

[R5212 : page 105]

THE ONENESS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

"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 by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." – I Corinthians 12:12,13.

WE ARE all baptized by one Spirit into one Body. The figure of a human body of many members, operating together for the general good and for the accomplishment of one general purpose, one work, is a mental picture that is very generally made use of by the whole world. It is not confined to the Church. In our own country we speak of the President, our Chief Executive, as the Head of the Government. We speak of the Congressional Body and the Senatorial Body, and of the co-operation of the various members of these bodies in a work for the general good.

The specially called out of God's people during this Gospel Age, whether they be called out from amongst the Jews or from amongst the Gentiles, are of one Body, because the Body is *one*, and not a divided Body. In this respect, the Body of Christ is different from the political bodies of today. In the United States, for instance, there are the Republican party and the Democratic party. [R5213 : page 105] They are not united in the most desirable sense. But the Lord says, through the Apostle, that the Church is one Body of Christ, that many members compose this one Body, and that all the members are related to each other.

The members of the Body of Christ all have one work, one purpose, or object, in view, and one method by which to attain that purpose. They are called to a special service – that they may show forth the praises of God. The world is seeking to show forth the praises of king or queen or sect or what not. But this class have but

one aim and object in life – *to serve God*. They are His representatives in the world.

God is the real Emperor, or Ruler, of the Universe. But His subjects in this part of His Dominion are under a curse of death. He does not intend to leave them in this condition. He intends to roll away this curse eventually and to bring them a blessing.

Many who in the past heard of this purpose did not understand; and many who understood found their hopes grow faint, as the time was long. The Scriptures say that God's plans will not fail; that His present Plan is the election, or selection, of the Church, and that the purpose of the election of the Church is for the blessing of the non-elect. God had this purpose in mind from before the foundation of the world, and He will carry it out. The Church is being chosen that they may be associated with the Son of God, the Logos, the Mediator, in His Kingdom.

THE ONENESS OF THE BODY ILLUSTRATED

Those who are now called out all receive a begetting of the Holy Spirit. They are all baptized by the one Spirit into the one Body. His members are fellow-sharers in the suffering of this present time. They are to be fellow-sharers in the glories that are to follow. So the Apostle is here dilating on *this particular phase* of the subject. One member cannot say to another, "You are not needed"; for God hath set the members every one of them in the Body as has pleased Him. And the Body would not be complete without every one of them, unless one should fail to make his calling and election sure.

With this view of matters, we should be very sympathetic with each other. There is no division in the human body. Yet one hand is separate from the other hand; there is a separation between the hand and the foot. But there is a work for every part of the body to do. The hand and the foot are connected through the *head*. The brain is in touch with all parts of the body through the nerves. Nourishment

passes from the central stations to the various parts of the body. So it is in the spiritual Body. We are not all doing the same thing. God has a variety of things to be done. He gives one a work to do in this department, He gives another work to do in another department.

The Apostle proceeds to say that if one member suffer, all the other members come to its relief. If one member of the Body of Christ suffer, all the other members suffer with it. And no member can be in ill condition without the knowledge and sympathy of the Head Member, Christ. Our Lord said to Saul of Tarsus, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." When Saul was persecuting some of the members of the Church, he was persecuting Jesus. Whether it is a member living back in Jesus' day or one living today, it is the one Body. There is one God and Father of all, one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and one Holy Spirit by which all are to be controlled and guided.

It is blessed to mark this oneness between Christ Jesus and the members of His Body. Our Lord does not selfishly grasp all the glory and seek to retain it for Himself. On the contrary, with loving solicitude He marks the progress of His Body-members as they develop in character-likeness to Himself, and says, "They are Mine; and I am glorified in them" (John 17:10); and He would have them all bound up together with Himself in the Father's Love. He would also have them with Himself, beholding and sharing the glory which the Father has conferred upon Him as a reward for His loyalty and obedience throughout all the crucial testings which came upon Him.

All the Divine family are bound together in one bond of love and fellowship and confidence and sympathy and harmony and common interest; and the honor and glory of one are the honor and glory of all. The Lord's prayer abounds with petitions for this oneness. Mark the expression – "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, are in Me and I in Thee" [Thy Spirit, or disposition, and purposes and aim being common to us all]. (John 17:21.) Hence He

would have us adopt the same Father's Spirit, aim and purpose, and devote all our powers with zeal and faithfulness to the accomplishment of the Father's will.

Be not men's servant: think what costly price
Was paid that thou might'st His own bondsman be,
Whose service perfect freedom is. Let this
Hold fast thy heart. His claim is great to thee.
All His are thine to serve: Christ's brethren here
Are needing aid, in them thou servest Him.
The least of all is still His member dear,
The weakest cost His life-blood to redeem.

=====