392 One, Oneness (*Unum, Unitas*)

In this name one is noted the conjunction or the splendid joining, Psal. [132:1}: “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity.” Good as for the outsides, pleasant as for the insides. The example for this in nature and in art. For as long as a thing is one it is saved so that it subsists, but when it is divided it corrupts. Thence it is that among the theologians the number two is consider infamous because it first recedes from unity. And according to the Philosopher,[[1]](#endnote-1) every unified virtue is stronger than distributed from itself. The example is concerning the burning candle which if it were alone it would be extinguished easily, but not so when many are burning. And one bird is more easily taken by a hawk than a crowd of birds. Therefor with the falcon flying to the cranes flying in unison it helps them.

First, to disperse, so the devil does to men united, Eccle. 4[:9]: “It is better that two should be together, than one.”

Again, in the same place [Eccle. 4:10]: “woe to him that is alone.” For many in a good congregation and united with effect proceed more securely, resist more forcefully, and overcome more joyfully. For unanimity makes men victors, just as on the other hand dissention makes for being conquered. The example of a certain father on the point of death and having seven sons, he ordered seven rods to be carried before them and said to one of his sons that he should break one of the rods, and he broke it easily. And again, he commanded that he break two together and he broke them but with more difficulty. Third he commanded that he break three together, but he could not do it. He said, Concerning you if you are united you will prevail. But this is understood concerning the unity of the good and in the good, for the unity of the evil is harmful, and therefore it is to be torn apart according to Gregory, book 33, *Moralia*,[[2]](#endnote-2) where it is said, just as they are accustomed to be harmful if unity is lacking from the good, so it is pernicious if it not lacking to the evil. For unity strengthens the perverse, while they agree, and so much more are they incorrigible when they are more united. But recall such things that happened, Num 16[:16] they were an evil congregation. About which Psal. [105:17]: “The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan: and covered the congregation of Abiron.” The example is of the Red Sea through which sometimes is designated a degree of unity had by the children of Israel toward the promised land. To those setting out it hindered, but when it was divided, it offered a passable route. For unless, as Gregory says,[[3]](#endnote-3) the unity of the evil had been harmful, not at all would divine providence have scattered in so much diversity the tongues of the proud in building the tower of Babel. Therefore, the unity of the evil is evil, but of the good is good, and this is true not only in politics and citizens. But in monasteries and religious congregations it is evident where good unity or unanimity not only results when the inferior obeys his superior humbly, but also when the superior defers to his inferior rationally. The example for this concerns the substances that can be mixed in a mixture. For when two diverse liquids or metals ought to be truly united or commingled, it is required that each substance to be mixed relinquish something of its activity and comply to its mixability. The example is in the cithara where the chord proportionally extended renders an agreeable sound, but if it is dispersed not at all.

Again, for this that laminates of gold are well attached they endure. With a laminate of silver, it is necessary that three things be watched for, from dampness, from dust, and from the wind. So also, this that the human will be united with the divine and on the other hand it is necessary that against three things it should be guarded. Those things that are in the world, according to the canonical letter [1] of John [2:6]: “From the concupiscence of the flesh,” as for the wetness, “and the concupiscence of the eyes,” as for the dust, “and the pride of life,” as for the wind.

¶ Again, according to Gregory in a *Homilia*,[[4]](#endnote-4) between the evil and their heads the devil, there is so much conformity and connection that sometimes the members are called by the name of the head, as John 6[:71]: “One of you is a devil.” Sometimes the head is named from the members just as Matt. 13[:28]: “An enemy hath done this,” that is, the devil. Similarly, the middle between the good and their head Christ. According to Augustine,[[5]](#endnote-5) so great is the unity that sometimes the members are called by the name of the head as in the Psal. [104:15]: “Touch not my anointed.” Sometimes the head assumes the person of the members, as it is said in Acts 9[:14]: “Saul, why do you persecute me?”

¶ Again, Augustine says, book 2, *De ordine*,[[6]](#endnote-6) that it is this unity which preserves all. For by the unity of the parts a stone is a stone and a tree is a tree. But if the parts suffer a divorce, now an animal will not be an animal. Friends try to be one. And how much more they are one, so much more are they friends. One people is one city, from a thousand become one army.

¶ Again Augustine in the same place,[[7]](#endnote-7) God greatly commended unity among men. When from the beginning he made the creatures not all from one. But making one man he wanted all men to be from one. Macrobius upon *Somnium Scipionis*, book one,[[8]](#endnote-8) that none are more amicably joined to the number one (*monas*) than the number seven (*virgini*) on account of incorruption. Wherefore Matt. 24[:40] it is said, “One shall be taken,” namely, for the company of the angels, “and one shall be left.” For to these the angel is recognized as virginity. Wherefore it is said, 1 Kings 1[:1]: “There was a man of Ramathaimsophim.” This name of one properly belongs to the praise of the just, but we who are sinners cannot claim the title of unity since we are in ourselves divided, now by sorrow and then by joy, now by anger and then by sadness, so that they seem as many person as dispositions, because Eccli. [27:12]: “A fool is changed as the moon.” And so, in whatever mutation he seems diverse from himself, so that although they all run, “But one receives the prize,” 1 Cor. 9[:24]. Therefore, it ought to be known that unity of souls for many things, namely, for beseeching from God is for conquering over the enemy and for profiting in the good.

Concerning the first, by the poor gathering at the door of some lord, although one cries out he is not heard, however if many together cry out the more quickly they will be heard, Matt. 18[:19]: “If two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them.” Because of which it is said, Judith 6[:14] that “all of them together weeping poured out their prayers with one accord to the Lord.” And therefore, they were heard.

¶ Second, it is evident for the triumph over an enemy. There Ambrose says in the *Hexameron* concerning the works of the sixth day,[[9]](#endnote-9) that every fight waged unitedly yields a victory. Therefore, it is said, 1 Kings 11[:7] concerning the ancient warriors that “they went out as one man.”

¶ Third, namely unity for going forward in the good. Therefore, the Philosopher says, book 8, *Ethicorum*,[[10]](#endnote-10) that two alike coming together to do and understand are more powerful because it proves the friendly unity and utility. Wherefore it is read [1] Esdras 3[:9-10] that in rebuilding and usefulness they stood together “Josue and his and the children of Juda, as one man.”

Again, Augustine, *De libero arbitrio,* book 2, c. 38,[[11]](#endnote-11) there is nothing of theirs which they do not feel sorrowful in division and delightful in unity.

Again, in the same place,[[12]](#endnote-12) everything is ambiguous and therefore harmful, because it does not have a fixed unity.

Again, Augustine, *Contra quinque hereses*,[[13]](#endnote-13) why do you take apart the one. If you divide the one you will not have peace if it is broken. Therefore, there was no peace.

¶ Again, according to the Philosopher,[[14]](#endnote-14) one in substance makes that one in quantity, equally one in quality makes the like.

1. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 7.13 1144b30, 1145a6 (Barnes 2:1808): It is clear, then, from what has been said, that it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral virtue. But in this way we may also refute the dialectical argument whereby it might be contended that the virtues exist in separation from each other; the same man, it might be said, is not best equipped by nature for all the virtues, so that he will have already acquired one when he has not yet acquired another. This is possible in respect of the natural virtues, but not in respect of those in respect of which a man is called without qualification good; for with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given all the virtues. And it is plain that, even if it were of no practical value, we should have needed it because it is the virtue of the part of us in question; plain too that the choice will not be right without practical wisdom any more than without virtue; for the one deter, mines the end and the other makes us do the things that lead to the end. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gregory, *Moralia* 33.31.55 (PL 76:708): Nam sicut esse noxium solet si unitas desit bonis, ita perniciosum est si non desit malis. [Col.0709A] Perversos quippe unitas corroborat, dum concordat; et tanto magis incorrigibiles, quanto unanimes facit. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Gregory, *Moralia* 34.4.9 (PL 76:723): Si malorum unitas noxia non fuisset, nequaquam divina providentia superbientium linguas in tanta diversitate dissipasset (Genes. XI, 8). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Gregory, *Moralia* 13.34.38 (PL 75:1034): Ita quippe unum corpus sunt diabolus et omnes iniqui, ut plerumque nomine capitis censeatur corpus, et nomine corporis appelletur caput. Nam capitis nomine censetur corpus cum de perverso homine dicitur: Ex vobis unus diabolus est (Joan. VI, 71). Et rursum nomine corporis [Col.1034B] appellatur caput cum de ipso apostata angelo dicitur: Inimicus homo hoc fecit (Matth. XIII, 28). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 6.23 (PL 34:788): Unus enim Dominus noster Jesus Christus (I Cor. VIII, 6): quamvis dicantur christi per ejus gratiam, sicut in Psalmo legitur, Nolite tangere christos meos (Psal. CIV, 15). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Augustine, *De ordine* 2.18.48 (PL 32:1017-1018): In illa parte vitantur aliena, in hac propria copulantur, ut unum aliquid perfectum fiat. Lapis ut esset lapis, omnes ejus partes, omnisque natura in unum solidata est. Quid arbor? nonne arbor non esset, si una non esset? Quid membra cujuslibet animantis ac viscera, et quidquid est eorum e quibus constat? Certe si unitatis patiantur divortium, non erit animal. Amici quid aliud quam unum esse conantur? Et quanto magis unum, tanto magis amici sunt. Populus una civitas est, cui est periculosa dissensio: quid est autem dissentire, nisi non unum sentire? Ex multis militibus fit unus exercitus [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Augustine, *Sermo* 268.3 (PL :1233): Unitas commendata in creatione rerum et in Christi ortu. Charissimi, multum Deus commendat unitatem. Hoc ipsum vos moveat, quod in principio creaturarum, quando Deus cuncta constituit, fecit sidera in coelo, in terra autem herbas et ligna, dixit, Producat terra, et producta sunt ligna, et cuncta virentia: dixit, Producant aquae natantia et volatilia, et factum est sic: Producat terra animam vivam omnium pecorum et bestiarum, et factum est sic. Numquid Deus de ave una fecit caeteras aves? numquid de uno pisce omnes pisces? de uno equo omnes equos? de una bestia omnes bestias? Numquid non multa simul terra produxit, et multiplicibus fetibus multa complevit? Ventum est ad hominem faciendum, et factus est unus, de uno genus humanum. Nec duos facere voluit separatim, masculum et feminam: sed unum, et de uno unam (Gen. I et II). Quare sic? Quare ab uno genus humanum inchoatur, nisi quia generi humano unitas commendatur? Et Dominus Christus ex una, unitas virgo est; tenet virginitatem, servat incorruptionem. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Macrobius, *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* 1.6.10 ed. Ludovicus Ianus (Lipsiae: Godofredi Bassiii, 1848, 1:39): Nec te remordeat, quod, cum omni numero praeesse videatur, in coniunctione praecipue septenarii praedicetur: nulli enim aptius iungitur monas incorrupta quam virgini.

   (Stahl, pp. 101-102\_: Be not disturbed over the fact that although the monad seems to surpass all numbers it is especially praiseworthy in conjunction with seven: the incorrupt monad is joined with no number more appropriately than with the Virgin17. [Since seven “neither begets nor is begotten” and the monad “knows neither a beginning nor ending,” is is proper to join them.] [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Ambrose, cf. Jerome, *Commentarii in Epistolas Sancti Pauli* Ad Philippenses, 1 (PL 30:844): Omnis pugna unanimiter aggressa victoriam parit. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 8.6 1045a7-12 (Barnes 2:1650): To return to the difficulty which has been stated with respect both to definitions and to numbers, what is the cause of their unity? In the case of all things which have several parts and in which the totality is not, as it were, a mere heap, but the whole is something beside the parts, there is a cause; for even in bodies contact is the cause of unity in some cases, and in others viscosity or some other such quality. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 3.23.70 (PL 32:1305): Nulla enim res est earum quae nec dolorem nec voluptatem sentiunt, quae non aliqua unitate decus proprii generis assequatur, vel omnino naturae suae qualemcumque stabilitatem. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 3.23.70 (PL 32:1305): Omne autem ambiguum unde molestum est, nisi quia certam non habet unitatem. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Augustine, *Adversus quinque Haereses* 6.8 (PL 42:1109): Quid partiris unum? Si unum diviseris, integrum nihil habebis. O ariana haeresis, crudelis et impia meretrix, erubesce judicante Salomone. Meretrix, ne unum vivum, ne undecumque conceptum, jamque partum perderet, non permisit dividi filium suum; et tu dividis Dominum Deum tuum? Illa etsi meretrix, tamen pia, quia mater; tu et meretrix et impia, quia non mater, quod paris praefocas, quod non paris congregas. Quomodo alienum lactas, quae tuum necas? Viscera tua duruerunt, illius tremuerunt. Quid dixit? Date illi puerum, et nolite dividere eum (III Reg. III, 27): Filius meus est; sed melius apud illam integrum gaudeo vivum, quam divisum lugeam mortuum. Filius meus est, inquit; sed quid prodero mater puero, si vitam quam non confero, aufero? volo illius crudelis a parvulo repellere ubera, sed magis cogor judicis timere machaeram. Date illi filium meum: meus est natus; sed migret ad illam totus, apud me maneat affectus. Date illi puerum totum, non auferatur vita membrorum: non dividatur integritas, mihi non eripitur pietas. Quid dixit, Date illi puerum et nolite dividere eum? Ecce et ego dico, totum posside, et noli dividere Deum. Non, inquit; sed si vis habere pacem sine praejudicio, divide haereditatem. Et quomodo habeo dividere? Pater major est, Filius minor? O partes! o justitia! o aequalitas [1 1Kb] ! Una pars major est, alia minor. Non consentio, non facio partem; quia non divido pacem. Si enim fracta fuerit pax, jam non erit pax. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.6.d 1016b6-11 (Barnes 2:1605): Now most things are called one because they do or have or suffer or are related to something else that is one , but the things that are primarily called one are those whose substance is one ,—and one either in continuity or in form or in formula; for we count as more than one either things that are not continuous, or those whose form is not one , or those whose formula is not one . [↑](#endnote-ref-14)