

## IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EYE.

### 1 COR. 12:12-27.

A more apt illustration of the oneness of the true Church [whose names are written in heaven] can not be conceived of, than this which the Scriptures so frequently present – the human body made up of various and dissimilar members, yet unitedly constituting one body and each member dependent largely, upon each other member.

What a loss to the human body is even one member. Though its loss does not cause the destruction of the body, it does impair its usefulness. And so with the body of Christ, the church: each member is necessary, and has a duty to perform toward other members, as well as blessings to receive by its fellowship with them: Hence the Apostle urges that there be "no *schism* in the body" – that is that there be no *sectarian division* of those who are the Lord's body.

The body when complete and perfected, united with its Head and glorified, will be perfect, lacking no member; there will be no sect or division among the members. Only such as are fully under control of the one spirit, of the Head, will be members then. But not so now: Now some of the members are not fully submissive to the Head, and misled by the blinding delusions of Satan, are separated, and in that proportion deprived of the blessings and privileges of the body, and the body is also deprived of their assistance and influence. And as in the human body, if certain members are absent, or refuse to fill their office, other members will endeavor to compensate to the body for the deficiency, so in the body of Christ, those who realize the necessities of the body should rejoice in the privilege of *over*-work for the benefit of all. There is danger to those members of the body who are failing to fill their office, of their being finally cut off from the body, and others more worthy being appointed in their place. Take heed, let no man take thy

crown. (Rev. 3:11). "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." John 15:2.

In the human body the eye, ear, hand, and foot represent the principal *servicing* members. These are all needful and should work in harmony, under the control of the one will. The Eye *discerns*, and by it, we mostly judge; yet it frequently benefits by the hand's assistance in deciding of heat and cold, hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness; though the eye has ability to discern those things of itself, it is greatly assisted by the hand.

The hand is very valuable. It can execute what the eye could not do, but what it points out as expedient or necessary, yet without the intelligence and guidance of the eye, how slow would be its work, and how much of it useless.

The ear is useful to the body advising it of the harmony or discord of the immediate present; yet without the assistance of the Eye, how frequently it would mislead and deceive the body; every strange sound would fill it with dread when perhaps a blessing was in it, while every accustomed sound would pass unheeded though danger might be in it.

The foot is an important member of great value in the service of the body. It aids the Eye and Hand and Ear in their service; it carries forward and in a measure "runs" the body. True the body could see and hear without the feet, and it could make progress slowly, but without feet the progress would be much retarded. Yet without the eye to guide, the feet would stumble and get the body entire into confusion and distress.

Thus seen, every member is needful and necessary to the body, yet perhaps the eye is the greatest *servant*, yet by no means independent of the other members. Without them its service would be of little value. The Eye represents the body; hence, when we address another, we do not look toward and address the hand, foot or ear, but we look to the Eye as the representative of the whole body. In Scripture the Eye is

used as the representative of understanding or knowledge; and in all the world it is the symbol of intelligence.

Using these members of the human body and their various degrees of usefulness as servants of the body, as an illustration, the Apostle urges each member of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, to find his true position of usefulness in the body and fill it: that each be not jealous or envious of other members, but endeavor to fill well whatever position he is best qualified for – that there be no schism in the body, but that its various members, each doing the part designed by our Lord and Head, shall thus accomplish His will – the edifying and building up of the body.

Evidence is given to every member of this Body – that *the Body* is being led and taught of God; and though the special "*gifts*" are not bestowed upon every member, they do benefit every member i.e., "a *manifestation* of the spirit is given to every man [member] to profit withal" [thereby], v. 7. The early church was in danger of getting out of the Lord's order – all aspired to be teachers and prophets, etc., hence the Apostle reproves them saying: "You earnestly desire [covet] the more *eminent gifts*, and yet a more excellent way I point out to you" chap. 12:31 – *Diaglott*. Then the more excellent way is described in Chap. 13. This method is, to cultivate deep broad Love for each member and for the Head, and to wait patiently for the Lord to exalt you to some position in which you can best serve the body in love.

We should bear in mind that no one can constitute himself a gifted member any more than by taking thought he can add one cubit to his stature, though he may and should stir up and cultivate the gift that *is in him*. All must remember that the position of "greatest" in the kingdom, either now, or in glory, is of God's and not our appointment. He that would be greatest, let him become the willing loving servant of all the other members; willing to lay down his life for the sheep. Thus let us *seek* and "desire spiritual gifts" for the greater *service* and blessing to the body.

In the true body, God attends to the arrangement of the gifts. He places the various servants, and we note the placement and bow to his wisdom. "God hath SET [placed or appointed] SOME in the church; first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Cor. 12:28.

Of Apostles, there are but twelve (Paul being God's appointment to Judas' place) the ones specially appointed on and in the foundation. (Rev. 21:14.) The Prophets or *expounders* (see definition in Young's An. Concordance) are those who are used of the Lord in bringing forth (from the Scriptures) things new and old to the Church. This seems to be the EYE quality. Luther appears to have represented this eye quality for a short time. Through him as an instrumentality the body *saw* the doctrine of justification by faith. He was the expounder of that doctrine in modern times. An expounder is a *special* teacher, or a teacher of teachers – *a see-er* through whom hidden things may be manifested. Dr. Adam Clark is considered and treated as an EXPOUNDER by the M.E. Body, a prophet, seer, or discerner. Of the prophets of the nominal Church see what is written in Isaiah 29:10-14.

Teachers, as referred to by the Apostle are the instructors, or what might be termed the HANDS of the body who carry the bread and water and feed the flock – the sheep and the lambs. They may be either public or private teachers or instructors of the body and others.

Some of these gifts, such as speaking in unknown tongues, have measurably [**R733 : page 3**] passed away because the necessity for them has passed away. The Apostle foretold that these gifts will all pass away in time, for when the church complete is perfected, and when each member shall know even as he is known – perfectly – there will no longer be use for these gifts, as a means for edifying the body.

The *foot* member of the body may not unreasonably represent some who have neither the Eye quality of *discerning* truth, nor the Hand quality of helping cleansing and feeding the church; but who can

and DO, bear much of the weight and carry the body forward over obstacles. May not the foot then be the member possessed of money talent which uses it *thus*?

If the entire Body could but recognize its oneness and each use the gift or gifts possessed, remembering that the gifts bestowed are not *for itself*, but for the BODY, how great would be the strength and vigor and present power of the Body.

It is astonishing how many members desire to be EYES, and how few care to be FEET. Some will spend days and years to force eyesight: Determined that they must discover some new truth – some "new light." Many succeed in forcing something, but is it not more likely to be human darkness than divine light obtained in such a manner? If you are an EYE member you will see what is *due* to be seen without forcing, though not without studious care. And what you see will be so clearly seen, as to enable other members of the BODY to test and prove your exposition as harmonious with all other parts of God's Word.

Besides do not those who attempt to exercise some other gift than the one they possess, usually neglect the gift they have and thus deprive the body of their assistance? Thus it was in Paul's day; he "labored," working with his hands, as well as in preaching and expounding the Scriptures. Because the other members were not exercising their gifts, Paul's love for the body and the truth, led him to attempt still greater *service* to make up for the deficiency of others. But who will say that some missed a grand opportunity for the exercise of the FOOT member's office or gift, when Paul *needed* to make tents to support himself. And who will say that the BODY was not injuriously affected to the extent that those members were derelict and unfaithful in the use of their talents? How many valuable suggestions and how many *expositions* of truth that church failed to get, because the member for that office was otherwise *necessarily* engaged, who can know? See Acts 18:3; 1 Thes. 2:8,9; and 1 Cor. 4:12.

The Apostle shows not only that it is not God's order that every member should be an EYE, but he shows the logical inconsistency of such a thing in the words at the head of this article – "If the whole body were an eye," where would be the other needful qualities? Where would be the *mutual dependence* of one member upon another which when properly recognized, cements and unifies all the members as *one body*, in which every member is needful and appreciated.

The question arises: How shall we know the different members? We answer, In the same manner that you can decide whether you are right-handed or left-handed viz. by the adaptation to the work, by the relative ability to perform any particular service. Thus a teacher must be "*apt* to teach," *i.e.* have the gift or ability of making the *truth* plain, either in public or private; a "prophet," *i.e.* a discerner and EXPOUNDER of truth will be manifested by the clearness and force with which he will be enabled to bring forth from the Lord's storehouse (the Bible) "things new and old," meat in due season for the household; and a Foot member will know of his talent or gift by the money talent he possesses – the "ability" which God giveth.

In writing to the Romans (Rom. 12:3-8) of these gifts, the same apostle urges them also to remember, that "all members have not the same office," and that therefore having "gifts differing according to the grace that is given unto us," [R733 : page 4] each should fill his own appointment in the church, remembering that these gifts are of God who hath "*set*" [appointed] the various members in the body.

In endeavoring to decide what gifts we possess, the Apostle suggests modesty saying: "I say...to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think *soberly*, according as God hath DEALT to every man the measure of faith" [literally, capacity for faithfulness]. Ver. 3.

This sober examination of our *abilities* (which if we are consecrated are all the Lord's) to ascertain how we may be acceptable to the Lord and *best serve* the Body, will affect some who under-value

their talents, as well as those who think of themselves more highly than they ought. Some fear that they have no talents useful and needful to the service of the body; and some possessing several talents, use and seek to cultivate the lowest of these rather than the highest.

To such, after showing that our ambition and pursuit should be love, and that if love for the Head and body is cultivated, such seekers will be honored and used because of love and service; the Apostle says, "Ardently pursue Love and be emulous of spiritual gifts – but rather that you may prophecy." 1 Cor. 14:1.

In substance then, the duty and privilege of every member of the body of Christ is, to soberly, and honestly judge of his *abilities*; neither in pride overrating them, nor in false humility underrating them; that he may diligently and faithfully use them, earnestly hoping for his own increased efficiency in the service; not from self-love and vain glory, but from love of the body and of the Head.

These thoughts were suggested by two discouraged ones who wrote that they were fearful of not being members of the body, because, though they could study out and prove by Scripture, the truths presented through various writers in the TOWER, they were unable to SEE or discern these truths from the Scriptures themselves, without having them pointed out. Such should conclude that they are not EYE members, but the fact that they are able to discern by the aid of the eye, should be considered a proof that such are fellow members and of the same *body*. Let such remember the Apostle's suggestion: "If the whole body were an eye" where would be its perfection and completeness; and how could the body edify itself in love?

In the early days of the church the *connection* between the various members scattered abroad, was far less complete than now since the printing press and mails make it possible for *all* members to come into intimate communication with fellow members of the same body. Thus while we keep up our intercourse and communion with those members with whom we come *personally* in contact, giving and receiving

edification. The whole body, though separated by oceans, is now by God's providence enabled to meet at one table, and feast together upon the rich promises and blessed hopes which our Father's Word supplies; and which, new and old, are *meat* in due season to the entire household. Thus not only do all feed and grow in grace and knowledge and love, but many are encouraged and strengthened also by the extracts from letters from all parts of the world; and each member is bound to each other member in that sympathy, oneness and love which is part of the spirit of our Head.

In this manner the Lord our head has made it profitable and expedient for every member to fellowship every other member, and to assist in maintaining and perfecting the ONE BODY, because each is dependent on the other in some measure. None can sever the connection and be separated from it, and neglect its opportunities, without serious loss to himself. It has pleased God to edify, and instruct, and upbuild the BODY through the instrumentality of each other, and the one who thinks to draw supplies of grace otherwise, is, whether knowingly or ignorantly opposing God's arrangement, for God hath "SET" the members in "the body as it hath pleased him," FOR THE EDIFYING of the body of Christ – that thus the Bride may make *herself* ready for the marriage. Rev. 19:7.

But let us take heed: these gifts are not inalienable. By neglect to use them, or by their abuse, they may be lost. If any member fails to use his gift, or using it, fails to use it to the Lord's glory and for the good of the body, but in pride attempts to use it for self-glory, his place can readily be filled by another, by him who places the members, exalting another to his place and taking from him that which he had failed to properly use. Matt. 25:14-30.

"If the whole body were an eye" – "If they were all one member, where were the body?" 1 Cor. 12:17-19.

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