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#SS13

THE BODY IN I CORINTHIANS 12

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In his book *The Church, the Churches and the Kingdom*, Philip Mauro, speaking of the word **CHURCH** says, "Its unique distinction is that it came into the vocabulary of the Bible directly from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself." From this premise he works out some marvelous conclusions, but his premise being totally wrong, his conclusions are also wrong.

The Lord Jesus Christ never used the word *church* unless He spoke the English language, and it is doubted if even the most rabid Englishman would want to make this claim. It would also be difficult to prove that our Lord used the Greek language, since He labored only in Palestine and among Hebrews. Therefore, He would not have used the Greek word for *church* which is *ecclesia*. The writers of the four gospels have, by inspiration, told us in Greek what our Lord said in Hebrew. When they report Him as having said the word *ecclesia* He used the Hebrew equivalent of that word. It has been established by the Holy Spirit that the Hebrew equivalent of *ecclesia* is *qahal*, since these words are used interchangeably in Psalm 22 :22 and Hebrews 2 :12.

Our Lord never used the word *church*, and there is no defensible position except that the Lord used the word *qahal*. If this be true, then He did not introduce it into the Word of God. It was first used by Isaac in Genesis 28 :3, and it appears altogether in the Old Testament one hundred and sixty-two times.

Some have come to the crude conclusion that there is no church in the Old Testament because the word *church* does not appear there. This is the last thing they should expect. It is certainly true that the English word church does not appear in the Old Testament. Neither does the Greek word *ecclesia* appear, for we would not expect to find Greek words in an ancient Hebrew book.

Who would think of contending that there is no God in the Old Testament inasmuch as the word *theos* (Greek for God) does not appear there. There is, however, in the Old Testament the exact equivalent of *theos*, and there is also the exact equivalent of *ecclesia*. As stated before it is the word *qahal*.

The word *assembly* will translate both *qahal* and *ecclesia* in many occurrences, but there are many occurrences of both words where the word *assembly* falls far short of expressing the truth. In these instances we must use a coined word, which is ***out-calling***. This is more of a descriptive term than a name.

There was no out-calling before the call of Abraham. Up to that time God was not dealing with men according to choice or election. He was dealing with all men in the same manner-according to their faith and their works. At Genesis 12 God made choice of Abraham and his seed after him, and began to deal with them according to His choice or election. Faith and works filled a dominant place in their lives, but God's purpose for them according to election had to stand.

From the call of Abraham to the Cross, the nation of Israel was God's out-calling or church. It was called a church by Stephen in Acts 7. In Matthew 16 :17 the Lord Jesus announced His purpose to build a new out-calling upon a certain rock or foundation. Peter had just confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God. This was the foundation upon which the new out-calling was to be built. The Lord warned them that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Messiah, for the time of beginning this new out-calling had not yet arrived. From the day of Pentecost all who confessed that the despised and crucified Jesus was the long expected Messiah, the Son of the living God, became members of the out-calling the Lord said He would build. This was the out-calling of God or the church of God.

This was in existence before Paul's conversion for he persecuted the church of God (1 Cor. 15:9, Gal. 1: 13) ; and we have no trouble in identifying this out-calling throughout the entire period covered by the book of Acts. It was God's out-calling during that period, and there was no other out-calling or church during that time. It dominates the scene from Pentecost until Acts 28 :28, when it was superseded by another out-calling, "the church which is His body."

A People from the Gentiles

The tenth chapter of Acts marks the beginning of the work among the Gentiles, even though at that time it concerned only one household. At Acts 13 Paul comes upon the scene as a laborer, and by his ministry the work among the Gentiles was carried on with such vigor that many Gentiles were brought to Christ. These Gentiles were added to the Church of God, and the position they held in that church is clearly stated in the Word of God.

We are commanded in the Word to discern the things that differ. In many things this is not easy to do, but in the case of the church of God and the church which is His body it is not difficult. In many points they are the same, and many similarities can be pointed out. But in many vital points there is such a wide difference that it is utterly impossible to say that they are the same.

When the pseudo-scientist desires to demonstrate man's identity with the ape, he can point out hundreds of striking similarities. These, to him, demonstrate man's relationship to the simian. But we look at the differences, and in view of these we can honestly insist that man and the ape are not the same. Even so it is when we make an honest comparison of the church of God and the church which is His body. Many have set forth their similarities and have pronounced that they are one and the same. We recognize these, but the points of difference are enough to prove that they are two distinct churches or out-callings.

There are those who contend that the church which is His body began on the day of Pentecost. These see no difference between the church of God and the church which is His body. Others insist that the church which is His body began at Acts 13 with the ministry of Paul among the Gentiles. A third group insists that no one was saved and called as a member of the church which is His body until after Acts 28 :28. The writer of this article takes his stand with the third group, and stands ready to defend it with the Word of God. To him it is the only position that is defensible.

Not a Question of Salvation

No matter what stand one may take as to when the present outcalling began, it must be admitted that the question is not one regarding salvation but position. In other words, the matter can be put in three questions. What was the position of those saved on Pentecost? What was the position of those saved after Acts 13? What was the position of those saved after Acts 28 :28?

Some will answer that all three positions were the same. Others will say that those saved from Pentecost to Acts 13 had one position, and all saved after that had another position. The writer of this article is contending that all who were saved from Pentecost to Acts 28 :28 were given a position in the church of God, and that all saved after that time were given a position in the church which is His body.

In view of this it is evident that if we can find anything in the Acts or in the epistles of Paul written during the Acts period that tells us that the Jews or Gentiles who were saved during the Acts period were members of the church which is His body, then we must retract and admit that the present out-calling did begin somewhere in the Acts period. The proper way to do this is to go to the Acts and to the epistles written in that period and examine every statement that has any bearing upon the position of those

who were saved in that period. This should settle the matter for all who permit the Word to settle things. And since it is specifically the position of the saved Gentiles that we have in mind, we will concentrate upon those passages that speak concerning their position.

Gentile Position in the Acts Period

The only statement in the book of Acts that has any positive bearing on Gentile position during that period is found in **Acts 26 :17-18**.

"Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

In verse 18 the words up to the word *sins* has to do with Gentile salvation, and the words following have to do with Gentile position. The last statement could be better translated, "and an allotment among those who have been separated by faith that is in me." Here we are told that the saved Gentiles were allotted a place among the saved Israelites. As Israel's blessings were not transferable these Gentiles were partakers of that which belonged to Israel. Therefore, in the one and only statement concerning Gentile position in the book of Acts we find no word that tells us they were members of the church which is His body.

The Pauline epistles written during the Acts period are 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians and Romans. We will consider these in order.

In 1 Thessalonians there is one passage that has to do with the position of those spoken to.

In 1 Thess. 2 :12 we are told that God had called them to His kingdom and His glory.

There are no passages in 2 Thessalonians that deal with the position of those addressed. It seems that if these Thessalonians were members of some new and glorious out-calling, Paul would have made some mention of it in his first two epistles.

The Galatian epistle deals primarily with salvation, but it also gives a few thoughts concerning the position of those who are saved. Let us look at these.

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Gal. 3:7.

"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. 3:9.

"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;" Gal. 3:14.

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3 :26 - 29.

"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" Gal. 4:26.

"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Gal. 4:28.

"So then, brethren, .we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." Gal. 4:31.

These passages tell us that the saved of the Acts period were children of Abraham, blessed with faithful Abraham, that the blessing of Abraham had come upon them, that they were Abraham's seed, that they were heirs according to the promise that God made to Abraham, and that they were children of the promise. In all this there is no hint or suggestion that they were members of a new out-calling, the church which is His body.

When God made promises to Abraham and his seed He included the Gentiles in those promises. They were to be blessed through the seed of Abraham. These passages from Galatians demonstrate that both Gentile salvation and Gentile position during the Acts period were in complete harmony with the words spoken to Abraham. Their blessings were not made known by the revelation of a secret, for they were the subject of Old Testament promise and prophecy.

In the Corinthian epistles there is one passage that deals with position. This is the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians. Since that chapter is the subject of this paper we reserve its treatment until the last.

We now turn to the book of Romans, where we find more about Gentile position during the Acts period than in any other book. The question is dealt with in detail in Romans 11. The statements found in this chapter are so emphatic that it would settle the whole matter if men would only cease trying to read their own ideas into the epistles of the Acts period. Those who try to place the church which is His body in the Acts period usually ignore the plain statements given here.

In verse 13 of Romans 11, Paul addresses the Gentiles specifically, and tells them of their position and standing. In order to make plain the truth he uses the olive tree as an illustration. This tree had been planted in very rich soil. Into this soil God had put every good thing the tree needed for growth and fruit bearing. This olive tree is identified for us in verse 24 as being "their own olive tree." It was Israel's olive tree, and this cannot mean the church which is His body. This olive tree represented all of Israel's covenant blessings and privileges. To them God had given the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the law, the divine service, the promises and the Messiah. No other nation was given any of these things.

When Paul wrote the Roman epistle some of the branches had already been broken off. It may have been that the Jerusalem branch was broken off at the stoning of Stephen, the Antioch branch at Acts 13 :46, and the Corinthian branch at Acts 18 :6.

The Gentiles of the Acts period are described as being branches out of a wild olive tree. These were grafted in among the natural branches and with the natural branches they partook of the root and the fatness of the olive tree.

"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree." Rom. 11 :17.

Paul warns these Gentile believers not to boast over the natural branches, and if they do, to remember that they do not bear the root for the root is bearing them. He tells them that they stand by faith. In Old Testament times there was a door of circumcision open to the Gentiles by which they could enter into Israel's blessings. In Acts 14 :27 Paul announced that a door of faith had been opened to the Gentiles. These had entered into blessing with believing Israel by faith. Paul warns them that their position in the good olive tree makes them subject to the same treatment as the natural branches. He then climaxes the truth by saying:

"And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

This is plain. Why should we reject this testimony as to the position of saved Gentiles in the Acts period? Paul tells where these Gentiles came from; they were out of a wild olive tree. He tells of their position; they were grafted into a good olive tree. He identifies the good olive tree; it is Israel's own olive tree. Therefore, these Gentiles had their position in something that the unbelieving Jews had been cut out of. This cannot be the church which is His body.

The Body in 1 Corinthians 12

Those who appeal to this chapter do not seem to care for all that the Lord has spoken in it. Their chief delight is found in the thirteenth and twenty-seventh verses. These passages are wrested from their divine setting and forced to teach a doctrine that is not found when the chapter is considered as a whole. To come to a true understanding of these verses we must give due consideration to their place in the chapter, and to the place of the chapter in the epistle. Therefore, we will consider the epistle and then the chapter as a whole.

The occasion of this epistle was a letter of inquiry from Corinth, asking advice on certain questions, but making no reference to the sad divisions that existed among them (1 Cor. 7 :1). Paul wrote this epistle in order to deal with the problems that were vexing and disturbing the Corinthian assembly. One of the major problems was the matter of spiritual gifts. The Corinthian assembly had its existence, and this epistle was written, in that period of time which for the purpose of designation is commonly called the Pentecostal dispensation. This dispensation had its beginning on the day of Pentecost and continued for about thirty-three years. It ended when Israel was set aside by the pronouncement, **"the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles." Acts 28 :28.**

This dispensation was characterized by "signs following," and its unique constitution was given by the Lord in **Mark 16 :15-20.**

"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hand on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up unto heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

That this confirmation of the word by signs, wonders and miracles was taking place in Corinth is clearly indicated **1 Cor. 1 :6-7.**

"Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you so that ye come behind in no gift."

These gifts are listed as being the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues. Everyone of these gifts were being manifested in Corinth, and they were possessed by one or more members of the Corinthian assembly.

Under circumstances so extraordinary, it was unavoidable that many disorders should arise. Some men would claim to be organs of the Spirit who were deluded or imposters; some would be dissatisfied with the gifts which they had received, and envy those whom they regarded as more highly favored; others would be inflated, and make an ostentatious display of their extraordinary powers; and in the public assembly it seems that great confusion arose from so many persons desiring to exercise their gifts at the same time. These serious problems were included in the letter sent to Paul, or else they were reported to him by the house of Chloe (1 Cor. 1 :11).

The advice and counsel of Paul concerning these problems gives us some additional light on the exact nature of the difficulties. They were acting like children about these sign gifts. Instead of using them as signs to those who did not believe (14 :22), they were using them to minister to their own pride in the possession of them. For example, there may have been a man who possessed a spectacular gift like "working of miracles," who was filled with pride and looked with something like contempt upon the one who possessed a gift totally lacking in outward show, like that of "discerning spirits." Then again, the man who had the lesser gift was torn with jealousy and disappointment because his gift was not great and spectacular. Among a carnal people (3 :1) this situation caused many problems; and instead of these gifts being a blessing, they were becoming a curse; instead of building up, they were tearing down; instead of creating unity, they were causing division. Paul's burden is to get these gifts functioning, each in its proper place, so that they will be used for the glory of the Giver, and not for the personal glory of the possessor.

This is the situation that caused the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians to be written. From beginning to end it is a treatise on spiritual gifts and their proper use. It begins with the words, "**Now concerning spiritual gifts,**" and it ends with the words, "**covet earnestly the best gifts.**" Its one subject is gifts and every verse in the chapter deals with the matter under consideration. It does not deal with the formation or character of the church which is His body. Now let us examine the twelfth chapter, and all that we have said will be verified.

12 :1-3, "**Now concerning spiritual gifts (pneumatikon) brethren, I would not have you to be ignorant,**" As the chapter opens, the subject is stated plainly. Not that Paul does not say "concerning the church which is His body," but, "concerning spiritual gifts."

12 :4-6, "**Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord, And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all,**" By these words they are informed that no matter what their gift, operation or administration may be, whether great or small, they were neither to be puffed up nor to be disappointed. These gifts are simply the Spirit expressing Himself through them, and He cannot be expected to always express Himself in the same identical manner.

12 :7, "**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.**" Here they are informed as to the purpose of their gifts. They were not given for the purpose of self gratification, neither were they given to satisfy the possessor's pride in the exercise of them. They were "for profiting." This means that they were for the profit of others, that is, the whole assembly.

12 :8-11. "**For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kind of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will,**"

Here we have a list of the gifts that existed in Corinth. Let us examine each one,

The word of wisdom, To some had been given the gift of uttering wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge with the capacity to use it right. Some in the Corinthian assembly could utter wisdom when and as needed.

The word of knowledge, The Greek word which is here translated knowledge means knowledge acquired by effort, learning or experience. None of these Corinthians were more than five years old in Christ, yet to some had been given the gift of knowledge, and they possessed all that can now come as the result of long study, effort and experience. Their knowledge was given, ours is acquired. Inasmuch as the Greeks were known for their admiration of wisdom and eloquence, it is plain that these two gifts would be the cause of much pride on the part of some who possessed them, and much disappointment on the part of some who lacked them.

To another faith by the same Spirit. This could not refer to saving faith, as all believing Corinthians possessed this. Just what this gift was is difficult to say, In Acts 6:8 we read, "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." In 1 Cor. 13 :2, Paul makes reference to this gift by saying, "though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains." Probably none of the Corinthians possessed this amount of faith, but it seems that the gift of faith must have made it possible for them to do some very wonderful things. .

The gifts of healing. Note that the plural is used here. These gifts gave to some in Corinth the power to work immediate and complete cures in all cases of sickness and disease.

The working of miracles. This could be better translated, "operations of works of power." The results of the exercise of this gift must have been spectacular indeed.

Prophecy. Prophecy did not refer wholly to the foretelling of future events, but those who possessed this gift could do that very thing. An -example of this is seen in the case of Agabus (Acts 11 :28), where he told of a coming famine.

Discerning of spirits. This gift gave the one who possessed it the ability to authoritatively state whether a spirit was of God or not. This was a valuable gift, but it probably was not greatly appreciated either by the assembly or by the one who possessed it. It was entirely lacking in that outward show which so delighted the Corinthians.

Divers kinds of tongues. This was the ability to speak in any language wholly apart from any previous knowledge or study. In the time that Corinthians was written a man could travel just a few miles and find a different language. This diversity of language greatly hindered all commerce, travel and government. It would have greatly hindered the progress of the gospel, but God gave some the power to speak in any language that the hearers could understand.

The interpretation of tongues. This was the companion gift of speaking in tongues. Those who possessed this could interpret any language a speaker might use. There seemed to be in Corinth a childish delight in these last two gifts; probably because the possessors could use them to make a great show of wisdom.

It is not hard to imagine the confusion that was caused in Corinth by the presence of these diversified gifts in the hands of a carnal people. Having listed the gifts, it was then the apostle's task to show the place, the purpose and the proper use of these gifts. This he does in a plain and simple, yet exceedingly powerful, way by presenting the smooth workings of the human body, with its many diversified members as an illustration.

12 :12. **"For just as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is the Christ."** The body in this passage is the human body and the statements made concerning it are for the purpose of setting it forth as an illustration. The human body is a unit, even though it has many members, and all these members form the human body. Even as the human body so also is the anointed (the Christ). The Greek word for *anointed* and the word for *Christ* are the same. The reference is to the anointed church of that period. See 1 John 2 :27.

In order to make his illustration illustrate, Paul must demonstrate that they also are a body, and this he does in the next verse.

12 :13. **"For in one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit."** (R. V.)

This is the passage that is so commonly removed from its setting and made to teach many things which were never intended by the Spirit that indited this passage. Baptism in the Spirit began on the day of Pentecost, and this experience was common to every believer of the Acts period. It was true of Jews and it was true of Greeks; it was true of freemen and true of slaves. This common experience made a vital link which formed them into one body.

Certain men hard pressed to support their theories, have deliberately created the impression that whenever you find the word *body* it is a reference to the present out-calling, the church which is His body. This is not true, but since this erroneous impression is current in many quarters, it will be necessary for us to be established in the usage of the word *body* by the Holy Spirit. The clearest reference to the Spirit's usage of the word *body* is found **in 1 Corinthians 6 :16.**

"What? know ye not he which is joined to a harlot is one body?"

The usage here is exceptionally clear. From this passage we learn that two or more things brought into vital union are considered one body. In this case the union was an immoral one, but it formed *one body* nevertheless.

The nation of Israel in the Old Testament was a body. In fact Israel is called a body by the Spirit of God in **Luke 17 :37.**

"Whosoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."

The reference here is to Israel in the great tribulation. The nations of that day will come together in an attempt to exterminate Israel, just as the vultures gather about a dead body. This fact stands out: the word *body* is used here of those who certainly are not included in the church which is His body. If we call Israel a body, the priesthood a body, each tribe a body, the twelve disciples a body, a man and his wife a body, a man and a harlot a body, the church of God a body, the present out-calling a body, we will not be violating in the least the scriptural use of the word *body*. All of these are two or more things which have been brought into vital union or relationship. It is not right to play tricks with the word *body*, as if it were never used of anything except the present out-calling.

Paul, having set forth the human body as an illustration, then sets forth the believers of that time as a body because they had all been baptized into one Spirit. They were not baptized into one body, but into one Spirit, and this vital link formed them into one body. There is not a line in Scripture to prove that the Spirit ever baptizes, neither is there a line to prove that believers are baptized into the body by the Spirit. Christ was the baptizer, and He was to baptize in the Spirit. This being true of all believers in the Pentecostal dispensation, it made them one body. But even without this they still would have been one body.

"For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. 10:17.

Thus, we have recorded two separate things that made them one body. They all partook of one bread, and they had all been baptized in one Spirit.

12 :14-26. Having demonstrated that the Corinthians are a body, the apostle resumes the illustration by again setting forth the human body. From verse 14 to 26 every statement Paul makes is concerning the human body, but they are made in such a way that the hearers will immediately see that they are also true of the body of which they are members. His statements can be paraphrased as follows. The human body does not consist of one member, but many. If the foot were to say, "Because I am not a hand I am not a part of the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. Or if the ear were to say, "because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the smelling be? The truth is that God has arranged every member of the human body as it has pleased Him. If they were all one member, where would the body be? As a matter of fact there are many parts but only one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you;" nor can the head say to the feet, "I do not need you." Those parts of the body which seem somewhat feeble are indispensable. Without them the body cannot function properly.

It is not difficult to apply each of these statements to the church of God. The very gifts of some gave them an importance that we usually attach to the eyes, and the gifts of another relegated them to the position of the feet. Yet, one needed and was dependent upon the other.

We will do well to note that in this chapter the head is composed of those who were thus appointed, such as eyes, ears and nostrils. In the present out-calling, Christ alone is the Head.

The human body can be used very effectively as an illustration of the church of God. There was no equality in that body. The human body will not illustrate the church which is His body, for the outstanding truth of Ephesians is that the church which is His body is a joint-body. In a joint-body absolute equality must prevail. All members must be brought into it, and must be in it on the basis of absolute equality. Each member is the peer of every other member. No member can claim to be the eyes or the ears. Some members may see and hear more than others, but this does not make them the eyes and ears of God's present out-calling.

There is no equality of members in the human body. The eyes are more valuable than the fingers, even if one does need the others. There was no equality among members of the church of God. Some were apostles, some were prophets, some were teachers, and some were healers. In the church which is His body every member has the same rights, privileges and prerogatives. Faithfulness, devotion and diligence may seem to exalt one member above another, nevertheless, whatever one member may be, every other member can be. This was not true in the church of God. If a man was an apostle, it was because God had set him in the church as an apostle, and only these could be apostles.

Those who use the human body as an illustration of the church which is His body show a total ignorance of the character of God's present out-calling. They speak as if some today were the eyes and ears of the body, but they will never go so far as to name just one that God has appointed to do the seeing and hearing for the one body revealed in Ephesians. Every believer can do all the seeing and hearing that is possible for any other believer to do.

12:27. "**Now we are the body of Christ and members in particular.**" These words were spoken to the Corinthian church. A review of the context will show that the message has narrowed down to this one assembly. The definite article before the word *body* is not found in any Greek text. There is no indefinite article (a) in the Greek language, so where the definite article is omitted it has to be considered

indefinite, unless the definite character *of* the noun is clearly indicated by the context. The insertion *of* the definite article here would make the passage untrue. The Corinthians were not THE body of Christ. They were *a* body, or *one* body *of* Christ, but not *the* body. This would have excluded other assemblies such as Rome and Thessalonica. The Corinthians were *one* body, and they belonged to Christ.

12 :28-31. In this passage Paul gives a list of eight things ranging from apostles to diversities *of* tongues which he says God has set in the church. This statement prompts us to ask immediately, "Which church - the church which is His body?" If so, then the things listed here should be found today among the members *of* God's present out-calling. But they are not *to* be found, and these final words *of* Paul settle the question of the witness *of* 1 Corinthians 12. It is not a treatise concerning God's present out-calling. It is a treatise on the place and proper use of the many gifts given to the church of God.

The Body in Romans 12.

In Romans 12 we have the same teaching as in I Corinthians 12, only in Romans the message is greatly condensed. There the illustration is also the human body, and it is used to set forth the proper function of gifts in the church. Paul's statement "having then gifts differing," is enough to show that it is not a reference to the joint body revealed in Ephesians.

One Body.

Paul's statement in Ephesians 4:4 does not say that there has always been and always will be just one body. At present there is just one body. God does not recognize the many "bodies" that men have formed. Paul exhorts us to keep the unity of the one body.

Theologians of past generations believed and taught that the church began with Adam and included all the redeemed up to the new heavens and earth. This error superimposed upon the Word of God kept the church in ignorance for centuries. It was a glorious day when men made their first attempts at right division and began to make a clear distinction between Israel and God's present outcalling. But, after a good beginning it seems that there was an attempt on the part of most expositors to see how many places they could find the church, or a revelation of the church, in the Word of God. They saw it in Eve in Genesis 2, in Rebecca in Genesis 24, in the wife of Joseph in Genesis 41, in the tabernacle of Exodus 24, in the Song of Solomon, in the kingdom parables of Matthew 13, in prophecy in Matthew 16, in the instructions given in Matthew 18 and in the five wise virgins of Matthew 25. In the events of Pentecost they find its birth; in the book of James, addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, they claim to find its walk.

They force its history into Revelation 2 and 3; they see it in the twenty-four elders of Revelation 5; they make it the bride of Revelation 19, and put it in the Jerusalem of Revelation 21. Therefore, we must not be surprised when they discover a great revelation concerning it in a passage which from beginning to end is a treatise on gifts.

We have been saved by grace and called as members of the church which is His body. This calling has its own unique purpose sphere, truth, walk, blessings, hope and destiny. Let us determine to discover what these are by a faithful, prayerful, careful study of the Ephesian and Colossian epistles.

THE END. SS13