

## **“Now Ye Are The Body Of Christ ...”**

“... and severally members thereof. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues ...” (1 Cor. 12:27-28).

Paul has now reached the climax of his synopsis of the role of spiritual gifts. He has shown that 1) there were diversities of gifts, just one Spirit; 2) that the purpose of each gift was to profit withal; and, 3) the Holy Spirit divided to each one severally as He would (12:4, 7, 11). Paul has shown that although there is one body, it has many members, performing divers functions; he has shown that each member, however inferior it feels itself to be, performs a work that no other member can do as well as it. He has shown that diversity of functions are absolutely essential for the body to act. He then shows that this diversity in the human frame was planned by God Himself and these diversities of functions in fact pleased God who planned the body. “But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him” (1 Cor. 12:18).

Although actually there are neither feelings of superiority or inferiority between physical members of the body — the eye does not literally say to the hand, nor the head say literally to the feet, “I have no need of you,” he “proposes” such a situation as existing in order to teach the lesson of oneness yet diversity of function in the spiritual body in the distribution of spiritual gifts: the “eye,” “head,” “hand” and “foot” are all personified to address the fact that such feelings both could and did exist among members of the Corinthians church as touching their possession of one of the nine spiritual gifts. Some had “lesser gifts” (as they regarded them) while others had “superior gifts” (as they viewed them), and such attitudes led to a chaotic state in which some felt themselves “invisible” when eclipsed by the showy, superior gifts.

Still, in the human body the members more “feeble” are necessary (vs. 22). The members less honorable have more abundant honor bestowed upon them (vss. 23-24). God has tempered the whole body together, “giving more abundant honor to the part that lacked, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another” (vss. 24-25). Does one member suffer? All the members should suffer with it. Is one honored? All should rejoice with it (vs. 28).

His use of the human body has served its purpose and now he speaks plainly. “Now ye are the body of Christ and severally members one of

another." And just as the human body was designed by God and each member set in it by Him, so God designed the spiritual body and set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, etc. (vs. 27).

Seven rhetorical questions which follow such a declaration begin in vs. 29: "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" No answer was given because no answer was needed. "No!" was the obvious response to each. These questions destroy forever the argument of the charismatic community which insists that the tongue gift was intended for all. Each of the nine gifts (12:8-10) were members of the spiritual body and while their functions were different, each served a useful purpose for the time intended. All no more spoke with tongues than that the whole physical body is a physical tongue. And while the apostle encouraged Corinthians to desire earnestly the greater gifts, he concludes this discussion by adding, "And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you" (1 Cor. 12:31).

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