

The first truth is the recognition of, that there is **diversity in unity**.

It is evident that in the one body no one member can claim pre-eminence, each member having its own function.

The Holy Spirit forms the body and equips members for service.

The recognition of the second truth, that there is **unity in diversity**, would exclude the principle of independency.

<sup>22</sup> ***On the contrary**, it is much truer that the members of the body which **seem** to be **weaker** are necessary,*

**On the contrary-to a much greater degree.**

**Appear to be weaker**

**Weaker: more feeble, impotent, without strength**

That is, we must not discount a member because he **seems** to be **weaker**. He may be more necessary than the stronger member.

Philippians 2:2-4

<sup>23</sup> *and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable,*

Then there are parts of the body less honorable in our estimation than other parts; there are members that seem lacking in honor.

When dealing with our human bodies we give more honor on our less honorable parts by covering them up. This makes our less stylish members more acceptable.

- It is delightful to be in a circle where you are made conscious that the Spirit is operating.
- Where the members have consideration for one another.
- Where there is no selfish consideration in the body.
- Where each member is having the same concern one for another, it must be so.
- That is where the Spirit is operating.

*<sup>24</sup> whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But **God** has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked,*

We have an instinctive sense implanted in us, we feel that the most attractive features can do without the care which is freely bestowed on the less attractive.

The point is that we take special pains to honor our less esteemed physical members, and we should do the same in the church rather than neglecting or despising them.

Whether it be good or otherwise, all that is **according to God** in one Believer goes out for blessing to all the rest.

<sup>25</sup> *so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.*

### Purpose clause.

We have seen, then, that God has so constituted the body of Christ, like the natural body,

- that there should be no division of interest,
- but the good of each in the good of all, and
- the care of each for every other member.

It is His aim but may not be the fact.

The members, though each having its special function, are dependent upon one another.

The truth, then, of the body of Christ is that no believer has the quality of being more important or better than others, and all are dependent upon one another.

The result is that

*<sup>26</sup>And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

The truth is that the members do affect one another, as they are united to one another by the Holy Spirit, and that which depends upon the Spirit stands.

But the effect is real throughout the church. It is a body — the body of Christ — and as a whole it feels in joy or sorrow: otherwise it is not a real organic unity.



<sup>27</sup> *Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.*

**He does not say, “You are *the* body of Christ” but, “You are Christ's body.”**

The church at Corinth was not *the* body of Christ but was the local expression of the body as forming part of it.

Paul presents this truth in order **to walk in the light of the only unity formed by the Spirit and to act under the guidance of the Spirit.** And yet the Lord asks for nothing more.

**The only unity formed by the Spirit** is the **one body of Christ**, and the only membership that Scripture recognizes is membership of this body.

- It is very evident too that it is not an ideal or future picture.
- It is a living reality on earth, which every Christian is bound to walk in and express, abandoning, at all cost, whatever is inconsistent with, or destructive of it.
- It is a state now on earth, not about to be by-and-by in heaven.
- There will be no such thing as the suffering of one and the sympathy of the rest on high.
- Unbelief shirks responsibility because it does not like the trial.
- In heaven, no doubt, there will be perfect love, and all selfishness will be gone forever.

*<sup>28</sup> And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.*

We see here how completely the true thought is that God, not man, arranged the assembly, and the relative place of all in it.

The **apostle** is first because he had an all encompassing gift—he could prophesy, he could teach, he could perform miracles, and he could heal.

The **prophet**, however, could not exercise apostolic authority.

The **teacher**, listed third, had neither apostolic authority nor prophetic gift.

McCalley

*29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they?  
All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles,  
are they?*

- Paul's questions suppose distribution of gifts among the members of Christ, and not their concentration either in one or in all.
- Neither have all the same functions, nor has any one all the functions which are expressly said to be distributed to each of the many members, to this one, and to that another.
- The Holy Spirit works to glorify the Lord Jesus.

***<sup>30</sup> All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?***

1. In the Epistle to the **Ephesians**, we learn that the gifts are given from Christ the ascended Head of the body.
2. In **Corinthians** we learn that the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts in the assembly on earth.
3. Some of these gifts were doubtless for the inauguration of Christianity. Such are the sign gifts. There is not a word to say that they would continue through the whole church period.
4. It is significant that the gifts which men covet are placed lowest in the scale.

*<sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire **the greater gifts**. And I show you a still more excellent way.*

- Greater gifts are something that the body should wish for.
- The Church at Corinth is encouraged to **desire earnestly the greater gifts**.
- The gifts were for edification of the body, not for show.
- We can easily abuse gifts by seeking to use them to exalt ourselves.

We are told there is a better way of serving one another and manifesting Christ as His Body. A better way for believers to feel and think, to walk and worship, beyond all gifts.