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THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST



BY
WILLIAM J. MCGARRY, S.J.

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THE
MYSTICAL BODY
OF CHRIST

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The Mystical Body of Christ

THE gratifying increase of books dealing with the Mystical Body of Christ has brought about a deepening, we may believe, both in the external loyalty with which many Catholics are now professing their traditional faith, as well as in their stronger inward desires towards greater individual holiness.

If some are puzzled by the difficulties of the dogma, this is probably due to two principal difficulties. There are, of course, many others, but two, it seems, are basic causes of obscurity, if not of error. The first of these is due to a failure to recall certain time-worn theses concerning the Church of Christ. For her members are the members of the Mystical Body. This difficulty is surmountable and in the first part of this pamphlet some endeavor to remove it is made. The second difficulty centers about the kind of unity we ought to predicate between the members and the Head. The complete solution of the obscurities with which this unity is surrounded is not possible on earth. Hence, any effort to clarify them must consist in discovering clearly where the study of Revelation may lead us and where the realm of the incomprehensible begins.

NOTIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

This first and fundamental position is not difficult to understand as far as the fact is concerned. The Church, existing in space and time, with all its invisible elements, is united to its Head, Christ, as our bodies are joined to our heads. Two things are united and we know both. Christ, body and soul, God-man, is present spatially in the glory of His risen body in Heaven. Now this whole Christ, not His human body only, nor His human soul only, nor His Divinity only, but the whole Christ in His human nature, which is,

of course, indissolubly united to the Divine nature, is the Head of the Mystical Body, the Church. How this Head is united to the body, how this union is effected—these are questions that border on the mysterious.

Now if, as some do, we wish to name this entire unity of the Head, Christ and the body, the Church by the title "the Mystical Christ," this is very good. It is following out Pauline terminology. Only let us keep our terms straight. The Mystical Christ, then, will not be the Church only, nor the physical Christ of Heaven only, but the one entity which is due to the union of the two. The name, properly understood, is quite allowable; it is suggested in St. Paul's writings though it will not be found there. And for that matter neither will the commonly used expression "Mystical Body."

The consideration of the other part of the unity will bring us to lay down another fundamental position from which much follows. The Church is the Body of Christ and we now engage to study her as she is on earth, without for the moment considering her oneness with Christ. In her we perceive two elements: one is visible and the other invisible. The visible element is called the body of *the Church* (not, be it noted, the body of Christ); the other is the soul of the Church. Here we save ourselves the danger of obscurity by recognizing that we are dealing with elements of the Church *on earth* and in saying *soul*, with the invisible element. Because Christ is withdrawn and invisible and because there is an invisible element on earth should not lead us to identify the two. He is not the invisible element of which we are speaking when we name the soul of the Church, though obviously in reality there is a most intimate relation between Him and the invisible element of the Church. Rather we are saying that the Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ has itself a body and a soul. If one is tempted to exclaim at this confusion or to

cry out at the use of the one metaphor in two senses, let one read on. The usage comes from the past; it is not confusing but helpful as will appear; indeed it expresses finely what we ought to say; it presumes only that we can distinguish between two simple ideas, and that, indeed, is no great burden on any mind. So we say, careful usage distinguishes the notions, the Mystical Body of Christ, the body of the Church and its soul. The Fathers and theological writers have used this terminology so long that we cannot reject it or improve on it.

Regarding the first, visible element of the Church on earth, her body is obviously not a physical body. It is a moral body as is the body politic or state; it is the communion of the millions of members of the Church, her multitudinous subjects, or the congregation of those who submit to her authority. Two points immediately emerge; one concerns the kind of unity with Christ. Though not discussing this now let us merely point out in passing that at this lowest denomination the Church is a moral unity; it will be altogether probable, therefore, that when we consider her with her soul and her whole being united with her Head that she will be *more* than a mere moral unity.

The other point is pertinent now: membership in the Church is necessary for membership in the Mystical Body. For the body of the Church on earth plus her invisible element is that which is joined to her Head. Members of the Church are those who belong to her visibly; for she is a visible society. Without any lengthy paragraph, is it not clear that all those Protestant forms of theology which denied the visible Church on earth cut themselves off from any proper approach to an understanding of the Mystical Body and thus precluded any complete or correct understanding of SS. Paul and John? Yet was not such an understanding of paramount importance to those

whose Testament was the *sole* rule of faith?

The members of the Church are men dwelling on earth. In the primary sense of the word, *Church* means the Church militant. In the wider sense we speak of the Church suffering and of the Church triumphant. So, too, we may speak of those in the Church suffering and glorious as belonging to the Mystical Body, in the wider sense of the term. There are three stages of perfection and of progress—the combat, the partial victory and the consummation. But as the term is commonly used in its primary sense the Church on earth is strictly the Mystical Body. Here we have an answer to the questions: are the souls in Purgatory in the Mystical Body? are the blessed souls of Heaven members of it? They belong to it in its ulterior stages of perfection as they belong to the Church in those gradations. It is in this wider sense also that not only those in Purgatory and Heaven, but even those there before the passion of Christ, the Church of the Old Testament and the saved pagans, are said to be of the Mystical Body. And even in the widest sense, some theologians, not all, spoke in ages now gone of the inclusion of the angels in the Mystical Body.

THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

The members of the Church on earth are those who are united to her by the triple ties of baptism, faith and obedience to Apostolic authority. These are elements of external comports, and so we may pass by the consideration of the invisible elements behind these names. The reception of baptism, the profession of the Church's faith and submission to her jurisdiction constitute the essential conditions of membership in her communion.

But is there not a significant omission? Is not a state of grace a condition absolutely required for membership? It is heresy to answer yes. One is truly a member of the Church if one is united to her by the

triple bond, even though such a man be in a state of mortal sin. He is *really* a member though an imperfect one; he is called a *dead* member, or a *mortified* member (for he was alive in Christ); he is united to the body of the Church but he is not a live member; for he has lost the living principle of grace within him. Any supernatural activity which affects him arises from no living principle within him; it is the live body of which he is now a dead part which plays upon him to make him live again. And so in spite of being in sin he has great prerogatives. For he is not like a hand or arm which is cut off and lost beyond the revivifying power of the soul; he is rather like a deadened or bruised part of the body whose decay is remedied through the action of the living parts about it.

But why call him a member at all? Because he has the triple tie. Because he is still the subject of the Church. Because he enjoys the privileges of her Sacraments. But above all because the *intercommunional* vital action of the whole Mystical Body is centering on him in order to return him to life and activity. God giving him the grace, he has even a right to life again through the Sacrament of Penance; he is invited, nay even obliged to exercise this right. He is immensely privileged compared with those sinners who have no rights to the sacramental channels of grace. Conscious of this the Church has held it heretical to say that only those in sanctifying grace are her members; not by such exaggerations and falsities need she defend her own holiness. Yet such notions have been put forth by heresiarchs, and as late as 1794 Pius VI condemned as heretical the opinion that only the Faithful in a state of grace are members of the body of the Church.¹ I mention this condemned proposition because it was not made by some non-Catholic sect, but it was adopted in the diocesan synod

¹Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion Symbolorum et Definitionum*, no. 1515. Here the expression "body of the Church" occurs in the exact sense.

of Pistoia under the presidency of a Catholic Bishop; it is a good example of the bogs and morasses into which Jansenistic leanings brought some Churchmen.

Baptism, faith and obedience, then, are the three conditions of membership. These are understood complexively, i.e., all three are required together. Each singly is necessary, but each is not singly sufficient (except baptism in the case of infants). To be a *real* member of the Church (there is another sort of membership to be discussed shortly), the adult must be united to her in all three ways. Several conclusions concerning membership in the Mystical Body may be drawn by discussing singly these conditions.

No unbaptized person is a member of the body of the Church. The Church has never considered the unbaptized (or infidels as they are called) as her subjects. They are not affected by her laws directly; if they are affected indirectly, as at times they are by her marriage laws, it is because of their relation with baptized persons. It is an article of Catholic faith that baptism is required for membership in the Church. Since the Church and the Mystical Body are one, it follows that to be a member of the Mystical Body one must be baptized. But further consideration of this article will throw light on both propositions. It is a certain proposition (but not defined as an article) that by baptism, only baptism by water is meant in the above article. Hence, neither martyrdom for Christ (the baptism of blood) nor the act of perfect love (baptism of desire) effect what is called *real* membership. We will see that such as are martyrs or so love are called *implicit* members. Finally, it is more commonly held that the required baptism by water must be valid in reality and not merely putatively so.

Baptism is, of course, the only condition of membership which can be fulfilled in the case of a baby. For the professions of faith and obedience are acts which suppose the use of reason. The child who is

truly baptized, *truly so*, in the Catholic Church, but also in any Protestant sect, is a member of the body of the Church of Christ and of the Mystical Body. Furthermore, since such a child is in a state of grace and united to the Holy Ghost in virtue of true baptism, it is a member in true and full standing for its state, be this baptism administered by a Catholic, a Protestant, an infidel, an atheist, or even an atheist in deep sin. For we recall that there is but *one* Sacrament of baptism and that for its valid administration neither an upright life, nor true faith, nor any faith, nor a state of grace is required in the minister of the Sacrament.² You will remark that such an expression as "he was baptized as a Protestant" has really no theological reality, provided baptism is valid. There is but one true baptism and all the benches of bishops of Geneva, Lambeth and Stockholm cannot change it. Perhaps this will give one a tender thought when looking into the prams of Protestant neighbors. And one may truly console the sorrowing mother of a lost child by telling her that the baby is really with God's angels.

The second condition of membership is the sincere profession of the whole Catholic faith. The heretic and the schismatic are not members (*real* members) of the body of the Church nor of the Mystical Body. They have some sort of an inferior membership in this sense that they are baptized; they have the indelible character of baptism. This is obvious from the fact that they fall under the legislation of the Church, principally and most publicly in the case of the marriage laws she has laid down for them. This accounts at times for the great irritation aroused against a most calm Rome when she pronounces on the marriages of baptized Protestants. But let us see what a heretic is and draw some conclusions. The reader

²The essential requirement is to use the proper matter and form of the Sacrament and to have the intention of effecting through the rite what the Church intends. Many non-Catholic doctors instructed by friendly Catholic priests have baptized properly hundreds of children who have died near the time of delivery.

will easily make analogous conclusions concerning schismatics.

The heretic is baptized and retains the name Christian. But he denies some article of faith precisely because he denies that the living Catholic Church is the rule of faith. Hence, merely misquoting an article or understanding it wrongly does not make a heretic. Such may arise out of lamentable ignorance of the catechism. Now the heretic may deny the Church's teaching power contumaciously; he may sin against the light. And be it added, if he has had the faith he does not lapse into heresy without sinning somehow against the light.³ The heresiarchs who have gone forth out of the fold of the Church, spurning her guidance and pridefully setting up their own congregations have thus sinned. They are formal heretics, publicly avowing their new ideas and are not members of the Church.

But what of the millions who follow heresy through family or national traditions? What, to be specific, of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, baptized in Protestant sects? They deny articles of the faith; they take no guidance from Rome; most of them are now complete religious eclectics who choose now here, now there what they believe. Withal many of them are not *formal* heretics; they do not pertinaciously stamp out a compelling beacon-light which shows them that Rome is authoritative in matters of faith. They are not contumacious in this matter. Rather they have grown up with an attitude of mind which disregards any Roman claims. Various distorted notions have been poured into their minds by their training, descent, history and environment. Technically their denial of the authoritative teaching power of the Church is made in ignorance; they are unsuspecting of a grave obligation of search or reflection or submission, so un-

³Council of Vatican, Denziger-Bannwart, nos. 1794 and 1815: "Those who have received the faith at the hands of the teaching power of the Church can never have a *just* cause either of changing or doubting their faith."

suspicious of such duties as to escape serious sin. They are called *material* heretics.

But neither are such material heretics members of the Church in the *real* sense. This is common Catholic teaching. True, they are not outside the Church in the same sense as the unbaptized, and they have not the sin of formal heresy. They are nearer the Church in the sense that fewer steps are required for full real membership in her. And what is said of heresy is applicable to schism, and very applicable to the great body of the schismatics, the Orientals; they are really heretics now, for they reject the articles concerning the universal primacy of the Roman See. To other schismatics who retain all the articles we may apply analogously what is said of heresy.

THE SOUL OF THE CHURCH

Those belonging to the Church and united by the triple ties are her *real* members, be they in a state of grace (and so, perfect members) or in grave sin (and so, imperfect). Others are not *real* members whatever may be said of them in other respects; something has been said of their inferior place, remote or near, in what regards membership. And something also is to be said when we consider the soul of the Church. Now the complexities of the problem begin to appear when we come to discuss the soul of the Church. Yet any attempt to understand the unity of the Church and Christ depends on some knowledge of what the soul of the Church is.

As we spoke of a body of the Church, so we speak of her soul. That which gives unity and life to the thousands of cells in a man is called a soul; that which ultimately marks him as a man is his soul; the soul is his formal and unitive element. We now search for that which gives oneness and life to the body of the Church, i.e., to those millions who are individually united to her by the triple external ties. Theologians

have not been content to find this in the common pursuit of salutary ends under a single authority. At first glance that might seem to answer as the invisible element in the Church as it does as an invisible element in the body politic or state. True, the Church is a Kingdom and Christ a King, but Revelation shows, as it seems to all save a few theologians of the past who took too regalistic or juridical a view, that the Church is the body of Christ as well as His Kingdom, and that such an analogy suggests far more than the word, *Kingdom*. Again, authority itself, if a vital and supernatural thing, depends on some ulterior element, and this somehow divine.

Here we come upon a true theological problem, i.e., one on which sufficient light has not been given us yet through Revelation. Two opinions are offered to explain the soul of the Church. First, it is sanctifying grace, found in plenitude in the Head and through Him found in the holiness (passive, in her members) of the Church. To explain: this grace is a created gift of God; once obtained it dwells in the individual soul until grave sin expels it. It is a real thing just as is any quality or habit of our souls; it is a spiritual reality just as, naturally, our intellect is a spiritual reality. It is, further, a supernatural reality, i.e., all the forces and efforts of man's powers as man can never produce it. Man can produce something spiritual, such as an idea, and this naturally; but no power of nature can produce something supernatural, such as grace. This distinction is lost upon many because *spiritual* has been given two meanings; we make it here for the sake of clearness. God alone, then, produces grace; at most, assisted by his actual graces, we may dispose ourselves so as to be *less unworthy* of it; but we can attain to no disposition of soul which positively enacts its production, or merits it, or compels God to give it.

We notice that in emphasizing sanctifying grace, other graces as such are not included. The excellent

theologians who defend this first opinion (Palmieri and Wilmers may be cited) differ concerning secondary points on actual and charismatic graces. Since we will reject their theory in toto, we merely note their divergences. We may note that with all others this school admits a *real* membership even when a Catholic is in mortal sin, and they speak of the *implicit* membership of an act of love. A word on this is pertinent. Even in non-members a state of grace *implies* a desire to be united actually and really with the true Church. Such a state is attained outside the Church generally by perfect love. In such an act a man desires to do *all* that God wishes. He wishes, therefore, actual entrance into the true Church. Thus he who so loves God is a member implicitly, even though circumstances of time or subjective ignorance may prevent his entrance. Further, we see how these principles explain the dictum: "Outside the Church there is no salvation." Membership in her either *real* through the triple tie, or *implicit* in the act of love, is absolutely a condition of entrance into Heaven.

Thus, while Protestant and unbaptized persons are not *real* members, many (let us pray, millions, nay all) may be in a state of grace. If so they are members implicitly or "*in voto*." They are very well said to belong to the soul of the Church; for whether this soul is sanctifying grace or the Holy Spirit, they are actually in union with it, though only implicitly in union with it *precisely as it is a unifying principle* of the body of the Church.

The second school holds that the Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. This theory is daily becoming more popular both among professors and their popularizers. It is sustained by weighty arguments from Scripture and Tradition; theological reasoning shows it is definitely more harmonious and consistent in explaining the complex doctrinal points involved in the theology of the Mystical Body. The opinion may be said to get

under way by pointing out the defects (three in number) of the first theory. Its defenders say: we seek a sufficient, ultimate, unifying principle to account for the one living Church of Christ on earth. But sanctifying grace is neither sufficient, nor ultimate, nor unifying. Hence, they seek elsewhere in Revelation and there find that their theory answers (better if not exclusively) all the demands of the problem.

First, sanctifying grace is not a sufficient or adequate principle since it does not account for several features in the invisible element of the Church on earth. It does not account for *all* the created supernatural gifts nor for the Increate gift, the Holy Spirit. This, indeed, *accompanies* sanctifying grace always, but it is distinct from it. Now we find that the propounders of the first theory really have this difficulty themselves. Hence one says: sanctifying grace is *principally* the soul (Wilmers); and another: charismatic graces (power of miracles, prophecies, etc.) belong to the body. Such sentences show that the real problem is evaded. We seek a sufficient principle of *all* the vital supernatural activity in the body of the Church. We deny their solution, just as we would deny that John's human soul is the sufficient explanation of his vital actions, if it cannot explain the movements of his arm.

Secondly, sanctifying grace is not an ultimate principle. For the life of the Church, is the reason why the individual lives supernaturally, i.e., has sanctifying grace. There must be a cause prior to this effect. Hence, sanctifying grace is certainly one of the proximate and secondary principles of life in the Church, but it is not the ultimate and fundamental.

Finally, sanctifying grace is not a *single*, unifying element. It is a created gift in individual souls, whether we speak of its plenitude in Christ the Head or in others. It is similar (in essence) in all, but it is not identical in all. In single isolated cases it is numbered into the millions, and all these million cases of it, even

taken collectively, do not make a *single* unifying element. All men are not *one entity* because all have similar intellects; Averrhoes made the mistake of saying this. Neither, we say, is the Church *one entity* because millions have the similar created gift of sanctifying grace.

On the other hand, the Holy Ghost seems perfectly to answer all the demands of a solution. This Divine and Increate Person is one and identical in every activity in the body of the Church. Again, this Person is an ultimate principle of all supernatural action, for beyond the uncaused God we cannot go. Finally, He is an adequate principle, accounting for all created gifts in the supernatural order, be they sanctifying grace (through or outside the Sacraments), faith, hope, charity and all the moral virtues, or charismatic gifts and powers. All these are living effects of His presence (how St. Paul emphasizes the place of the Spirit in speaking of the charismatic gifts is seen in 1 Cor. xii); they are all *powers* or *living faculties* as it were of the soul of the Church, but the soul itself is the Holy Spirit. Thus we distinguish two effects of the Holy Spirit on and in the Church. First, His presence affects the Church as a whole, constituting it one living supernatural entity. Secondly, His presence affects the members, enabling them to participate in the life of the Church through sanctifying grace and the other gifts. In a word, through the Spirit the Church *is* and her members *are alive and active* in the supernatural order.

To complete this explanation we add that whenever the name of the Third Person is mentioned, it stands for the Triune God. As creation is *appropriated* to the Father, though it is equally the act of the Three Divine Persons, so here the unitive effect on the Church is appropriately said to belong to the Spirit. Most authors who hold that the Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church explain the theory by appropriation. But we may recall that as the indwelling of the Spirit in the

individual soul is generally understood in this way, while a few theologians of merit still consider it as belonging personally to the Spirit, so in this analogous question we may have an open mind, at least on this secondary feature of the main theory.

Now without doubt the theory outlined above does seem to satisfy as a solution. Its defenders go on to show that their reasoning is but the crowning and formulation of what is contained in Scripture and Catholic Tradition concerning the Mystical Body. The writings of SS. John and Paul are so replete with the Church as vivified by the Holy Ghost that our theory seems the only one which comes up to their vigorous expressions. Again, the pithy expression of St. Augustine sums up the understanding of his deep and penetrating theological mind: "What the soul is to man's body, this the Holy Spirit is to the body of Christ, which is the Church. The Holy Spirit does in the Church what the soul does in all the members of one body." St. Thomas' expression goes farther and covers the topic of the unity between Christ and the Church: "The Holy Ghost is the ultimate and principal perfection of the whole Mystical Body as is the soul in the natural body."⁴

Why, then, is not this second opinion certain? We may mention one difficulty and one obscurity, not to argue them, but to show that all is not clear. The difficulty is this: we are seeking a formal element; is not ours rather an efficient cause rather than a formal cause? If we answer that it is both, then, are we not making the Infinite and Increate the formal element of that which is finite and created? Moreover, we seem to be conscious of obscurity here, for when we say that the Holy Ghost is the soul or form of the Church, we really mean the quasi-soul or quasi-form.

We do. The infinite God cannot be the true form (in

⁴St. Augustine, Sermon 267 (Rouet de Journal, *Enchiridion Patristicum*, no. 1523); St. Thomas, *Third Book of Comm. on the Sentences*, 13th Distinction, 2nd Question.

the univocal sense of that term) of a created thing. But our *quasi* only indicates that we understand the term in the analogous sense. We add that the full understanding of this sense is not within the reach of our minds; it is a mystery. Confronted with a mystery we search the sources of Revelation; we find that everything points to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. We know that it cannot be the soul except in some analogous sense of the word. We point out clearly that here is the fact and there is the mystery. Such a position is entirely legitimate in the field of theological reasoning; in fact it is the only logical position to take when one approaches the borderline of the mysteries of God. We are content to strive to prove that our theory is contained in SS. John and Paul and in the writings of the Doctors of the Church; further search in these sources will clarify it.

Unity of the Mystical Body

UNIONS, MATERIAL AND MORAL

Everyone recognizes the living unity of a plant or of an animal or of a man. It is a *physical* unity. Again all admit the unity of a family or of a state. It is a moral unity, since its being depends on the action of several individual wills working together for a definite purpose under a legitimate form of authority. Both of the above unions are real, i.e., they exist outside our minds and quite independently of our thinking about them. Let us remark here the reality of moral unions quite apart from any capacity they have of being measured by calipers. For *all* which is real is not necessarily sensible or palpable or measurable. In a word, there are unions material and unions supra-material, and both are real.

Obviously the union of Christ and His Church is not a material one. Yet it is compared with the vine;

here then we have an *analogy* expressing the tremendous *reality* of the influence of the Head on the members. Christ emphasized the fact in this parable that the union between Himself and His members is very real; but obviously He did not mean a material oneness.

If therefore we seek the category to which the union of Christ and men belongs we will find it among moral unions and not physical ones. We see that we come upon many elements in this holy union which correspond to features found in society or in the state. But we also note other features which prove how insufficiently we describe Christ's union with us, if we stop at the comparison of it and the state. For we note that the family and state are *natural* societies. That is, human nature instinctively bids man to join them, confers on him through them the means to gain his ends and even regulates man's conduct in them for his own temporal and eternal betterment. Now the union of Christ and men obviously was never a *mere* natural union. Its very being depends on the Incarnation of the Son of God. The Incarnation is an event which nature could await, obedient to infinite power; but it could not compel, enact or even desire it. In origin at least the mystical union is on a plane above any mere natural union.

Thus, even if we regard the union of Christ and men as a moral union we must place it in a category above that of the state and family. We can make out *similar* features in both—multitudes of men, harmonious impulses and actions of the wills of the members, a common striving for the purposes held out and the dominant force of authority invested in human persons. But even in these similar features the basic difference pointed out above obtains. Moreover even if nothing more than his fundamental divergence of nature and supernature were discernible, even if corresponding elements were squarely and univocally parallel, one could scarcely be content to rest the question here by

stating that the union of Christ and the Church is a moral union in the supernatural order. Described in its lowest terms it is this at least; but this view will shortly appear to be quite inadequate.

In some respects there is a square parallel between the natural state and the theocratic monarchy of Israel in the Old Testament. In it authority descended on a Davidic King and this through the voice of God openly heard and recognized; in the state this authority comes to the ruler from God indeed, not however revealing but regulating men through creation's own laws. Again, in Israel, commands, policies, judgments and laws were often spoken through the prophets, the spokesmen of God. In the state the legislative, executive and judicial departments are indeed sustained by God but the direct voice of His prophet is not heard.

Israel obviously differed from other states because of her patently divine guidance and thus one might not rest satisfied with the parallel between Israel and the ordinary natural state. But even if this parallel were flatly square, it is clear that the Church united to Christ is immeasurably above Israel in dignity, intimacy and excellence of union. On considering the case of the Israelitic monarchy, then, one is less satisfied with such a restrictive description of the union of Christ and the Church as is conveyed by calling it a mere moral union in the supernatural order. We must think of it as something far higher and far more sublime.

We are led to the same conclusion if we consider that in the mystical union between Christ and the Church there are tremendous *supernatural realities* present. These may be perceived by comparing the naturalization of an immigrant and the birth of a Christian. In both processes a unification results which is supra-material and real. If the process of making an immigrant a citizen results in a moral unity between him and the state, and yet as a process is infinitely in-

ferior to the Christianization of fallen man, then correspondingly the incorporation of men in Christ will far transcend merely moral unity.

Naturalization makes the immigrant a citizen, i.e., it sets up in him a moral relationship to the state and its authority; a certain moral quality attaches to him now which he did not have, and it is just as real a quality as would affect him if at two o'clock he was single and at two one a married man, or if at dawn he was pale and at sunset sunburned.

But that is all. He has not by that process, let us say, all the inherent qualities and attitude of mind of the American spirit and genius. He has not lived in himself all the reverses and triumphs of the nation with which he is now one; naturalization has not duplicated in him the fortunes of the country's history; he has not lived the lives of its heroes and founders, nor is he automatically clothed inwardly with the habits, virtues and grand majesty of the unity of which he is now part. It is said that the American spirit is the light of Western progress; but the immigrant is not such a light. Truly America struggled through the agony of schism in the Civil War; but the immigrant has not thus suffered. In a word, naturalization has not produced in the immigrant the qualities of the nation's majestic and inner dignity nor reduplicated in his life the vicissitudes of her history. But Christianization of the fallen man has done precisely this.

ALTER CHRISTUS CHRISTIANUS

We were all born aliens to Christ; we are all immigrants who have come to the Christian commonwealth. Baptism or naturalization has done all at least that the same process does in the state. But more than this, the incorporation of man into Christ (1) reproduces in the new-born Christian the inward qualities of the majesty of the Godhood, and (2) as a process reduplicates Christ's own life in each Christian. In

being and in *biography* Christians are other Christs.

Christ is truth (Jo. xiv, 6) eternal truth, inwardly truth and utterly truth in being, gesture and message. Now He says of His disciples: "For them do I sanctify myself that *they also* may be *sanctified in truth*" (Jo. xvii, 9), i.e., dedicated and supernaturalized by His own truth communicated to their souls. Christ is the light of the world (Jo. viii, 12), and "you [Christians] are light *in the Lord*; walk then as children of light, for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and justice and truth" (Eph. v, 8). Christ is absolute perfection and intimately and ineffably one with the Father. And He prayed that Christians "may be one, as Thou, Father *in me* and *I in Thee*; that they also may be *one in us* . . . that they may be *one as we also are one, I in them* and Thou in me that they may be made *perfect in one*" (Jo. xvii, 21ff.).

It would not be difficult to mark down each divine and human attribute of Christ the God-man and to find in Holy Scripture, especially in Christ's discourses in St. John's Gospel and in St. Paul's letters, the same attributes predicated of Christians. But obviously the long theological exposition of the texts must be foregone here. Yet in all this most bold and sublime assertion of most intimate union between Christ and men there is never once the least trace of pantheistic confusion. The attributes in the Christian are finite and created; in God they are infinite and increate. In God they are God and the divine nature itself; in Christians they are attributes received, communicated and shared. They are similar, not identical; they are analogous, not univocal. As God Christ has all the inward majesty of God utterly and absolutely in being, essence and property; as Man in His created human nature He was ineffably sanctified by the substantial divine sanctity. In Christians participation in these qualities of divine holiness must be infinitely lower though they are divinely real and unutterably sublime.

Now if Christians on becoming such are somehow given the being and qualities of Christ the God-man, then a similar life's history must follow this gift. For if a being is born a man, then the lot of humanity is his; if a rabbit, then he lives that hazardous life of lettuce and escapes; if a plant, then the being may perfume a rose-garden or add to the miasma of a swamp. But always the fortunes, passions, actions and effects of any being will follow upon its nature. If the Christian, then, acquires a new nature through Christ and in Christ, the biography of Christ must be somehow reduplicated in him. If the new nature acquired is not identical but similar to Christ's, then his biography is not an identical replication of Christ's life but one similar to it.

Now the Christian cannot be before the moment of the redemption. Hence any living of Christ's life must begin with the hour of Christ's passion and death. St. Paul conceived it this way. Christ came to earth in the nature of man, of unredeemed man; He became man's brother and loved him; He became his priest and offered Himself in sacrifice for him. Christ marched this erring and unredeemed brother to Calvary with Himself. And it was Christ's effective will in the matter that wrought this solidarity between Himself and other men who were subject utterly to the whims and forces of flesh, sin, Satan and death.

Christ said in effect to this lost unredeemed brother: You will come with me and be nailed on the cross with me. When I die physically *you will die as the slave* of sin, Satan, flesh and death. You will lie with me in the grave. When I arise, you arise; when I ascend to the Father, you ascend; when I sit in glory, you sit in glory; when I judge, you judge. Now is this enactment of Christ's will merely poetry or metaphor or rhetorical graciousity? Or is this reduplication of His own life from the cross onward a somehow real replication at the moment when the unredeemed brother be-

comes a Christian? Is being another Christ a real thing or is it obscure poetization?

St. Paul says that it is real. For "our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin may be destroyed" (Rom. vi, 6). There is reality here; actually no adverse power can force redeemed man to sin; but before the redemptive power affected man, he was the plaything of malignant forces. When Christ died physically, we died mystically. But how? When is this moment in our own physical lives? At baptism. "Know you not that we who are baptized in Christ Jesus [Greek: into Christ Jesus] are baptized in his death [Greek: into his death]; for we are buried together with him by baptism into death" (Rom. vi, 3). Baptism is our mystical death into His physical death. He died actually in April, 33; we *as subjects* of sin and Satan die *really* at the moment of our baptism. This real death of ours is called mystical; it is as real as is the expulsion of all sin and of all subjection to sinful forces.

But positive effects also occur in baptism. For "God even when we were dead in our sins *hath quickened us together in Christ* and *hath raised us up together* and *hath made us sit together* in the heavenly places through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii, 4ff.). I remark that the tenses here are *past* and that in the Greek the "together" is a unit with the verb.⁵ Now St. Paul often speaks of our *future* resurrection and he means the resurrection of the body which is a real and physical event of the future. But in this and similar passages he is speaking of a *past* quickening or vivification, of a *past* resurrection and of a *past* ascension together and in Christ. He is speaking of something already accomplished in Christians, already achieved, valid, real and

⁵The force and meaning of St. Paul's bold compounds may be remarked in the following illustration. Two thieves were "crucified together with" Christ. Now this verb (συσταυρόω, cf. Mk. xxvii, 44; Mk. xv, 32 and Jo. xix, 32) is the same one which St. Paul used in Rom. vi, 6 and Gal. ii, 19 to express mystical co-crucifixion with and in Christ.

effective. These are mystical realities which have occurred in our lives.

Now the Church is born of Christ not as a full-grown multitude. It began when Christ redeemed individuals by this internal invisible process and commanded His disciples to set up their external authority as a supernatural society. Each Christian addicted and incorporated into this commonwealth entered it through the process of the replication of Christ's death, burial, resurrection, ascension and enthronement in glory. Since this process is completed mystically at the moment when baptism wrought the triple tie of our membership, since mystically at that moment we *have* ascended to Heaven with and in Christ, we must therefore speak of the union of the Church and Christ as one between the Church already mystically ascended though she is on earth and Christ already enthroned in glory. When, therefore, the Church is called a "Heavenly" Jerusalem the epithet is to be taken in its literal sense. Bearing this mystical elevation in mind we may now search further into the nature of this union.

THE MYSTICAL UNION

The obvious approach to some understanding of the union is provided in the revelations contained in St. John's Gospel. We cited Christ's own statement that Christians are one with Christ and God *as* Christ and God are one. Now this "as" does not indicate a comparison of *equal* unities; else we fall into pantheism. We know that the union of Christ with God is ineffably above that of others. In Him the divine and human natures are united in the one Person of the Word. No creature except the created humanity of Christ is thus hypostatically united with God. The comparison is one of analogates and not of equals. As His is a real hypostatic union, ours is a union *analogous* to it. And speaking of ourselves in the aggregate as mem-

bers of the Church, His body, our union is still analogous; it is another union imitative of the hypostatic, resembling it, mirroring it feebly though sublimely; it is another Incarnation of Christ extended mystically in space and time.

As the Three Persons effected the assumption of the human nature of Christ and joined it to the Second of them, so the Three wrought this other lesser assumption of the Church and joined her to the physical God-man in Heaven. As God Triune decreed and permitted Christ to live through the buffetings and joys of life on earth, so the Triune God has permitted the Church to bear the suffering of her persecutions and enjoy the moments of her triumphs. As divine truth was His, so it is hers infallibly; as divine power was His, so miracles crowd her history; as the substantial sanctity of the divinity was His, so participated sanctity is hers; as divine eternity is His, so too she is unending. As death and resurrection and glory was His, so too death and resurrection and glory *have* occurred mystically in all her members.

This mystical union, then, is a real union in the supernatural order, mystical, sublime, elevated to the very order of the Godhood. Its very existence depended on the fact that a new life-process has equipped each member to be part of a society which lives and moves and has its being, which is guided and protected internally and externally in Christ, and this because the Triune God has joined a thing of earth to His own Son enthroned in heaven. The Church is the mystical Christ marching along all the world's ways and down all the corridors of the world's time. It is the Incarnation of the Son of God, enlarged spatially and temporally, by participation among men of the sanctity of the Godhood.

It remains now to join these considerations with some features which were developed in the first part. We saw that the Holy Ghost, appropriatively for the

Triune God, is the quasi-form of the Church. In the present paper we have seen how each member of the Church is an *alter Christus*, an effect wrought by the Triune God by reduplicating the being and life-process of Christ in each member. Each *adopted* son of God is assimilated to Christ the *natural* Son of God.

The congregation of those who have the triple bond constitutes the Church. They are the adopted sons of God through baptism, faith and profession, and they are living and perfect members of the Mystical Body when they are in a state of sanctifying grace. *Effectively*, this union of individuals in and with Christ results from the decree of the *Will* of the Triune God. God *wills* that His natural and adopted sons constitute one supernatural social entity. And what He wills, He effects. Ultimately therefore the objective fact of the Mystical Union depends on the *Will* of the Triune God who decreed it.

But now that by dint of that will it does exist, now that it is mystically another Incarnation spatially and temporally extended, what bond makes it one? What effect on the two things united has the decree of the divine Will had? By what cement do they cohere? Or is there any bond apart from the will which *effects* their union? *Effectively* God's Will makes them one; what makes them one *affectively*?

Affectively the two united elements are one because they are both united in God. God is the cause affecting the union; He is the bond and cement through which they cohere. The Triune God is the quasi-form of the Mystical Christ.⁶ Yet the two things which are united are on different planes in the supernatural order and therefore they are united to God differently. Christ is one with the Father in nature, substantially, ineffably; His divine nature *is* deity. But our natures cannot be so united and one; they are not deity; *they*

⁶Quasi-form or quasi-soul, i.e., God acts as if the ultimate principle of life, consistence and action were the Godhood.

are deified. For "he hath given us most great and precious promises that by these you may be made *partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Pet. i, 4).

These considerations bring us to the ultimate mysterious reaches of the doctrine of the Mystical Body. For the Church, body and soul, is truly an image of the God-man on earth; she is His being and majesty walking amid creation. Christ and His spouse together are the projection of the very august Godhood itself throughout the reaches of humanity. Yet this perfect extension of the divine to all men, this effective deification of all men is not accomplished thoroughly because of the resistant wills of men. Hence the varying degrees of this union and its lower and imperfect forms.

However, God is so loving as always to be drawing and alluring the hostile to come. Within the Mystical Body, the living pulsing Godhood which quickens it is stimulating and revivifying dead members and pouring out graces upon those who are living in Christ. Outside this body God is sending His countless graces to bring men from far-flung strands to a place within the warm divine ebb and flow of deified life. And so will God work on and ever strive to bring all to Christ as head. "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then the Son also himself shall be subject unto him [God] and put all things under him [God] that *God may be all in all*" (1 Cor. xv, 28). That God may be *all things in all things* is Paul's strongest expression of this unity of infinite and finite. If God be all, then they must be deified; if He is *in* all, they cannot be deity. Thus the Mystical Body, through which all this *being* is wrought (for it is effected through subjection to Christ the Head), rests upon that utter and ultimate deification of all things in God, insofar as the omnipotent God can raise creatureship to nearness to His own infinite being, nature and inward divine majesty.

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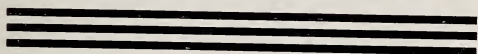
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