

ONE BODY, ONE SPIRIT, ONE HOPE

EPH. 4:4

The unity of the church of Christ is clearly revealed in the New Testament. Though there is great variety in ability, naturally or acquired, yet the least as well as the greatest is a member of the Body, and all alike are vitally connected with Christ the Head. Those who are of full age, and strong, either to understand or to work, have the greater responsibility, but the young, unlearned and tender, as lambs of the flock, are carried in the Shepherd's bosom, and are the objects of his tender care. The figures used in the bible all illustrate this unity, and, we may add, indivisibility. „One fold and one Shepherd;” John 10:16. The vine and the branches; John 10:16. The vine and the branches; John 15. The temple and living stones, built on one foundation; Eph. 2:20-22, and One City, as „the bride, the Lamb's wife;” Rev. 21:9,10.

There are many scriptures which assert the unity of the Body aside from our text. The diversity does not weaken the fact of the unity any more than diversity in the families of men weakens their relationship. There is much comfort in the assurance this fact gives to *all* who have put on Christ. They are all *one* in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:26-29. It is a great encouragement to all, for the *least* who retains this vital union with Christ is as certain of eternal life as the greatest. To see and appreciate this unity and indivisibility would destroy sectarianism and endear Christians one to another. Sectarianism began to show itself in Paul's day, and was condemned. „I am of Paul,” and „I of Apollos,” &c., was met by the question, „Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” 1 Cor. 1:10-13. This is as much as to say: As Christ is not divided, ye should recognize no divisions, and call yourselves by no name but Christ. If it was contrary to the spirit of Christianity then, to say I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Peter, what can be said to justify men now in calling themselves „Calvinists,” „Armenians,” „Lutherans,” „Wesleyans,” or by *any* man-made name. If Paul were writing to the churches of the nineteenth century (was he not?) would he not call such things *carnal*, as when he wrote to Corinth? 1 Cor. 3:1-5. Would not every great and good man, after whom, or whose opinions, a party has been named, could he speak to-day, join with Paul and condemn it? Are mere opinions a sufficient ground for such gulfs or walls between Christians? These are but temptations, above which let the voice of the apostle be heard, „Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” Eph. 4:3. Faith and opinion or knowledge are too often confounded. Every Christian has faith in Christ as a living person, and as a personal Saviour, for „without faith it is impossible to please God,” but a man's knowledge and opinions vary according to circumstances and the degree of advancement. What would we think of the humanity of a brother who would disown his brother in

the flesh because he is less advanced in knowledge, or cast him out because he is young? Or what of the Christianity of a brother in the spirit who acts on the same principle? Does not this tendency grow out of a misapprehension of the true basis of fellowship? We think so. Is there a *real* tie between members of one family in the flesh? Yes, we say, they have the same *blood* in their veins. Is the tie any *less real* because it is spiritual that binds the members of the family in Christ? They have one *spirit*. „There is one body and one spirit,” &c. The possession of the spirit of Christ is an evidence of vital union with Christ; Rom. 8:9-15; and the „fruits of the *spirit*” alone, should be accepted as the elements of Christian character and basis of recognition. Gal. 5:22-24. The relationship of Father, Son and Brother, which is revealed in the New Testament, is based upon the One Spirit. All who possess it are fellows, whether they know it or not. „If the foot shall say because I am not the hand I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body.” Or if one shall say to the other, „I have no need of thee,” does that destroy the relationship? 1 Cor. 12. „By one spirit are we all baptized into one body ... and have all been made to drink into one spirit.” Rev. 13. Whoever has that spirit gives evidence of membership in the body, and therefore of acceptance with God; and whoever God accepts shall I reject? God forbid. Oh that we might rather more fully realize this unity, and sing in the spirit,

„Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love.”

It will be observed that the unity of the body and the spirit is fundamental; and that as there is but one Head, all who have fallen asleep in Christ, are as much a part of the one body as are those who live at any time. The living generation of Christians *represents* the whole church, but they *are not* the whole any more than a part of my body is all of it, and the church, the Bride of Christ, will not, can not, be complete until all who compose it, either sleeping or waking, are developed. But if a *part*—the living *mortals*—can, as they do, *represent* the whole on earth, why may not a *part*—the first company made *immortal*—represent the whole in a heavenly state. This we say, with the *possibility* in mind that there is *order* in the reward of the church; „Prophets, saints and them that fear his name, small and great.” Rev. 11:18.

We are satisfied that whatever theory does not recognize the essential unity of the church must be false; and yet we believe it can be shown, and that it will yet become more apparent, that there is not only variety in condition here, but also a corresponding variety in position in the kingdom, and a difference in the time of reward, as we usually reckon time. „They that are Christ’s, at his coming” (parousia—presence) must include all Christians, even „babes in Christ,” unless it can be shown (?) that „babes *in Christ*” are not *members of Christ’s body*; and yet it is evident that it is a *period* and not a *moment*, which is comprehended in the statement „at his coming.” We understand it to mean „during his presence.” Paul also says, „at (or during) the last trump,” and it

has often been shown that the last or seventh trumpet sounds for many years. Without here giving the proof, which has often been given to many of our readers, we would say, we believe the seventh trumpet will continue to sound until the year 1914, which includes, between now and then, the day of wrath and of angry nations, which is the period, not only of the restoration of the earthly Jerusalem, but of reward to the church, or the upbuilding and glorification of the heavenly Jerusalem.

When the New Jerusalem descends at the end of that period, or is manifested as the light of the nations for the succeeding age, as Christ, the Head, has been the light during the Gospel age, it will be observed that it is a city complete—not all throne—but a company had just been exalted to the throne, or ruling position and capacity (Rev. 5:8-10) before the opening of even a single seal; but during the great tribulation which follows, a great and bloodwashed company find a place *before the throne*, (or on the „sea of glass;“ comp. Rev. 4:6 and 15:2), and they *serve God in his temple*. Rev. 7:9-15. The temple is the church, and to be in it is to be a member of it. Here we find variety and unity. All constitute the „tabernacle of God,“ and the city as a whole is called the Bride—and yet we see some members higher than others. There are superiors—rulers—in the city, but the city as a whole is a ruling or influential power over the nations, and the „nations shall walk in the light of it.“ We have in an article writte

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before, on „The Building up of Zion,“ shown the double character of Zion—Jewish and Christian—and that the same period, from now to 1914, is devoted in God’s plan, to the restoration of the Old and the glorification of the New. With this view of the case, we can see room for the fulfillment of all scriptures that speak either of the unity or variety in the church of Christ. Some, like Elijah or Aaron, escape; others are left to develop or ripen by the judgments. The throne is *first* established, as in Rev. 4, and it becomes the nucleus around which the church will gather, until all that fear God’s name are made up as jewels for his kingdom.

Aaron was not the nation of Israel but he represented them, and while they were allowed to pass through ten plagues being protected from the *seven last* he, having previously gone up to meet Moses in the mount was the administrator of those plagues.

We believe Aaron is a type of the overcomers, or *saints*, but not of the whole church, which includes them „that fear God’s name small and great“ as well as the „prophets, and saints.“ Rev. 11:18. „And the Lord said to Aaron, „Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the *mount of God*, and kissed him.“ Exod. 4:27. The *mount* being a type of the kingdom of God, it would appear that Aaron meeting Moses represents a company meeting Christ in the kingdom. Christ is in the kingdom first, or is inaugurated in the kingly office, before others can

share that honor as his cabinet. In Luke 19:15, we read: „That when he was returned HAVING RECEIVED THE KINGDOM,” then he called the servants to account, and rewarded them with a share in his royal honors; „Have thou authority over two cities,” &c. Ver. 17. Notice that the examination of the stewards is *after* he has the kingdom, or royal right and yet *before* they share it. The parallels of the Two Dispensations seem to indicate that Christ was *due as King*, or in the kingly office, in the spring of 1878.

The immediate *beginning* of the legal restoration of the Jews, by the Anglo-Turkish treaty is circumstantial and visible evidence that „he whose right it is” had come. Ezek. 21:27.

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When the crown was removed the nation fell, why then should not the restoration of the nation be taken as evidence of the official presence of the King? It seems clear to some that examination of the servants is now in process, and that soon reward may be expected.

„The Times of the Gentiles” extend to 1914, and the heavenly kingdom will not have full sway till then, but as a „Stone” the kingdom of God is set up „*in the days* of these (ten gentile) kings,” and by consuming them it becomes a universal kingdom—a „great mountain and fills the whole Earth.” Dan. 2:35-44. The history of the four universal monarchies symbolized by the image, and also by the four beasts shows that each existed in the days of its predecessor and became universal by conquest. The fifth is no exception to this rule, though it differs from the others in its nature, the character and condition of its rulers, (being all immortal like Jesus the Head) and in the mode of the warfare. First by purchase [long ago] next at the coming as King, by legal transfer, and later by conquest. „The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his anointed ones.” Rev. 11:15. In this conquest the *saints in glory* are to share, and shall „execute the judgments written, this honor have all the saints.” Ps. 14:9. It has been inferred by some that *mortals* will do all that work, because the Psalm speaks of *beds*, „Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds.” There are several reasons why we cannot believe that mortals will do that work. First: we believe that in this prophecy as in many others the type and antitype are *blended*, and therefore that *all* that suggests mortality in the executioners was fulfilled in King David and his army. The „beds” may represent the state of perfect rest; and the „two edged sword,” „chains” and „fettters of iron,” which are all weapons of carnal warfare, may *represent* the weapons of a warfare which is not carnal, but yet mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. There are many reasons for regarding the *future* work of the saints as of the same *character* as the *present* work but differing only in degree. When it is suggested that saints either mortal or immortal are to use carnal weapons, as they must if the literal statement of the psalm is to be fulfilled in the future, we are reminded of the reproof of Jesus to his disciples when they proposed calling down fire from Heaven, upon their enemies: „Ye know not what manner of

spirit ye are of; I am not come to *destroy* men's lives, but to *save* them." We have no ambition for such work or such honor. Being non-combatant here, so far as relates to carnal warfare, so we expect to be hereafter. Again, we can not believe that mortals are to do the antitypical work, because the promise is to *all* the saints [not to all that fear God's name] and the inspired statement is that „it is sown in corruption; it is raised in *incorruption*: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in *POWER*," &c. „To him that overcometh and keepeth my works to the end will I give *POWER* over the nations." „Be thou faithful unto *death* and I will give thee a crown of life." If saints were raised mortal to be washed by the word, it would prove that they were still on trial and their work unfinished. But Paul, having *finished* his course, could say, *henceforth* there is laid up for me a crown. The judgment of the *church* is in this life; the judgment of the *world* is hereafter. *One* of the clear evidences that this is true of the church is that they are raised *immortal*, and are therefore sure of eternal life. Whoever is raised mortal, and needs washing, *may* come under the power of the second death. Surely the great antitypical kingdom of God is not to begin its work in the mortal state and afterward be changed to immortality. Mortality is weak; immortals have power.

There are, of course, two phases of kingdom work; one represented by David as a man of war, as in the one hundred and forty-ninth psalm; the other following as Solomon, the man of peace. But immortal saints can superintend the affairs of nations in the future, and work revolutions for their good, as immortal angels have done in the past, without using carnal weapons. In the future, as in the past, wicked men and nations will doubtless do their own fighting.

During the coming reign of terror the saints will reign in judgment, and yet in war it will be „every man's hand against his brother."

There are evidences that during the downfall of nations, the house of the Lord is built up, and all that fear the Lord will be made up as jewels for his kingdom. Mal. 3:16,17. After the day of wrath, which seems to synchronize with the great harvest, Matt. 13, or the ingathering of all that fear God's name, Rev. 11:18, then comes the shining forth as the sun, the manifestation or appearing in glory, or the descent of the New Jerusalem as the Bride of Christ and mother of the nations. Light, deliverance and glory to the nations will be the result. „There shall be no more curse." As a means to that great end, the servant „before the throne" (or on „the sea of glass," Rev. 4:6) in that glorious city, will be as necessary as the priest who sits with Christ in his throne. The little, too, is as essential to the *completeness* of the body as is the Head itself. Both the Jewish and gospel churches are called a „kingdom of priests," or „royal priesthood." The former is a type of the latter. But in the type one tribe only represented its priestly character and did the priestly work. That fact did not destroy the unity of the nation. The like order will and even now does exist in the gospel church, but its unity, instead of being impaired, is rather sustained by the variety.

Variety is an essential element of the Divine harmony.

The holy spirit was sent to take out from among the Gentiles a people for his name—to be his wife. Are not all who are baptized by one spirit into one body, included among that people, whatever be their stage of development? When Christ prayed for *all* that believe, through the apostles' word, did he include the babes in Christ? If he did not, then a *middle* would exist between the church and the world; but his prayer that „they *all* may be one,” „that the *world* may believe,” shows that no middle class exists. The variety evidently exists within the limits of the one body, and we are convinced that all who possess the one spirit are members, and will be sharers of the one hope. As Christ is the Head of the church, so they, married, become the united head of the world, the father and mother of a redeemed race.

J. H. P.

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