

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17 and 1 Cor. 12:1-31
Singing: 413:1-2 – 140:1 – 276:1-4 – 27:1-5 – 369:1-3

Intro: The Church of Jesus is Biblically not a *local congregation* (Conf. Art 27)

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (1)

I. A body with different members

II. A body governed by love

III. A body active in service

I. The Christian Church is one body with different members

A. The connection with vs. 1-2 and 3-11

B. Unity is promoted when our *thinking* is renewed about the Head-body

1. **How do you view yourself (vs. 3)**

a. Do you see yourself as a *monument of grace*?

b. Are you humble about *gifts*?

- nothing is more distasteful than to spiritual pride

- consider how your most gifted Head presented Himself

2. **How we view the body:** *we being many are one body in Christ* (vs. 5a)

a. The Spirit has used various pictures to describe Jesus' Church

- examples

- common truth in all

b. the doctrine of "The Union with Christ" suffers under-appreciation

- see Col. 2:9-10; Eph. 1:3-14

- our 'union with Christ' is a rock of Gospel comfort

c. this union with Christ- ruth should also help us *to look at each other*

- consider Jesus fierce words in Matt. 18:6; Acts 9: 4

3. How we view each other: (vs. 4-5; 1 Cor. 12:4-31)

- a. The Head-Body analogy received most detailed coverage (1 Cor. 12)
 - all organs are needed though all are not (1 Peter 4:10-11)
 - as important
 - as strong
 - as honorable
 - yet none are to be despised or ignored but all are to excel in their tasks as God determined (vs. 6-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11)
- b. Do we view *communion of saints* in the light of vs. 5?
 - believers are not members in Christ's body as people in a neighborhood or even a local congregation
 - in Christ's Church we are ***members one of another***
 - we belong together
 - we suffer/rejoice together (vs. 15; Heb. 13:3)
 - we cannot function without each other

Close: The Biblical meaning of 'fellowship': Acts 2:42-47

TRUTHS TO PONDER

We ought not to make any condition of our brethren's acceptance with us but such as God has made the conditions of their acceptance with Him. (M. Henry)

The living church is nothing but Christ displayed. (W. Gurnall)

When the Bible speaks about church unity, it speaks of unity not at the expense of truth but on the basis of it.

The best way to promote union is to promote truth. (C. H. Spurgeon)