

NOTE: The reason that certain parts get the honor is that they have the need to receive it. But in this process, God has "tempered" (Greek: mix together) the whole to the end that the whole exhibits His workmanship. Where Aristotle would say "nature," the Bible says "God." The effect of this planning by God is seen in men's intuitive respect for the ignoble and unadorned portions of the body. Modern man has sought by his ferocious rebellion against God to overthrow what God has implanted in the heart. It is a blatant exhibit of Romans 1.

5. INTENTIONALITY within the body. vv. 25, 26.
- Unity. It is stated negatively in the text. No schism is the aim. No divisions in the body.
 - Anxiety. Every organ is to have care of the other one. The watchfulness of each works to bring about the dignity of the whole. Thus the less honorable actually become the special objects and interest of the whole.
 - Sensitivity. Here is the unselfish solicitude of the body organs. When the head is crowned, the body feels it. When the feet suffer, the head responds. It is a beautiful expression of mutuality.

Conclusion Paul writes all of this to show that the Body of Christ differs. Yet it is one. The contemporary pressure to pour all into the same mould is not Biblical. There is only one need for all: salvation. After that, God provides variety within the Body. Oh, to fulfill the function for which we have been placed in the Body by the Holy Spirit. Are you? Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"Diversity in the Body"

1 Cor. 12:15-26

Introduction

- Every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. There are no exceptions to this rule (1 Cor. 13:13). That Body has many members just like a human body has.
- To point out the multiformity within the Body of Christ, the apostle Paul is directed by the Spirit to show this same sort of structure in the human body. The comparison with the Body of Christ is patent and normal.
- A number of striking statements are made by Paul concerning the human body. Each one is to be utilized in understanding the structure of the Body of Christ and the gifts provided to it.

1. INDIVIDUALITY within the body. vv. 15, 16.

This is proved by:-

- A member of activity. v. 15. Here is a 3rd class condition concerning the "saying" of a "foot". If a foot says it is not the hand, does this mean it does not belong to the body? The phrase "I am not of the body" seeks to express independence and to deny dependence. It carries more than a partitive idea. The final phrase (also found in v. 16) is to be read as a statement and not a question, thus: "it is not therefore not of the body." The double negative is forceful. No foot can sever itself from the body by distinguishing itself from the hand.
- A member of creativity. v. 16. Another 3rd class condition marking the "saying" of the ear. As above, it is the lower organ which responds of the higher. The words "is it" really mean "along side of this" and should be rendered "because of this" for it asserts that

"it is not therefore not the body." Paul, therefore, contradicts the self-disparagement of the two chagrined members of the body in identical terms. Members have individuality, but they are none the less in the body!

2. DIVERSITY within the body. vv. 17, 19, 20.

This is proved:-

a. Organically. v. 17. Here is a direct expostulation of those who seek to exalt one organ to the contempt of another. The despised is as integral a part as the admired in order that the body might function! Take the eye for example. It is a wonderful organ, but if the hearing organ desired to be the seeing organ, then the indispensable service of hearing would be left undischarged. The same holds true for hearing and smelling.

b. Logically. vv. 19, 20. The discontent of lower members in the body and the scornfulness of higher ones are alike signs of selfish individualism which is totally indifferent to the welfare of the body. The logic of the argument (v. 17) is applied to any member of the body (v. 19). This is done through the use of a rhetorical question (v. 19). The question is answered in one simple epigram conclusively: "But as the case stands (so Greek) many members, yet one body." This is an excellent rehearsal of the truth as earlier set forth (vv. 12-14).

3. DIVINITY Within the body. v. 18.

This does not deify the body in anyway, but shows God's activity within it. Mark:-

a. Action by God. The argumentative "now" means: "as things are" God actually appoints the place of each member of the body. The middle voice of the verb "set" shows He has personal interest in it all.

b. Selection by God. The word "one" points to the individual and God's specific choice for each member of the body. It's a fantastic notation to detail for God!

c. Distribution by God. "Every" marks the work of God in the totality of the body. He governs the entire body.

d. Satisfaction by God. The verb "pleased" is actually "willed." It is the Greek verb which affirms His determining will as opposed to His discriminating choice (as in 2 Pet. 3:9). The whole matter rests with God. Inorganic matter nowhere invades this privileged domain of the human body. The whole body is a display of His handiwork (Psa. 139:14).

4. NECESSITY within the body. vv. 21-24.

This is proved:-

a. Generally. v. 21. Multiformity is of the essence of organic life. Each member is needed within the body and each is necessary to the other. Two members are imagined looking superciliously on their comparatives: eye and hand; head and feet. The verb "cannot" conveys the moral and practical impossibility involved. The eye needs the hand and the head needs the feet to reach their goals. A keen eye and a scheming head of a paralytic--what a picture of impotence! There is no such thing in the physical as independence.

b. Specifically. vv. 22-24. The "much more" of these verses is logical and not quantitative. Three groups of members are shown to be absolutely required in the body.

1) Feeble parts. These probably refer to the sensitive members protected by their position in the body (lungs, stomach, liver, kidneys).

2) Ignoble parts. These are the viscera. The verb "bestow" shows that they are covered like a garland (Mark 15:17) or a garment (Matt. 27:28). They are covered to get more honor, indeed a super amount of it.

3) Unadornable parts. These "uncomely parts" have been identified generally as breast, womb, and genitalia. This is the final gradation for Paul and he pushes the comparison to the utmost. These organs get superabundant

comeliness