we are brought by God the ever blessed Spirit into a true conception of our utter unworthiness, that our standing before God is all of His rich and sovereign grace, flowing to us through the blood and righteousness of Jesus, we shall be able, and shall delight, to act in accordance with the admonition, "Forbearing one another in love." See how kindly and considerately he writes. No lording over God's heritage here. "Endeavouring." He does not say they must keep the unity of the Spirit; but, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Here we see how favoured sinners, in union and communion with Christ, are taught to esteem each other better than themselves, to strive not for the highest place, but be willing to sit with the lowest of the low in the family of God, that Christ alone may be exalted, and His name glorified.

Now let us just run over that which some of you may have heard before. It may prove for our instruction and edification. "To speak the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." (Phil. 3:1) So wrote the apostle, and so say I. Let us notice a few of the peculiarities, or characteristics, of this epistle. It has been well styled, "The Family Epistle," because God the Father and His elect children, the Lord Jesus and His redeemed brethren, and the Spirit of adoption with all the heaven-born ones, are seen in every chapter. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in eternal and unceasing union with the eternally-loved family, are discovered in hallowed intercourse and communion. Turn to chap. 1:2: "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." There you have the Father gracious to His children. Read down to the end of ver. 5, and there you see the children blessed: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself." Come to chap. 2:18: "For through Him we both" elect Jew and elect Gentile "have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." The Father at home with His elect, redeemed, and regenerate children. Look at chap. 4:6: "One God, and Father of all," with ver. 14: "That we be henceforth no more children tossed to and fro." Here we see the Father settling His children for life in His family. Come to chap. 5:1: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear Children." Not followers of a party, a creed, or forms, and ceremonies; but followers of God, and that as children dear unto Him. Come to chap. 6:23: "Peace be to the brethren" of the same family, "and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus you see in every chapter a covenant Father blessing, predestinating, redeeming, regenerating, establishing, and teaching His own children in Christ Jesus.

I wish you to notice another peculiarity in this epistle. In every other epistle of the New Testament you will find something about the coming again of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Looking through this epistle to the Ephesian Church, in it you will find this contrast to all the rest there is no mention of the Lord's coming, because a present Christ is revealed from first to last. Christ, in whom all the elect children of the Father are blessed and predestinated. Christ, in whom all the predestinated ones are quickened and saved. Christ, in whom all the quickened ones hold sweet fellowship with the Father. Christ and His Church in resurrection grace. Christ and His brethren in ascension glory. Christ and His bride in eternal union. See chap. 2:4-6: "But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even

when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Do notice that word "together." You see this epistle knows nothing of absence or distance; but reveals the closeth relationship and the most hallowed association. No separation. Christ eternally one with His Church, and His Church unceasingly one with Him.

We will now notice the design of this epistle. Chapter 1: gives us a description of the Father's will to His children: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will;" (ver. 5) "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself;" (ver. 9) "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." (ver. 11) We are predestinated, not according to what we think is right, but according to His own will. He reveals to us the mystery of His will, not according to our asking, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but according to His own good pleasure. We have obtained an inheritance, not because of anything in us, but wholly according to His purpose who cannot go out of Himself for a reason to act graciously to His children. God is not callous or indifferent to the wants and necessities of His people, hence, with the revelation of His will He links His glorious activities on their behalf.

Chapter 2, reveals these activities. The whole of it is taken up with showing the intense passivity of the people of God in the reception of all the spiritual blessings, bounties, and benefits which God bestows upon them. Were they dead in trespasses and sins? He quickened them together with Christ. Were they lost amid the ruins of the fall? He testifies to them, "By grace are ye saved." Are they laid low in a low place by sin and Satan? They are raised together with Christ, and made to sit together with Him in heavenly places. Are they utterly spoiled and ruined in Adam? They are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus. Are they at a felt distance from God? They are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Is there an estrangement from God? Christ is our Peace who hath broken down all partition walls. "And came and preached peace to you." Paul does not write of Himself that he was the preacher, or that Christ had duly commissioned certain persons to preach. His eye was upon the one Object of the Church's glory. He knew of no preacher like Christ. If God's Christ, the Preacher of peace, the Expounder of God's Word, the Revealer of the Father's secret love, the Declarer of the Father's will, the Great Prophet of the Church, be not with us this morning, there will be precious little peace or comfort for the tried and tempted children of God. The Ephesian Christians had never heard the audible voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet He came and preached peace to them. He was a Preacher of peace to them by the power of the Holy Ghost. Do the living children long for fellowship with the Father? Through Christ they have access by one Spirit to the Father. That word "access" means introduction. Introduced by one Spirit to the Father. Are the saints by nature strangers and foreigners? God has made them by His grace fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Jehovah is the Builder of His Church. See! "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-Stone: in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." God is the Designer and Architect of this spiritual building. The design is seen by Him, in all its fair proportions, "fitly framed together." The building groweth stone by stone into a holy temple for Himself.

Chapter 3, reveals the hidden mystery that elect Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with elect Jews of the same glorious privileges and immunities of the kingdom and covenant of grace. Look at verse 9: "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been

hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Come to chapter 4. Here you have God's model, God's plan by which He acts; His standard, according to which He meets and accepts His children. What is God's standard? It is not the sweet feelings of one, nor the cutting experience of another. There is much folly amongst the children of God at the present time in regard to these matters. Some are despised because they soar too high, and others because they grovel too low. But this is the question, Is God glorified, Christ exalted, and the Spirit honoured? Ministers are given for the gathering together of the scattered family, and the edifying of the body of Christ, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (ver. 13) Nothing short of that will do for God's eye, and anything short of it will never satisfy the yearnings of any redeemed and regenerate child of God.

Come to chapter 5. Here we have the love of the great Covenantee set before us, As the Head and Husband of His Church, He gives Himself for her, cleanses her from all sin, and presents her "to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy without blemish," (Eph. 5:27) and draws from her adoring heart that reverence which His beauty and bounty alone can command.

Chapter 6 describes those who are brought into the experience of the privileges of the family of God, not in the enjoyment of uninterrupted peace. As assuredly as a living child of God is blessed with a gracious lift into the heavenlies, he will encounter wicked spirits there.

"When his pardon is signed, and his peace is procured,

From that moment his conflict begins."

So it is here. The children, blessed with all spiritual blessings, are called upon to "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Eph. 6:11) Through the full provision God has made, His people shall be more than conquerors.

I wish you to notice a characteristic expression of this epistle "Heavenly places." You find the word "places" rendered "things" in the margin; but the real rendering of the expression is, "the heavenlies." It occurs five times, each revealing a peculiar family privilege. Let us look at them.

Covenant blessing. Chapter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

Ascension glory. Chapter 1:20: "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places."

Spiritual communion. Chapter 2:6: "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Divine revelation. Chapter 3:10: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God."

Spiritual conflict. Chapter 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." See margin.

Here you see the heavenlies form the scene for the display of His grace and glory by Christ Jesus to His Church and people. Here the Church is blessed in Christ, ascended with Christ, seated with Christ, taught by Christ, and victorious in Christ. With blessing there must be conflict, and the man who expects one without the other is sure to meet with bitter disappointment. Having endeavoured to give you a view of the peculiarity, design, and characteristics of the epistle, let us look at the portion which I have read for our consideration this morning. It appears to divide itself thus?

THE BODY "There is one body."

THE SUPPORTERS OF THE BODY "One God and Father, one Lord, one Spirit."

ITHE SUPPORT OF THE BODY "One hope, one faith, one baptism."

I. THE BODY "There is one body." "You will see that I have not divided the text according to the order of the words, nevertheless, according to the mind and will of God. Oneness is the theme of the text. "One body." Well may we join with dear old John Kent in that precious verse

"Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus,

Long ere time its race began;

To His name eternal praises,

Oh, what wonders love has done!

One with Jesus!

By eternal union ONE."

Here we see the oneness existing between God's elect people and their great and glorious Head. We have many metaphors and illustrations in God's Word which show forth the eternal and spiritual union which exists between the Redeemer and the redeemed, the Saviour and the saved. It is very remarkable that every metaphor fails to show forth the perfection of this union. Is it a body? Bodies die. Is it a building? Buildings perish. Is it a tree? Trees decay. Is it the marriage union? There are two or three little words which sometimes ring in the ears of those who are united in fond affection "till death us do part." In this blessed oneness there is no death, ruin, decay, or parting. We find one precious portion which describes this union in all its fullness. It is in the unfolding of the heart of Jesus to the Father, as recorded in John 17:21-23: "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. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." That is something more than a stone in a building, a branch in a tree, a member in a body, or a wife united to a husband. It is not a metaphor or illustration, but an eternal fact flowing from the heart of our great King-Priest concerning all those who were given to Him in the counsels of eternity. You may be ready to say, Why should the Holy Ghost employ these metaphors if failure attends each and every one of them? Mark you, the failure exists not in reference to that particular truth which the Holy Ghost conveys thereby, but in showing forth the perfection of eternal union. When He speaks of the union of the branch with the tree, fruit-bearing is the truth He conveys. When He speaks of the stone in the building, stability is the theme. When He speaks of the members of the body, sympathy is the subject of His communication. So when by Paul He makes use of the expression, "one body," He will have us to know

that among the many members of the one body there is a common bond of purest sympathy. One of our poets has said, "A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind." So it is with the children of the living God, when they are brought to experience a fellow-feeling in the things of God, a fellow-feeling of their own nothingness in the light of His perfections, a fellow-feeling in the grace, goodness, and glory of Jehovah, and in all that Jesus has done and suffered for them, then they are wondrous kind to each other. Nothing else can produce this wonderful, I will not say reciprocal, but mutual kindness, love, forbearance, pity, and patience.

"There is one body." Let us look at a few portions in which this truth is set before us. We read in Rom. 12:4,5: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Turn to 1 Cor. 12:12, and following verses: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." Just you think about that; for there is much contention, grief, and bitterness, even among the members of the one body, as to the position they fill according to His will. "And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; and those members of the body which we think to be less honourable." Look at that! "Which we think." Pretty thinkers we are. Any member is none the less honourable because of our foolish thinking and judging, for, blessed be God, there is not one less honourable than another in His esteem. "And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked, that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." You see succour and sympathy all through this blessed description of the mystical body of Christ.

"There is one body." In dwelling upon this part of the text we cannot lose sight of the real human body of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. See John 2:21: "But He spake of the temple of His body." A real human body without the sin which deforms our wretched nature. A body perfect and complete, formed by the miraculous operation of God the ever-blessed Spirit in the womb of Mary His mother. Not a human body with His Divinity acting the part of a soul; but "of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting." Turn to Isa. 53:10-12: "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin." "He shall see of the travail of His soul." "He hath poured out His soul unto death." Listen again. John 12:27: "Now is My soul troubled." Look at the accounts given by the three evangelists of the Gethsemane sufferings of Christ: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Yes, our Jesus had a real human body with a real human soul, "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15) He was tried, troubled, harassed, oppressed, and distressed in union with them, and they with Him. When He obeyed, they obeyed in Him. When He was circumcised, they were circumcised in Him. When He was baptized, they were baptized in Him. When He was crucified, they were crucified in Him. Separation between the Head and the members

cannot be. Who can tell the glorious freedom and liberty experienced in the heart of the child of God who is brought by the Spirit to know his eternal and uninterrupted oneness with the Son of Jehovah's love? Turn to Psalm 139:15,16. Here we have Christ speaking of His human and His mystical body: "My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made is secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see My substance, yet being imperfect." Not imperfect; but, "imperfect; and in Thy book all My members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Look at Paul's quotation of Psalm 40:6 in Heb. 10:5: "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me." Again, in Col. 2:9: "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," or, in a body. It is not true that He laid His glory by. He veiled His glory beneath His sinless humanity, and now and again in the days of His flesh that glory was seen, to the consternation of those who obtained a glimpse thereof.

"There is one body." This is that mystical body of which Paul writes in Eph. 1:22,23: "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." One of the most marvellous declarations in the whole Book of God. Look at chap. 4:12: "For the perfecting of the saints." That means the knitting together of bone to bone, limb to limb, member to member, in regenerating and confirming grace. "For the knitting together of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Here we have revealed to us, Head and members perfectly united, forming a perfect whole before the face of the Father. It is an utter impossibility to sever one member from its great and glorious Head, however uncomely that member may be according to our judgment. But look at the source of all nourishment and strength to the body. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (chap. 4:15,16) As the natural head is the source of all feeling, influence, and sympathy to that one body composed of God's own elect, it matters not where they be, in glory, on earth, or according to 1 Cor. 1, "things which are not." Those who have no real existence on this earth as yet, but who shall be born, and born again, and brought by invincible grace into union and communion with Himself. Now turn to Col. 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for His body's sake, which is the Church." What does that mean? No filling up of the afflictions of Christ endured by Him while here upon earth, but the filling up of the afflictions appointed to the members of the one body. These afflictions in individual members are for the benefit, consolation, and encouragement of the whole body. Any bereavement, disappointment, temptation, tribulation, or trouble I may experience, can only be for the benefit and building up of the one body. In that word ONE, we have the unity of the Church of God, and that in the face of all the contentions, divisions, factions, sects, and schisms which appear to human eyes. The prayer of the great Head must be answered. The intercession of the Surety cannot fail: "That they all may be one." (John 17:21) We now notice

II. THE SUPPORTERS OF THE BODY¹. 1. One God and Father. 2. One Lord. 3. One Spirit. 1. One God and Father of all. As we read in chap. 1., He manifests His fatherhood in eternal predestination and election. He has also made gracious and full provision for them in all their wants and necessities through time, and in all their bliss and blessedness throughout eternity. Mark! He is the God and Father of all His eternally-loved ones. Those who are now basking in bliss before the throne of His glory, those who are begotten again but know not their relationship, babes dandled upon the knees of Divine affection, and desiring the sincere milk of the Word, an Ephraim here, taken by the arms and taught to groan Ephraim yonder, wandering far from his Father's home, but never a hair's-breadth from his Father's heart. One

God, the Father of all His elect whatever their difficulties, infirmities, or failures may be. He is ever mindful of His own. But look at His greatness and glory! He is above all. Above all things in heaven, even those bright and glorious intelligencies who, at His behest, hasten to minister to His needy children here below. Above all things in earth, my need and my supply, my loss and my gain, all the disorders and distractions outside, and all the differences and dissensions inside the family. Blessed be His name, before Him "all the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:35) See! He is through all. That is a blessed truth. He is through all the members of the one body. He enters into all their trials and tribulations, losses and crosses, the sorrows of their hearts and the aches and pains of their bodies. In the fires of afflictions He will be with His children all through. (Zech. 13:9) Through the floods of adversity He will never leave them nor forsake them. But mark! He is "in you all." Jehovah was in the midst of Israel in a tabernacle. He now lives in the hearts of people in union with Jesus. O what a marvellous truth! One God and Father dwelling in, and actuating every member of the one body, which body is His temple, in which He will be eternally worshipped, adored, and glorified.

2. "One Lord." Who is this? Each living soul, as He is revealed, cries out, "My Lord and my God." We read that "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord." She was a sensible woman. Why did she call him Lord? Because he knew how to manage and rule over her. His was the rule of love, and when the husband's love sways the heart of the wife, she will seek for opportunities to show her reverence for her husband. So the Church, as Christ her Head and Husband is revealed in her hears the testimony of the Spirit, "He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." (Psalm 45:11) She acknowledges one Lord who bought her with His blood, and rules her with His love. He is Lord of her heart because He alone can save the lost, sustain the weary, succour the weak, and sympathize with the sorrowful. If His love reigns in our hearts, we can, without fear or presumption, call Him Lord, and in His gracious presence all strife and murmuring cease.

3. "One Spirit." "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." (2 Cor. 3:17) The Holy Ghost was the Former of the human body of our Lord. He is the Adorner and Beautifier of His mystical body, the Church. He was given without measure to the Head, He is given in measure to the members. It is by His gracious power alone that elect sinners are quickened from a death in trespasses and sins, and graciously brought into the enjoyment of oneness with Christ and with His highly-favoured members. Do they pray? It is by the Spirit of grace and supplication, who helps their infirmities and makes intercession for them with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 8:26) Do they believe? It is by the Spirit's testimony in them. Do they love? It is because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them. (Rom. 5:5) In the one body, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22,23) In the distribution of these gifts there is marvellous diversity, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." (1 Cor. 12:4,11)

III. THE SUPPORT OF THE BODY¹. One hope; 2. One faith; 3. One baptism. Here we see how the one body is held together and graciously supported. 1. "One hope." What is your hope? The hope of the hypocrite is like a spider's web, spun out of its own bowels and brushed away in a moment. The hope of the Pharisee fixes on himself, while that of the legalist rests on his own contemptible doings. But your hope springs not from, neither is it fixed on, yourself. See how blessedly Paul describes it: "And Lord Jesus Christ our Hope." (1 Tim. 1:1) "Christ in you the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) "For the Hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." (Acts 28:20) Listen to the cry of the weeping prophet Jeremiah: "O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble." (Jer. 14:8) "For we are saved by hope." (Rom. 8:24) Hope in the Christ of God is firmly fixed and anchored in Him, and, though fearfully shaken, can never be broken.

2. "One faith" animates and characterizes the whole of the one body. I have heard persons express a desire for the faith of Abraham, as though his faith were superior to that of the rest of God's children. Those who pray for Abraham's faith little think how they are asking for Abraham's trials. I want the same faith Abraham had. The faith of God's elect. (Titus 1:1) The faith that works by love. (Gal. 5:6) The faith which purifieth the heart. (Acts 15:9) The faith that overcomes the world. (1 John 5:4) Christ is the Author, Maintainer, Finisher, and Object of true faith. (Heb. 12:2) It never ends in damnation but salvation. It is not an exercise of my natural judgment or of my mental faculties; but it is the communication of a spiritual grace which I possess not naturally, which causes me to rejoice in the assurance of my salvation. It is the faith of my precious Husband warming and cheering my heart. It is the faith of the Head felt and enjoyed by the members. See! Have I a righteousness? It "is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. 3:9) Am I justified? It is "by the faith of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 2:16) Do I live? "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) That is the one faith which He communicates to me, and by which I am bound to Him and enjoy my indissoluble union to Him, and to all the members of His one body.

3. "One baptism." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16) Simon Magus believed naturally and was baptized outwardly, but he had no part or lot in the one faith and the one baptism set before us in the text. How can we understand this? Only on the ground of the Spirit's baptism without the aid of a font or a baptistery. See! "As many of you as have been baptized INTO CHRIST, have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27) "Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptized INTO CHRIST JESUS were baptized INTO HIS DEATH?" (Rom. 6:3) "For by one Spirit we are baptized INTO ONE BODY, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:13) Here you see it! "Go ye therefore and teach all nations" not some, but all the nations of the saved (Rev. 21:24)"baptizing them in the name of the Father." ELECTION! "And of the Son." REDEMPTION! "And of the Holy Ghost." REGENERATION! That is wholly by Jehovah's testimony communicated to all the members of the ONE BODY by the ONE SPIRIT. Amen.

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