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THE BODY OF CHRIST:

SEPARATING MYTH

FROM METAPHOR

Written by
Charles L. Hunt
January, 2006

FOREWORD

It is an honor to write a foreword to a work as important as this one. The biblical metaphor of the body of Christ is misunderstood by Catholics, Protestants, and many Baptists. In his book, *The Body of Christ: Separating Myth from Metaphor,* pastor and teacher Chuck Hunt brings into sharp focus the true meaning of this metaphor. Pastor Chuck clears away so much of the confusion concerning the body of Christ that there is little left to tell. While this book covers a large area of interesting and related subjects and topics, Bro. Hunt shows with well reasoned biblical support that the relationship depicted by this Head/Body metaphor is not an organic and vital connection to Christ picturing a *salvational* union but rather a *functional* relationship that involves the believer's sanctification and growth through membership in a local visible body—*the church.* The distinctions and clarifications that are drawn in this book are biblical issues all Christians should be clear on.

William Van Nunen,
Dean
John Leland Baptist College

I thank God for my wife Vickie who sacrificed her personal goals that this book might become reality. She was my consultant and typist. She is my friend. I love you.

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I thank God for the wisdom, common sense and editing skills of William Van Nunen, Dean of John Leland Baptist College. He had the ability of putting this book into a more readable format. He had the courage to disagree with a stubborn author.

Preface

The local church holds little spiritual significance in the mind of many modem evangelicals. Ecclesiological dualism is the doctrinal force behind this thinking. These people acknowledge the existence of the local church but in reading the Scripture apply all the great ecclesiological statements to their "universal-invisible" church. The local church is further slighted by being contrasted with the "true church."

This attitude is epitomized in the *Systematic Theology* by Lewis Sperry Chafer. His section on ecclesiology contains two hundred and sixty-three pages. Only ten of these pages are given to what he calls the "gathered" church. Here he teaches that the local church is without mission or any corporate task.

People caught up in this mindset are shocked beyond measure to learn that many Baptist people reject any concept of a "universal-invisible" church. They assert that the word *ecclesia* in the Greek New Testament either refers to actual local assemblies or is used in an institutional sense. In this they are returning the great ecclesiological statements of the New Testament to their proper application, that is: the local church.

The implication of the strictly local view that most offends ecclesiastical dualists is the belief that the local church is the "body of Christ" mentioned by the Apostle Paul in several of his epistles. They have so strongly regarded this metaphor as salvational that anyone challenging this concept is instantly assumed to be in error.

This area of ecclesiology is the topic Pastor Charles Hunt has ably tackled. As such it meets a real need in providing an in-depth exposition of this controverted point. Some will be surprised to find how Pastor Hunt has drawn from the work of modem scholarship to defend his thesis. May God grant each one who reads an open mind as he/she reconsiders this issue.

This is not the first example of where "truth stood on the scaffold while error sat on the throne."

Ron Crisp, Pastor
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[34] Indeed a large number of English translations, both old and new, translates it such.
[35] Carroll, B.H., ECCLESIA (The Church,)
[36] The Greek for "heart" as used in Matt. 15:18, "mind" as used in Phil. 2:2, and "belly" as used in John 7:38 are defined respectly by Zodhiates. **heart**- "in the NT, used only figuratively (I) as the seat of the desires feelings, affections, passions, impulses, i.e. the heart or mind (II) As the seat of the intellect meaning the mind, understanding" **mind**- "Contracted ... from (5424)." (5424) is defined "Literally the diaphragm, that which curls or restrains. Figuratively, the supposed seat of all mental and emotional activity. **Belly**- "... It also means the inward part, the inner man, similar to the breast, the heart as we speak of it in Eng."
[37] Harold Lindsell, *Evangelicals and Inerrancy,* p. 50, Ed. Ronald Youngblood.
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[45] Jerrel Huffman, (taken from notes prepared for Bible class of Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Duncan, Oklahoma) p.22.
[46] The listing of these gifts is not to be considered a concession by the author that there has not been a cessation of apostolic gifts.
[47] S. E. Anderson, *Real Churches or a Fog,* p. 12.
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[51] Ibid., p. 13

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INTRODUCTION

"And further, by these, my son, be
admonished: of making many books *there is* no end;
and much study *is* a weariness of the flesh."
(Eccl. 12:12)

These words of Solomon require a worthy response before another work is added to the endless list of books expecting us to weary ourselves in studying yet another volume. This work is such a response. Each generation sees various doctrines blossom that years previously were planted in seed form. Only after they have reached full maturity do they either, like wheat or tares, gracefully bow in fruitful honor to Jesus Christ or arrogantly stand in barrenness dishonoring the field of truth in which they appear. It is the taunting of one such tare that moves this author to write.

The Bible is filled with similes, metaphors, parables, and allegories, and it is easy to incorrectly associate these literary devices as they are uniquely developed within a particular context with a teaching foreign to their context and therefore lose the elucidation of the truth the figure of speech was intended to give. Such is the present case with the biblical metaphor of the Body of Christ. Many scholars not only misunderstand the metaphor but draw conclusions from it that lead to serious error and confusion. For example, the most predominant view is that the metaphor teaches the believer's organic and vital union to Jesus Christ. Such a union is a biblical teaching and is demonstrated in Jesus' metaphor of the vine and branches; however, the Pauline metaphor of Christ as the head of the body does *not* teach this truth. The purpose of this work is to explain the true nature and meaning of the metaphor of Jesus Christ as head of His body, the church.

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. The following sketch contrasts the commonly accepted view of Christ as head of his body with the one put forth in this volume. As you look at these two diagrams and as you read through this book, ask yourself, "How is Jesus Christ the head of His body?"

[18] See chapter one, footnote 5 for an explanation of the indefinite article "a" rather than the definite article "the."

[19] Robert H. Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology With Empha;is on Pauline Anthropology,* p. 223.

[20] lbid., p.228.

[21] Gosnell L. 0. R. Yorke, *The Church as the Body Of Christ in the Pauline Corpus A Reexamination,* p. 43-45.

[22] Isaiah 11:2 lists seven gifts using the structure of the lampstand. The Spirit of the Lord is the middle shaft. The following three pairs progress outward with each pair providing one for the left side and one for the right.

[23] Rev. 1..12, 13, 20.

[24] Note the meaning of "by the Spirit" in verse 3 where it has the similar meaning of "being lead."

[25] Cf. Matt. 28:18-20.

[26] Robertson, A.T., *Word Pictures of the New Testament,* October 1994: Online Bible, CD-Rom.

[27] This does not mean the author believes Christ's baptism with fire has been fulfilled.

[28] "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." (1 Cor.12:18)

[29] Some think two or three believers together spontaneously constitute a church. This is based on Matt.18:18-19. If this is put in context it is easy to see that Christ is referring to the exercise of church discipline. When two or three members of the church go out to counsel offended brothers Christ promises to be with them.

[30] J. Michael Brubaker, *In Pauline Ecclesiology,* Doctoral Thesis. P.48.

[31] "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God … I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

[32] Matthew Poole, *A Commentary On The Holy Bible, Vol.Ill Matthew-Revelation,* p.668.

[1] T. Croskery, *The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 46, Ephesians*, p.31.
[2] W. F. Adeney, *The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 46, Ephesians,* p. 60
[3] Lloyd Jones, *God'[s Ultimate Purpose,* p. 427.
[4] Ibid., p. 429.
[5] The KJV translators should have italicized "the" in 1 Cor. 12:27 for the definite article "the" is not found in the Greek text. When no article is present, one usually translates a noun with an indefinite article "a" (an) or no indefinite article at all according to English sense of the translation.
[6] Some may contend that this metaphor is weak because, if pressed, it teaches a loss of salvation. It makes perfect sense if we place it in the whole context of the Bible and the immediate context of the Gospel of John. Jesus is the creator of all things including man as John, chapter 1, teaches. Mankind in Adam once lived both spiritually and physically by the life of his Creator. When he sinned he died spiritually and he, as well as his descendants have the need of being cleansed by the new birth and restored to a spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. Man, though fallen, still maintains the image of God in a deadened form. What better way to picture the best that the fallen sinner can do than to proclaim a relationship of life that mankind once possessed and then lost in Adam by a dead branch which will be severed on Judgment Day.
[7] "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church."
[8] Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible, Vol. Ill,* p. 666.
[9] John Thornbury, *The Doctrine of the Church,* p. 25.
[10] Ibid., p.25.
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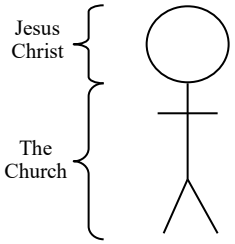
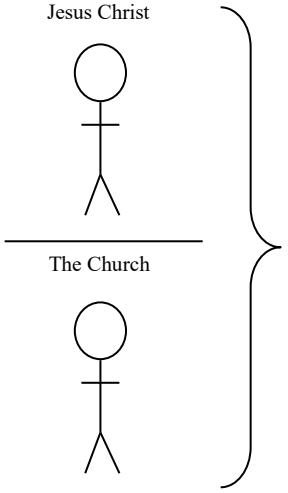
[15] Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey,* p.47.
[16] Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology,* p.862.
[17] "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

FIGURE I. The church is united to Jesus by an organic and vital union.



Here, Jesus Christ is the head as a part of the body; therefore, the church metaphorically is the trunk of the body only.

FIGURE 2. The church is under Christ as its head just like a wife is under her husband as her head.



Here, the term "head" is a designation of position and relationship to a metaphorical body, which is also complete in inself. This body is the church. It is Christ's body just as a husband views his wife as his own body.

Chapter One

THE POPULAR BUT INCORRECT VIEW OF THE HEAD-BODY METAPHOR

Introduction

The Bible, of course, is not a creation of man. It is a revelation from God, and its depths and perfection are unsearchable. When something manmade is closely examined, its flaws appear proportionate to the extent of the examination, but the Word of God possesses wisdom, knowledge, and truth which excel under the greatest scrutiny. Manmade doctrines can not stand the acid test of the truth of Scripture. Such is the case when we Scripturally examine the popular but mistaken interpretation of the metaphor of Jesus Christ as head of the body in an *vital organic union* with the body. This view holds that Christ is the head and the church is the trunk in which together they form one composite body in a living and life sustaining union. It is, therefore, often concluded that the Pauline metaphor of Christ as head of the church expresses a *salvational relationship.* However, such a conclusion is positively untenable in light of the Scriptures.

Examples

The following quotes are indicative of the general body of Christian writers on the subject who have misunderstood the metaphor. One should be reminded that the Biblical doctrine of the believer's vital union to Jesus Christ is not being challenged for it is a Biblical doctrine. Nor are we calling into question the general wisdom or the integrity of those who hold this position. We wish simply to point out that they have incorrectly associated the Christian's union to Christ with a biblical metaphor that was never intended to picture that union. The reason for their oversight will be dealt with later in this book.

Addendum II

A DOCTRINAL MODEL FOR FURTHER STUDY

Another doctrinal model could be developed by examining the three predominate views within Christendom concerning baptism and comparing each to its respective ecclesiology. The Catholics believe water baptism actually places you in Christ. The Protestants believes the Spirit baptizes you into the universal invisible body of Christ. Baptists believe that believers, already in Christ by a work of God's salvation, are baptized in water representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and are thereby brought into membership of a body of Christ. Obviously if ideas differ on what the church is, how believers enter it will differ.

Catholicism teaches that baptism of water is a sacrament bringing salvation and is propagated as the physical means whereby one can in reality be placed in Christ, resulting in one becoming a member of the universal visible body of Christ in a real way. The physical work of baptism initiates the Spirit's power to place the participant in union with Christ. This changes one's physical reality because mystically and in a real way one becomes a member of the universal visible body of Christ.

Protestantism has the Holy Spirit immersing believers at salvation into the universal invisible body of Christ. Hence, passages that should clearly teach water baptism are taught as referring to Spirit baptism. Baptism is spiritual and the body of Christ is spiritual. Being placed into the body of Christ is equivalent to salvation.

The Baptists once again see baptism in water as the one baptism of which Scripture speaks in Ephesians 4:5, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." This work is a symbolic declaration of the work of God's salvation when He placed us in Jesus Christ. Baptism in water is the work of sanctification which brings us into association with Christ's metaphoric body, His assembly. Baptism in water is a metaphoric picture of our union with Jesus Christ and brings us into union with His metaphoric body, His Church.

Spirit through the Apostle Paul simply draws an analogy between Jesus Christ's possession of all the diverse spiritual gifts in the unity of His person to a human body which has all the diverse organs and appendages and yet exists in a beautiful unity. First Corinthians 12:12 then develops this metaphor of a body using the Corinthian Church instead of Christ.

> "For 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 Christ."

Each of them is pictured as a distinct member of a body and yet there is the unity of the body. Each member represents a gift of Jesus Christ. Therefore the diversity of the members represents the diverse gifts of Christ given by the Holy Spirit and the unity of such associates them as the body of Christ because it is a metaphorical body that possesses Christ's gifts.

Summary

Truth builds on truth and error on error. Our comparisons show how vital a biblical view of any doctrine is--especially ecclesiology. Heresy, of course, rarely has a logical order, but when one's ecclesiology is faulty, it leads to other gross errors in soteriology and the ordinances of the church by mixing and confounding them. To this writer the correlations made above reveal a pattern of doctrine that demonstrates the inconsistency of Baptists who hold to the Protestant doctrine of the universal invisible church. This doctrine, now held by many Baptists, is obviously not a revival of truth but a doctrinal novelty born out of the doctrinal necessity in which the Reformers placed themselves when they rejected the authority of the Catholic Church but did not recognize the succession of local Baptist churches from the time of Christ unto their day.

T. Croskery

The following quote from Croskery demonstrates a weakness in logic in that he consciously or unconsciously changes the analogy of the metaphor:

> As the body is not complete without the head, so the head is not complete without the body. The Lord Jesus Christ is not complete without his church. How can this be? He himself says, 'My strength is made perfect in weakness,' but is his power not always perfect? It is declared to be perfect in our weakness. So the church serves as an empty vessel, into which the Saviour pours his mediatorial fullness.[1]

What inconsistency is conspicuous in this quote? It is the author's change of metaphors from the church being the trunk of Christ's body to being that of an "empty vessel." If the metaphor was meant to teach an organic union, why does Croskery change the metaphor midstream from a "trunk of a body" to an "empty vessel" which Christ fills with his mediatorial fullness? Why not just follow the body metaphor to its logical conclusion? The answer is because the conclusion would be absurd. The conclusion that Croskery draws from his - "empty vessel" metaphor that Jesus Christ as the body's head is made perfect in some unknown way through the weakness of the body ignores the reality that had he followed the body metaphor to its logical conclusion you would have the Head being equally dependent upon the life of the body for its life. The reality of this metaphor, if viewed as those who see in it an organic union with Christ, is that the body is filled with the life sustaining blood and organs which are equally and absolutely necessary to the life of the head. In other words, there is a *codependency* in which the head and body equally sustain each other.

Physiology in Antiquity

What is the biblical teaching concerning the nature of the human body and that which sustains its life? What was the understanding of

those of the Apostle Paul's day concerning the physiology of the human body? Genesis 9:4-6 says: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." This understanding of the significance of blood to the life of the body is also seen in Leviticus 17:11-14, **"For it is the life of all flesh; the blood** of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off." This concept of the significance of the blood to the body had not changed during the time of Christ and the Apostles. This is the reason the meeting of the apostles and elders of the church of Jerusalem concluded with James, our Lord's brother and pastor of the Jerusalem Church, stating in Acts 15:20, "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and **from blood."** Would someone of Paul's day or even Paul himself think in terms of the head sustaining the life of the body? Would they not think of the blood of the body sustaining the life of the head?

W. F. Adeney

This next quote from Adeney contains a similar inconsistency concerning the body of Christ metaphor as that of Croskery above:

> The essential unity consists in the subordination of all the parts to the one head. Severance from Christ is death to the Church. A Christian Church is a headless trunk. We may retain the doctrine and ethic of the New Testament, but nevertheless, amputation of the Head means death. Even a partial severance of connection involves paralysis—loss of spiritual power and loss of spiritual feeling.[2]

Once again a parallel can easily be made. In Luther's view of the Lord's Supper the bread and wine do not literally become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, but they become the "Real Presence" of Christ's body and blood. This is a step removed from the position the Catholic Church holds. Luther stopped short of the truth in his reforms concerning the Catholic sacrament of the Lord's Supper and concerning the Church. His reluctance to let go completely of Papal doctrine caused him to develop the teaching of consubstantiation, and his rejection of the authority of the Catholic Church led him to develop the idea of invisibility in relationship to the true church. The presence of Christ's body and blood in the elements of the sacrament was invisible but real according to Luther's understanding. This same idea of the invisible yet real presence of Christ's body which was used in his interpretation of Catholicism's view of transubstantiation was introduced by Luther into the ecclesiology of the Reformers , who developed a view of the church as the invisible yet real presence of the body of Christ. Hence, the body of Christ becomes a cosmic presence, something that no Christian can see, but of which every Christian is a part. The Baptistic view does acknowledge the real presence of Jesus Christ by His Spirit in the midst of the assembly, but not the real presence of His body mystically joining the individual members.

Representation
Compared to the Local Church

Thirdly, a comparison can be seen between the historic Baptist understanding of the Lord's Supper and their view of the church. It is acknowledged by this author that our Baptist forefathers gave a greater spiritual significance to the Lord's Table than many Baptists today. In The London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 the language is vehemently clear in the denial of transubstantiation and inherently clear in their denial of consubstantiation. The Baptist view believes the elements are representative of the real body and blood of Christ. Jesus' body and blood are only present metaphorically. Baptist ecclesiology is consistent also to its view of the Lord's Table. The body of Christ is a metaphor for a local assembly such as existed at Corinth, and it has no cosmic supramundane existence or reality. The Holy

derson states, "The Reformers promoted the 'universal, invisible church' theory trying to outwit the Catholics."[47] According to historian Philip Schaff, the doctrine of the invisible church began with the Reformer Zwingli:

> Augustine ... made a suggestive distinction between 'the true body of Christ' and 'the mixed body of Christ,' which led the way to the Protestant distinction (first made by Zwingli) between the visible and invisible church.[48]

Although Schaff attributes the formulation of the doctrine **to** Zwingli, he states that Luther was the first one to use the word invisible in relationship to the church.[49]

The Development of Consubstantiation

It is interesting and in support of the point being made that it was during the Reformation Martin Luther introduced his teaching of consubstantiation and the idea of the invisibility of the church. According to Luther himself he had difficulty with this teaching;

> For being in great perplexity I took great pains in Difcuffing the point; I endeavour'd with all my might to extricate and free my felf, as well perceiving I fhould thereby very much incommode the Papacy. But I fee I am caught, there is no way of efcaping left me: For the words of the Evangelists [This is my Body, &c.] are too plain and clear to be fore'd to any other meaning.[50]

After quoting Luther concerning the bread and wine in the sacrament Thomas Deane, a papist, goes on to state:

> It is evident that in this Doctrine *Luther* was neither *Catholick,* nor Church of *England Protestant.* But yet fo much a *Catholic* he was, as to hold the *real prefence* of the *Body and Blood of our Lord in the Sacrament.*"[51]

Indeed, amputation of the Head does mean death—death for the head as well as the body! One might react that you can not press metaphors too far. This is true. You are not to press metaphors, similes, and parables beyond the obvious. But is the conclusion that the head would die as well as the body if the body were severed from the head beyond the obvious? Is death to the head a minor detail that should just be overlooked for the greater cause of forcing this metaphor to teach the truth of a vital union with Jesus Christ? We think not.

The Vine-Branch Metaphor of John 15

In John 15 the beautiful metaphor of Christ as the vine and professing believers as the branches is developed. The branches that have experienced the washing of regeneration and are clean will bear fruit and manifest that they are in a vital union with Jesus Christ. The branches which bear no fruit manifest their only union with Jesus Christ was that of one who possesses only a lifeless profession of Christ. Take the branches from the vine and there is still life in the vine, but take the body from the head and the head dies. This is why the metaphor of the church as the body of Christ cannot possibly teach an organic oneness with Christ in salvation.

Martin Lloyd-Jones

The following quote of Lloyd-Jones, an excellent author, makes an exception to his usual genius:

> There is not a part of the body which is not controlled by nerves and the nervous system. The life in every muscle and in every part is conveyed to it by nervous energy and power. And all the nerves ultimately can be traced back to the brain, which is in the head. It is the centre and the source which controls all the nervous energy of the whole body and of every separate part and particle of the system. When the Apostle says that Christ is the Head of the Church he means that He is the Head of the Church in that sense. We

> have no life apart from Him; all the energy and power come from Him.[3]

This analogy makes reasonable sense to us in the twenty-first century, but they of the first century could never have made such an analogy. If we believe in the grammatical-historical method of exegesis, we know that the head-body metaphor was something they could fully understand in their day. So, how does one justify giving an interpretation like this to a verse which could not be properly understood until hundreds of years later when our knowledge of human physiology would, pardon the pun, make the connection? At any rate, Lloyd-Jones fails to see that such an interpretation as he gives breaks down in that the head can not sustain itself apart from the body.

Another Example From Lloyd-Jones

Most authors who have a misconception of the head-body metaphor continue to press their incorrect understanding of the metaphor even where their inconsistency should easily be seen. Again, contrary to his usual carefulness, Lloyd-Jones fails to see the break down of his interpretation of the metaphor:

> The body is one, and yet it consists of a number of individual members or parts. As Paul says in I Corinthians: 'Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular' (12:27). In the human body, as he points out, the hand has one function and the foot has another; the nose and eyes and the ears and the various parts of the body all have their individual parts to play … But what we have chiefly to remember is that, as members of the mystical body of Christ, and having our individual parts to play, the energy and the power we exercise all comes from Him. He Himself made this quite clear when He said: "Apart from me ye can do nothing."[4]

> "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

This speaks concerning the same body which is within the context throughout the chapter-the Church of Corinth.

That which defines us in the body of Christ is neither our nationality, gender, nor our social standing, rather the gift of Christ which the Holy Spirit has sovereignly given and the Father sovereignly placed in each particular assembly, just as He did at Corinth. Members are spoken of as being an eye, foot, head, etc., and each placed by God so as to constitute an organized body. Jerrel Huffman writes:

> The 'body' is not a mere aggregation of parts, but an orderly arrangement of these parts. For instance, the human 'body' is a whole, made up of many parts-hands, legs, arms, feet, ears, eyes, head, and torso. A pile of heads, hands, feet, or legs, does not compose a body! Likewise, a number of believers or the totality of believers does not necessarily make an ekklesia. These members must be set in orderly arrangement to constitute an *ekklesia."*[45]

He ends his chapter by speaking of God's placement of these gifts in the Church. The person and his gift are spoken of as one and the same. Apostles are set in the church but also miracles, governments, and tongues.[46] The unity with which Christ possessed these diverse gifts is analogous to the diverse members of a human body existing in the unity of the body. Likewise, the church at Corinth with their diversity of gifts exists in unity because they are Christ's metaphorical body.

Consubstantiation Compared To the Universal Invisible Church

Secondly, a comparison can be made of Luther's view of consubstantiation and his view of the church. The popular teaching today even among some Baptists that the church is the universal invisible body of Christ finds its roots in the Reformation period. S. E. An-

Christ. The Catholic doctrine concerning the church misinterprets those passages which refer to the church as Christ's body to produce their belief that the body of Christ through the sacraments is in a real way the universal visible Church.

Instead of seeing the church as a called-out assembly of believers organized in a particular locality and only metaphorically a body because Christ's diverse gifts dwell there in a corporate unity; they force this metaphor of a body into a form which mixes the mystical and the real into a universal visible sacrament. They ignore the truth taught by the metaphor the Holy Spirit moved Paul to use in 1 Corinthians 12:12:

> "For 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 Christ."

This is the foundational statement which establishes the metaphor used throughout the rest of the chapter. The Apostle gives a metaphor of a physical body picturing a functional unity among the Corinthian Church. Like the diversity of members in a human body exists in the unity of one body so the diversity of spiritual gifts dwell in Jesus Christ in the unity of His person. This being true, it is then developed that the church of Corinth is metaphorically one human body with each member possessing a diverse gift of Christ and yet just like Jesus Christ, they too were to exist in unity.

The Unity of Christ's Body

The unity of Christ is a recurring theme in the Corinthian epistle. It begins with the question, "Is Christ divided?" The centrality of Jesus Christ is then developed in different applications throughout the book. When one reaches 1 Corinthians, chapter twelve, Paul is not speaking about being placed in Christ pertaining to salvation but being placed into an assembly which is described as a metaphorical body, so he can demonstrate that the unity sought is practical. What practical meaning does 1 Corinthians 12:26 have to do with the millions around the world who are presently in Christ?

What we find curiously absent in his discussion of 1 Corinthians 12 is any consideration of verse 21 which reads:

> "And the eye cannot say unto the hand,
> I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the
> feet, I have no need of you."

Note that the metaphorical body which Paul presents here has a *head!* Its head is treated no differently than the feet. Every member of this body is necessary *including* the head. In verse 27 they are told:

> "Now ye are the body of Christ
> and members in particular."

The church at Corinth was "the" or as the Greek reads "a" body of Christ.[5] Clearly, the church at Corinth is depicted as *a body complete with a head.*

The Mixing of Metaphors

Jesus' statement in the above quote by Lloyd-Jones that "Apart from me ye can do nothing," has its context in the vine-branch metaphor of John 15 and within that context it makes perfect sense. However, when mixed and placed within the context of an organic head-body metaphor, it makes no sense at all because apart from the body the head has as much sustaining power as the body—none! A vine, on the other hand, can have a branch severed and still maintain full vitality even growing more branches. The process of pruning can even strengthen the vine.[6]

Matthew Poole

The renowned Matthew Poole, commenting on Ephesians 1.22,[7] falls prey to the same illogical thinking as the others and gives the word "head" two meanings:

> Christ is the "*mystical head* … as a king is to his subjects, to rule them externally by his laws" and "as a *natural head* ... to the body which it governs by way of influence, conveying spirits to it, and so causing and maintaining sense and motion in it ... (italics mine).[8]

Two problems are evident here. One is that he makes the same mistake as the others in making Jesus Christ a head organically linked to the torso or trunk which is viewed as the church. The other is that he then is forced to change the meaning that is given to the term head within this context. Jesus Christ is the head over all things, but all things do not constitute His body. The word "head" in Ephesians 1:22 appears just like it does in 1 Corinthians 11:3, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." Is every man metaphorically the body of Christ? Is every woman an acelphalous trunk over which man is the organic head? Is Jesus Christ to be pictured as a headless being with God being His head? The context of Ephesians chapter one is the sovereignty, power, and exaltation of Jesus Christ over all. A complete resurrected God-man Jesus Christ reigns over all things and in the interest of His assembly—it is a complete body over which He presides as Lord.

More Metaphor Mixing

If one interprets the head-body metaphor in Ephesians 1:22-23 as an organic union, there is a mixing of metaphors. Ephesians 1 :22-23 states:

> "And hath put all things under his feet,
> and gave him to be the head over all things
> to the church, which is his body, the fullness
> of him that filleth all in all."

Here we have a strange picture indeed if Christ metaphorically is the head of the body for all things are placed under His feet. He is one and at the same time a head which has feet. Some will perhaps react

> compared to the mystery of the incarnate Word. As the assumed nature inseparably united to Him, serves the divine Word as a living organ of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the visible social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ, who vivifies it, in the building up of the body … In that Body the life of Christ is poured into the believers who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ who suffered and was glorified.[44]

It appears evident that there is a parallelism in thought concerning Catholicism's teaching of transubstantiation and its understanding of the nature of the church. The mystical and even cannibalistic interpretation of Christ's words "this is my body" (1 Cor. 11:24) coincides with the mystical and yet the "real way" that Catholics understand themselves to be the body of Christ.

The mystical and the real blend together to "form one complex reality which coalesces from a divine and a human element." They make an analogy between the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the Spirit's vivification of the visible church in such a way as to make it a living organ of salvation and an ecclesiastical incarnation of Jesus Christ. They believe that "in that Body the life of Christ is poured into the believers who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ who suffered and was glorified." Note also that the "hidden" is contrasted with the "real" giving the understanding that the real way pertains to the visible and physical nature of the Church.

A Wrong Hermeneutic

A comparison of these two doctrines reveals an error in applying proper hermeneutical principles in the interpretation of Scripture. The Bible is literature and we find a full range of figurative language in it. But with their inordinate desire for the mystical, they press some figurative language to the absurd. In building their doctrine of transubstantiation, the Catholics misinterpret Jesus words "This is my body" and take them literally by which they justify their belief that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus

the following quote from a Catholic encyclopedia indicates:

> Our English word is related to the Scots *kirk*, the German *kirche* and the Dutch kerk, all of which are derived from the late Greek *kyriakon*, meaning 'the Lord's (house).' The classical Greek *ekklesia* meant 'assembly of citizens' and implied a democratic equality among its members who met for legislative and other deliberations. In the Greek Old Testament (LXX), *ekklesia* represents the Hebrew *kahal*, meaning the religious assembly (Dt 23; I Kgs 8; Ps 22). In the New Testament the term *ekklesia* be the body of Christ. always refers to a group of people: (1) those Christians in a region or city (e.g., Acts 14:23ff.; I Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1); (2) those gathered in a particular house (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19); (3) all Christians gathered in the Church (Mt 16:18; Eph 1:22).[43]

The Catholic view is correct until the meaning of ἐκκλησία is given an ecclesiastical twist to make it mean all Christians gathered in the universal visible Catholic Church as a religious hierarchy.

This original error within Catholicism's ecclesiology is greatly multiplied by their inordinate need for mysticism. This can be demonstrated by their statement in the Vatican II documents as to the belief concerning the Church as the body of Christ:

> Christ, the one Mediator, established and continually sustains here on earth His holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as an entity with visible delineation through which He communicated truth and grace to all. But, the society structured with hierarchical organs and the Mystical Body of Christ, are not to be considered as two realities, nor are the visible assembly and the spiritual community, nor the earthly Church and the Church enriched with heavenly things; rather they form one complex reality which coalesces from a divine and a human element. For this reason, by no weak analogy, it is

as to the reason for the phrase "his body" if it is not referring to his mystical body. The Greek reads, τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ. The αὐτοῦ (his) of τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ (his body) is definitely a possessive genitive. All scholars are in agreement here. But the context is clear that the "his" is not reflexive in reference to his physical or some imagined mystical body. The body which He has purchased with His blood and organized into a living organism in the form of a local assembly is *His*. When this passage is exegeted properly a glorious truth emerges. Just as the fullness of the spiritual gifts, with all their diversity, dwelled in Jesus Christ in the unity of his being, so they exist in their fullness and unity in each assembly (metaphorically a body) over which He reigns sovereignly and to which he chooses to fill and nourish as His body just as a man chooses to nourish his wife.

John Thornbury

The following quote from Thornbury continues with the same weaknesses as the previously quoted authors:

> Christ is not only the Head of authority over His people, but He is also the source of their spiritual life and energy. **Just as the members of a physical body derive life and power from the head to which they are vitally connected, so all who are joined to Christ by faith derive their spiritual life and strength from Him** ... Thus, according to this position, Christ is not only the governmental Head but the organic Head as well.[9] (Highlight mine.)

This quote adds nothing new but again repeats the error of mixing metaphors with Christ being an organic head of the body and yet at the same time the governmental Head. This is like trying to draw two lessons from a parable that has only one — it cannot be done. The head-body metaphor is either teaching that Jesus is the organic head over church or the governmental head but not both! Thornbury further states:

> If the above meaning can be ascribed to the figure of head and body-that it describes a saving or spiritual union of

> Christ and the church-the strict local position [i.e. the local and visible concept of the church as held by Landmark Baptists] is rendered untenable...[10]

This is a conclusion that perhaps all of the above writers in this chapter would draw. John Thornbury believes that the true Baptist view of the church is that of a universal, invisible body.

But for those who hold a strict local view, as the current writer does with some modifications, Thornbury's conclusion certainly reinforces the necessity of correctly interpreting this metaphor. One's Ecclesiology stands or falls on a correct understanding of the head-body Metaphor.

Summary

Many more examples could be cited of those who have misconstrued the Pauline head-body metaphor to consist of an organic union in which Christ as the head is connected to the body in a vital or living union. We will see in the following chapter that such an interpretation is utterly impossible.

Baptists believe in neither transubstantiation nor consubstantiation. The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 states:

> "The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, although in terms figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ, albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before. (I Cor. 11; 27; I Cor. 11:26-28)"[42]

Baptists have believed and do believe today that the elements of the Lord's Supper only *represent* the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. They are not sacramental in nature and, therefore, do not convey the forgiveness of sin. This is the biblical position.

The Analogy Between Each View of Communion And Their Respective Ecclesiology

The parallel between each group's belief concerning the Lord's Supper and their ecclesiology is to this writer beyond coincidence. A distinct similarity can be seen by comparing the following: transubstantiation with the universal visible church; consubstantiation with the universal invisible church; the elements of the Lord's table only representative with the local visible church. This doctrinal model constructed from the three views of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper compared respectively to the three main views of ecclesiology can possibly shed some light concerning the meaning of the body of Christ as referred to in relationship to His church. It is believed that the comparison will reveal a correlation between each respectively and demonstrate the principle that truth builds upon truth and error builds upon error.

Transubstantiation Compared To The Universal Visible Church

First, a comparison will be made between Catholicism's view of the church and its belief concerning the Lord's Supper. The Catholic understanding of the basic meaning of ἐκκλησία is quite surprising as

> In the year 1215 ... at the same time Innocent III put forward the doctrine of transubstantiation which lies at the very centre of the service called 'the mass,' and which asserts that, by the words of the priest, the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper (they are sometimes called 'the elements') cease to be bread and wine, and literally and actually become the body and blood of Christ. Hence they are to be worshipped. The council accepted the doctrine and thereby legislated idolatry.[39]

Consubstantiation: The Lutheran View

The Lutherans, following the teachings of Martin Luther, developed the doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper known as Consubstantiation. A summary of Lutheran teaching states their belief:

> ... we receive bread and wine when we go to communion, but along with it we truly receive Christ's body and blood. (1 Cor. 10:15-16). We speak of this as 'the Real Presence' of Christ in the sacrament. We receive forgiveness of sins, strength for our life and the opportunity to proclaim publicly that we believe Jesus died and rose for us….[40]

This teaching of the so called "Real Presence" of Christ's body and blood is just a step removed from the Catholic teaching of transubstantiation and is typical of the short comings of Catholic Reformers.

Representation: The Baptist View

Baptists have been present since the days of Jesus Christ. Baptist historian S. H. Ford writes:

> Certainly hundreds of men have testified to the fact that Baptist churches, or churches though called by some other name than Baptists, have been in existence all the way from the days of Jesus until this present time."[41]

Chapter Two

THE CORRECT VIEW

Introduction

Kierstead writes, "The concept of the church as the body of Christ dominates our Christian thinking about the church today, almost to the exclusion of other symbols. Cole suggests that perhaps the Ecumenical Movement more than anything else has influenced this concentration."[11] Perhaps as the Ecumenical Movement fails, more will continue to reevaluate the biblical integrity of the popular but incorrect view of head-body metaphor. Although my conclusions concerning this subject were, for the most part, the result of independent study, it was realized later that a good number of Christian scholars had already reached the same conclusion. The following quotes acknowledge that others, like myself, have noticed the same problems.

Edmond P. Clowney

Clowney sees the vanity of arguing for an organic union in the head-body Metaphor and argues convincingly for the correct view:

Paul uses the term 'head' (κεφαλή Hebrew *rosh)* to describe the supremacy of Christ over all things and all ages (Eph.1:22; Col. 2:10). His usage is shaped from the O.T. in Greek, where (αρχή) is associated with (κεφαλή) in translating the Hebrew *rosh.* The 'head' has primacy, origination, honour, authority, summation. Here usage has so faded the original metaphor that there is no necessary implication whatever that the head stands in any organic connection with the body. Christ is head of all powers in heaven and earth as well as head of the church (Col. 2:10; 1:18). Neither the universe nor the powers are thought

of as the body of Christ. Even when Christ as 'head' is brought in close connection with the body the independence of the metaphor remains. When Paul describes the members of the body of Christ, he does not hesitate to use the eye and the ear as sample members of the body. If he thought in composite terms, of Christ as the head and the body as the torso, he would not have chosen parts of the head to illustrate members of the body. Efforts to explain the physiology of Paul's supposed composite metaphor in Eph. 4:11-16 have been in vain. How does the body grow up into the head? How is the body framed and knit together by the head? The point is that Paul's image of the church as a body is the image of a whole body, head included, a new man in Christ. Christ is the head over the whole body as the husband is the head over the wife (cf. I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23). Only by keeping the metaphors distinct can they be properly understood. Paul does not conceive of Christ the head of the church after the fashion of the Head" in C. S. Lewis's novel, *That Hideous Strength*! [12]

Gosnell L. O. R. Yorke

Gosnell L. O. R. Yorke, commenting on Ephesians, shows the utter breakdown of the organic union theory of the metaphor by applying it to husbands and wives:

> In 5:21-33, the analogy is drawn between the Christ-church relationship and that between husbands and wives. Both Christ and husbands are considered heads; the former *vis-à-vis* the church and the latter, their wives (vv. 23-30). Quite reminiscent of l Cor. 11:2-16, κεφαλή here cannot be taken physiologically since obviously, Paul is not suggesting that wives are without heads and that husbands are without bodies (cf. vv. 28f.); or that Christ is an ansomatic κεφαλή and the church an acephalous σῶμα with both in need of each other in some anatomical sense. Rather, the apostle is using κεφαλή in

The Comparison

The similarity between the incarnation of the living Word and the entrance of God's Word into the world make this comparison possible. Jesus Christ, God the Son, became man without ceasing to be God. God's Word became man's word without ceasing to be God's Word. Jesus Christ possesses two natures which are united but not mixed in the one person Jesus Christ. The Bible possesses two natures-a divine nature and a human composition-but these two aspects do not mix to make some type of co-authorship, rather the uniqueness of the undivided reality of the Bible is that it is the Word of God. Just as Jesus Christ was born of a virgin by the miraculous conception of the Holy Spirit within her womb so the Holy Spirit conceived the words of God in the minds of the human authors. Mary gave birth to Jesus of the seed of David, but He was and is the Son of God. The human authors gave birth to words in the language of their day that would be and still are to this day called the Word of God. Jesus appeared as an ordinary man and yet he was God manifest in the flesh. The Bible appears to be an ordinary book and yet it is the Holy Scripture of God.

Although this subject does not directly address the matter at hand, it does show the validity of this type of comparative study.

The Doctrinal Analogy Established

We believe that a doctrinal model similar in principle to those particulars considered above in determining the nature of the body of Christ is found in the biblical teaching of the Lord's Supper. The three common views of communion, transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and representation can be compared to the three common views of the church and the body of Christ: the universal visible, the universal invisible, and the local visible church. These comparisons reveal some interesting results.

Transubstantiation: The Catholic View

The doctrine of transubstantiation blossomed in 1215 A.D. Historian S. M. Houghton writes:

this doctrinal corruption concerning the incarnate Son of God, the truth of His person prevailed for the most part throughout Christendom. Today most of Christianity holds to the truth they defended that Jesus Christ in His one person has two natures--a divine nature and a human nature — in which union His person is not divided and his natures not confounded.

Unlike this raging battle over the person of Christ, the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture did not receive the scrutiny of examination that their Christology received. Historian Lindsell speaks concerning the development of doctrine within Christendom:

> In the early centuries of the church, the theologians and church councils faced grave problems. But none of them devoted much time to the question of an inspired and inerrant Bible. The question of Christology agitated every fishmonger in the Eastern Church. The philosophically-minded Greek world wrestled with the question of the pre-incarnate Christ. The Arian controversy symbolized this struggle, and from it came decisions that firmly imbedded into the theology of Christendom the teaching that Jesus Christ is coeternal with the Father, of one substance in essence and yet distinct in person."[37]

One of the chief concerns in the past century is the nature of Biblical authority and inspiration. Lindsell states the results of a poll taken by *Christianity Today* in 1964, "... the poll said that Biblical authority is the main theological theme now under review in conservative circles in America."[38] Some have realized a battle already fought and won can help in settling issues in the current debate concerning the inspiration of Scripture. If one places his view of inspiration in comparison to the well-developed Christology we have received and upon which we agree, it will be noticed this process of comparison facilitates the development and understanding of one's doctrine of inspiration.

> the passage to underscore the place of primacy that Christ occupies *vis-à-vis* the church, His σῶμα, as well as that which presumably, husbands occupy *vis-à-vis* their wives.[13]

Herman Ridderbos

Ridderbos, after presenting the organic conception of the relationship of Christ as Head of the church, makes this comment:

> Closer examination, however, enables one to realize quickly the untenable nature of this explanation. First of all, the representation of a body nourished from the head and growing up toward the head, as one would then have to take Ephesians 4:15, 16 and Colossians 2:19, is physiologically difficult to imagine, and was certainly not current in antiquity. For that matter Paul does not formulate: "the Head, from which," but "the Head, from whom," that is, from Christ (Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15). More importantly, however, from Paul's own terminology clearly another idea emerges than that of such a composite metaphor. For the church is continually represented as the whole body (in Eph. 4:16 as well), and not merely as the remaining parts of the body belonging to the head, which the idea of a trunk would then imply. In I Corinthians 12:16 the functions of the head are likewise compared with those of the church (and not with those of Christ). And what entirely settles the matter is this: Christ cannot be thought of as a (subordinate) part of his own body, which is involved in the process of growth toward adulthood and which as part of the body must itself consequently be "in Christ." Even from these "organic" texts themselves it is evident that one arrives at all kinds of absurdities when one chooses to take "body" and "head" as

> one, composite metaphor. This is still more clearly the case when one takes into consideration the application of the head-body relationship to the marriage relationship, as this occurs in Ephesians 5:23ff. There the husband is called the head (of the wife) and the wife the body (of the husband) (cf. vv. 23, 28). But it is unwarranted and absurd so to conceive of this as though the wife constituted the trunk of this unity of the two and the husband the head.[14]

There are, no doubt, many others who have correctly understood the head-body metaphor, but these are sufficient to show that the view proposed in his paper is not some novel position held only by a small group of independent Baptists.

The Real Problem

The problem with the organic interpretation of the head-body metaphor is not the glorious teaching of the believer's union to Jesus Christ that is associated with it. For in this truth all Christians rejoice. The problem is simply that the metaphor does not teach the believer's union to Christ. At best, it is a poor representation of the organic and vital union believers have to Jesus Christ, and at worst, it causes serious distortions of the truth it supposedly portrays.

Salvational Metaphors

The Bible uses many metaphors to depict the believers salvational union with Christ. In these, Jesus is not only portrayed as the life-sustaining source but as possessing within Himself the fullness of life *independent* of anyone or anything. For example, Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. Cut the branches off the vine and the vine continues to grow and sprout new branches. Jesus is the bread of life that came down from Heaven. We will stay dead in our sins if we do not become united to the Bread of Life by partaking of Him through the assimilation of regenerating faith. Jesus Himself is pictured as one in whose hand bread multiplies. He is eternal life independent of anything or anyone. Jesus is the water of life and we must drink of Him, but He Himself is pictured as a well incessantly springing up the waters of life.

Addendum I

THE ANALOGY OF CHRIST'S BODY IN THE COMMUNION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER WITH CHRIST' BODY, THE CHURCH

Introduction

This addendum introduces an example of a comparative study in the Scriptures of two separate doctrines which have more than a coincidental similarity. This type of comparison we are calling a doctrinal analogy or doctrinal model. The purpose of the following example is to establish the usefulness of using a doctrinal model in the study of Scripture. After giving an example of a doctrinal analogy to verify its usefulness as a tool in biblical studies, a doctrinal model will be developed. This doctrinal model will provide some interesting parallels and show that there exists a direct correlation between one's view of the meaning of "the body of Christ" in the communion of the Lord's Supper and one's view of the "body of Christ" as the church. These comparisons will reinforce the truth that has been set forth in these pages concerning the metaphor of the body of Christ, and among other things show the inconsistency of Baptists who hold to the false doctrine of a universal invisible church.

An Example of a Doctrinal Analogy: Christology and the Inspiration of the Scriptures

For the purpose of demonstration only an analogy between the doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures is given next. The person and work of Jesus Christ is the heart of the New Testament body of doctrine. For this reason a clear understanding and declaration of who Jesus Christ is held a place of primacy among the early churches. This they did even in the face of intense opposition in the form of false teaching concerning Christ. Many false teachers such as Sabellius, Arius, Apollinaris, and Nestorius fueled the fires of opposition, each denying either Christ's deity or His humanity, confounding His natures or dividing His person. In spite of all

as we formerly were in Adam. Yet, being in Adam is not pictured as the sinner being a member of one universal invisible flesh. We are the branches of Jesus as the vine. We are the branches of His salvational fullness as the grafted branches of an olive tree. Our spirit is one spirit with Christ's Spirit as He indwells the believer, but we are not one member in a mystical body because such a metaphor is not taught in regard to our union with Jesus Christ. In such a metaphor Christ would be a subordinate part of His own body. Our salvation would not just come from the head but also from the other vital members of the body. We could boast that we bear the head. Those of Paul's day would not have understood the metaphor in this way because according to their thinking the life of the body is in the blood not the head. They did not understand the brain as the central nervous system but rather the heart and belly region as the region of the mind.[36] When the Bible refers to the body of Christ it does not mean the mystical body of which He is the organic Head, but rather the metaphorical body of Christ that is His by possession, creation, relationship, and Lordship. It is built on the qualities of an ordinary human body, and then applied to the assembly of Christ as depicting His many and various spiritual gifts existing in a particular locale in unity and visible corporate manifestation.

The Olive Tree Metaphor

The salvation of God in Christ is pictured in Romans chapter eleven as an olive tree. This metaphor is most interesting because it not only supports the point of salvational metaphors not displaying Christ as having a dependency in the relationship, but it actually gives exhortation against the pride of one who would think in such a way. Romans 11:17-18 says:

> "And if some of the branches be broken off,
> and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them,
> and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;
> Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast,
> thou bearest not the root, but the root thee."

When a Gentile is grafted into this tree what is the first blessing he partakes of? Is it not the salvation of his soul by receiving the life and fatness of the root? Verse 18 speaks concerning this metaphor in a way of exhortation not to boast because life flows from the root to the branch not the branch to the root. Break the branches off and the root will sprout new ones because the source of life is in the root.

The weakness of the head-body metaphor with its organic union forming one composite body is clearly seen at this point. The head, who is Jesus Christ, can not say I bear you believers with any more strength than the body can say to Christ that we bear Him. The head-body composite metaphor is flawed and leads to a wrong interpretation which makes itself susceptible to the most arrogant boasting. Romans chapter eleven confirms that God is concerned about prideful boasting and reminds them clearly from whom they receive life. To picture our union with Jesus Christ organically in a head-body metaphor seriously denigrates Christ.

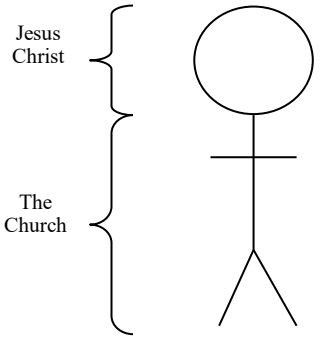
An Example

Throughout our study key passages will be examined to show the utter untenableness of the organic head-body view of this metaphor, but for the sake of an example consider the following passage:

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."
(Eph. 5:22-24)

Verse 22 states that the husband is the head of the wife ***even as*** Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Saviour of the body. Here a comparison is set up. If one wants to know what is meant by the head-body metaphor when it speaks of Jesus Christ as head of the body (the church), one needs only to consider the analogy of this passage. Surely the Pauline head-body metaphor has nothing to do with a composite head-body union or relationship. Are we to think of the husband as a trunkless head and the wife as a headless trunk or a non-person? Reflecting now on our two diagrams presented earlier, which analogy best fits the picture here, figure 1 or figure 2?

FIGURE 1:



fact that there is a consistent use of the word body in the singular in reference to the church neither establishes nor necessitates the existence of an universal invisible body of Christ. It establishes a careful use of the word so that there is no idea developed that would infer that there can be more than **one kind** of body of Christ.

There is one people of God, one kingdom of God, one fold of the sheep of God. Becoming a child of God, entering the kingdom and entering the fold of God all picture the believer as entering into the salvation of God. One entering into the body of Christ is not picturing entering into salvation but a relationship of sanctification. Hence, there is no conflict with there being many individual churches and each metaphorically a body of Christ because each body is not a picture of division in Christ. Rather this places the one people of God into corporate relationship with Christ. Remember there is a difference between being placed in Christ and the action of God subsequent to salvation placing us into a body which is Christ's. Hence, it is not that Christ has many bodies, but He has one place in which the people of God can experience a corporate sanctifying oneness to each other.

One might ask why there cannot be one invisible body if there can be one unseen fold or kingdom. The reason is that the body metaphor does not depict salvation, it depicts sanctification. When one is placed in the kingdom or fold of God, he is saved. He is entering the "in Christ" reality of salvation. A believer is not saved by being placed into the body of Christ; he is sanctified unto God corporately with other believers. All will experience the blessing of corporate unity and full sanctification in glory, but presently only those who submit themselves to God's action of placing themselves into an assembly experience the progressive sanctification this corporate relationship brings. Such sanctification does not create division in Christ, but rather it creates Christ-likeness in a way that cannot be accomplished by the believer in isolation, and which presently brings glory to God and will have an eternal weight of glory in heaven.

The teaching of our union with Jesus Christ should be guarded tenaciously. Refuting a metaphor that weakens the teaching of this truth has been one of the purposes of this book. We are one in Christ

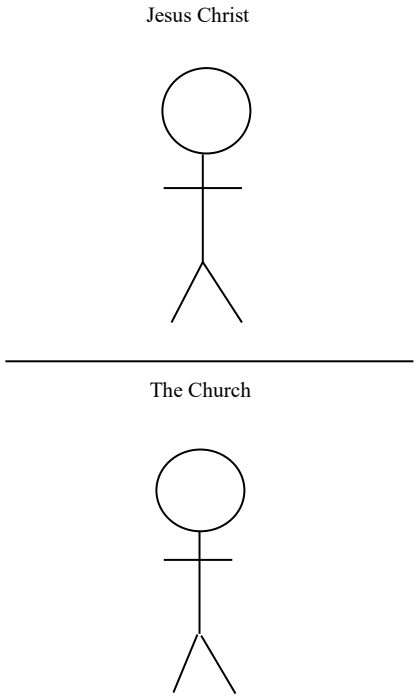
Chapter VI

Summary and Conclusion

The Church is "the body of Christ." The nature of this Pauline metaphor has been the subject of this book. The main point that has been developed is that this metaphor teaches the functional relationship of Christ to each and every assembly of which He is head. This metaphor neither teaches an organic union of the individual believer to Christ nor the organic union to Christ of any group of believers. Rather, it pictures Christ's relationship to His assembly as a husband nourishes his relationship to his wife although they are not organically one being but two becoming one in function, unity, goal and purpose. In the same way, each church is not organically one in being with a supposed mystical body of Christ but two, Christ and His assembly becoming one by a process of sanctification. Through His functional Headship relationship He cares for and enriches the church so that there is unity, oneness of goal and purpose between Himself and His assembly. It is called His body because it is His by possession, creation, and relationship. The church manifests the gifts of Christ as He possessed them in His body while upon this earth. Therefore the corporate organized unity of His gifts is the essence of the church.

One may question, if the view proposed in this book is true, why doesn't the New Testament speak of the **bodies** of Christ instead of consistently referring to the **body** of Christ? If each church is a **body** of Christ then why is there no reference to the **bodies** of Christ. The answer is found in realizing that the word church (ἐκκλησία) is never used in the New Testament in a metaphorical sense. Every time Jesus used the word church or churches in Matthew and the book of Revelation it is used in its ordinary sense. The Apostle Paul does not alter Christ's usage of (ἐκκλησία).[35] Its usage is always in either a concrete or generic sense in every passage. Therefore there is no possibility of conveying the wrong meaning of (ἐκκλησία) by using it in the plural-churches. On the other hand **body** in the Pauline ecclesiology is used in a metaphorical sense i.e. Christ's gifts organized in an assembly is analogous to the diversity of the several parts of a human body which exist in the perfect unity of the whole body. To speak of the **bodies** of Christ would confuse the metaphor. The

FIGURE 2:



Is the husband the head of the wife as part of a single body as in figure 1 or is the husband a complete body who is head over the wife? Clearly figure 2 depicts the biblical and correct view.

A Functional Union

The husband-wife union, therefore, depicted in Ephesians 5.22-24 is not a salvational union but a sanctifying, maturing, and developing oneness that is best described as a *functional* union. The head is a complete body or person, just as a husband would be viewed, lovingly exercising headship over a complete body or person, just as a wife would be viewed. The husband nourishes and cherishes his wife, just as a complete Christ nourishes and cherishes the church (His body). Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the body just as that body depicted in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, with a head no different in significance than the feet, both being necessary to constitute the body of Christ at Corinth.

The Organic View of the Head-Body Metaphor Causes us to Misunderstand Other Bible Passages

Not only does the organic view of the head-body metaphor destroy the doctrine of our union to Jesus Christ, but interpreting it in this way causes us to miss other truths within the passages where it is found. For example,

> "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:30-32)

These verses are often looked upon as revealing a mystical union in salvation to Jesus Christ. If the view proposed in this volume is correct, the passage yields a different meaning that pertains to a functional relationship just as would be experienced in a husband-wife relationship within the union of marriage.

The term "great mystery" does not mean that no one can ever begin to understand it in a practical way, as those who make is a mystical salvational union would lead us to believe. There is, of course, a depth to this mystery that will only be realized when we are in glory, but the predominant meaning of the word mystery is something that can only be known via the revelation of God, and the revelation needed to begin understanding this mystery is given right in the text much like the mystery of the rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:51 is revealed in its text. But because this text is approached as picturing a salvational union through the influence of the composite head-body metaphor, the reality of it picturing a union brought about by sanctification is overlooked. Years ago my former pastor, William Younger, gave me one bit of advice that has helped me tremendously. He said, "Chuck, always separate ecclesiology and soteriology and you'll go in the right direction toward understanding the biblical teaching of the church." If we approach this text realizing that the subject is ecclesiology and not soteriology and that this metaphor is depicting a functional relationship between those already saved and their Lord (as a husband and his bride), then verses 30-31 immediately reveal their true meaning.

Consideration of Colossians 2.19

Finally, Colossians 2:19 must be given attention:

> "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

This is only considered because the KJV translation needs some explanation. In English it appears that the word "which" has "head" for its antecedent. This would isolate head as a metaphorical part of the body and justify the mystical body of Christ's teaching. But this is not the case. The Greek underlying this is quite clear. The word "Head" (κεφαή is feminine in gender and "from which" (ἐξ οὗ) is either masculine or neuter and cannot have head for its antecedent. *From which* should be translated *from whom* and has Christ as a person as it antecedent.[34] Yes, Christ is the Head, but not as the metaphorical head organically connected to the mystical body. Christ is Head over the body as the husband is head over his wife, or as Christ is head over man or head over all things. Christ enriches *all* the body just as a husband cares for and enriches his wife.

Note the words "not holding the Head." "Holding" is translated "holdfast" in other passages. A body, of course, does not hold the head. The Colossians are to "holdfast" to the doctrine and fellowship of Jesus Christ as head over the Colossian body-which was a complete body. Not holding the Head is a warning against failure to do what Christ commands and failure to believe what His word teaches. Other passages could be interpreted without the influence of the universal invisible body teaching, but these verses should suffice to provide a pattern.

whereof I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Col. 1.20-24)

There is an obvious parallelism between Ephesians 2:14-16 and Colossians 1:20-24. The phrase "one body" in Ephesians 2:16 is the key phrase to be examined. It is thought by many that this "one body" in which the Jew and Gentile are reconciled is the universal invisible body of Christ. Poole mentions the popular view and then favors that the "one body" is Christ's physical body:

> *In one* body either both people united as one mystical body, or rather this *one body*, here, is the body of Christ offered up to God as the means of reconciliation, Col. 1:22. *By the cross*; i.e. by the sacrifice of himself upon the cross.[32]

Bengel states, "ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι *(in one body)* fixed to the cross... By His *death,* He *slew* the enmity against God Himself ἐν αὐτω *(in Him),* viz. in His *body."*[33] This interpretation is consistent with the context and perfectly parallels the references to Jesus in Colossians 1:20-22:

> And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the **body of his flesh** through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable In his sight.

In Ephesians 2:14-16 the context is similar in that Jesus' body of His flesh is in view as the means of peace and reconciliation. Therefore, there is a perfectly good and consistent contextual interpretation that once again does not acknowledge the mystical body of Christ as a reality.

The Head-Body Metaphor and Marriage

God designed marriage in such a way that the husband and wife separate themselves from family, friends, and associations so they can grow in their relationship of oneness. This natural bonding process separates the husband and wife from former relationships, obligations, and priorities to a new developing relationship of oneness. The need for this oneness is seen in Jesus, while upon earth, separating Himself from the multitudes while calling a people unto Himself and forming an assembly. This assembly coming out of the world is expressive of the bonding power that marriage brings. New converts will leave father, mother, houses, lands, etc., to join themselves to an assembly of Jesus Christ. Here they develop in that relationship of oneness to Jesus Christ only as they fulfill their part in the body in which they were placed by the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Church Membership Sets Us Apart

This biblical revelation explains why a new convert will leave so much to take his place in a body of Christ so he can experience the sanctifying life of the body as it grows in oneness to Jesus Christ. Indeed the greatest aspect of this mystery involves that which Jesus Christ forsook to become incarnate to redeem a people with whom He could assemble together in an organized relationship depicted metaphorically as a body and through them manifest His spiritual gifts and likeness. In Heaven He will visibly dwell with the grand assembly through whom throughout all eternity He will manifest His likeness and glory.

First Corinthians 12:18 helps us understand this truth: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." This action is by the work of the Holy Spirit as verse 13 explains, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The Holy Spirit leads those who are saved to a particular assembly to be baptized in water and become a functioning member of a body of Christ. So in salvation we are regenerated, gifted, and designed as a particular member of a body fashioned by God's design, but we do not fulfill that purpose until we leave the world and join a body of Christ.

There is no universal, invisible body that we instantly become a member of at the moment of salvation. This whole doctrine finds its strength in a misunderstanding of the head-body metaphor. The correct understanding of the metaphor is not organic and vital but relational and functional. It is not depicting our salvational union of being placed in Christ, but it is depicting a corporate functional union of believers set by God in a metaphorical body which is an organized assembly of believers — His church. There is as much difference between being in Christ and being in the body of Christ as there is between the Son of God and the Son of God incarnate who upon earth was local and visible and still is as the Lord in Heaven. We will discuss this distinction later. Being in Christ refers to salvation, and being in the body of Christ refers to a work of sanctification wherein a divinely organized assembly of believers corporately exercises and displays the diverse gifts of Christ in the unity created by the Holy Spirit.

Summary

The composite head-body metaphor is a myth that needs to be separated from the real metaphor of a complete body (His church) over which Jesus Christ presides as head. Each true New Testament church is a body which is his by possession and relationship and to which He is the Head.

members some were joining to a harlot constituting one flesh. He addresses the whole congregation by using the plural "your bodies are the members of Christ," but the admonition is received severally "joined to an harlot."

This passage becomes clear when one realizes each of the many bodies that constituted the church of Corinth individually has members of his own body. This is the same use that Paul presents in Romans 6:13. Each individual believer is to yield the different members of his body to Christ. First Corinthians 6:19,20 tell us that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and that our bodies are not our own. Does it not make sense that each believer's individual members of his body are Christ's members? If an individual believer joins the members of his body to a harlot he is taking members that belong to Christ and joining them to a harlot. This is the reproof and argument.

Consideration of Ephesians 2.14-16 and Colossians 1.20-24

Next, two passages are selected to be considered together:

> "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. 2.14-16)

> "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;

verse 15. Thirdly, keep in mind Paul's use of "members" as he does in Romans 6:13, 19.[31]

The Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 6.15

The question must be answered what then is 1 Corinthians 6:15 teaching? To understand this message, three considerations must be made. First, do not read into the text the universal invisible body teaching. Second, note the singular use of body everywhere except verse 15. Thirdly, keep in mind Paul's use of "members" as he does in Romans 6:13, 19.[31]

The physical body of the believer is in view throughout this text. Verse 13 of 1 Corinthian 6 states, "The body is not for fornication but for the Lord." Note the lack of parallelism in verse 15 if "members" refers to the different individual members of the church of Corinth. How can the members (plural) be the members of an harlot (singular)? If the individual members of the church were each a member of Christ then the members would be joined to harlots. Also, how can Paul state rhetorically in the first person singular shall "I" then take the "members" of Christ? How can one member of Christ take more than one member and make them the members of one harlot?

One might think that the plural "members" is used in the sense that if one member of Christ's mystical body joins himself to a harlot then he obviously in some sense involves the other members because they are members of the same body of Christ. In consideration of this read verse 13 carefully. His sin, in this context, is spoken of as against **his own body**. Surely if the universal invisible church view is in this context it would have mentioned his sin against the body of Christ. This helps establish the point that this text is not developing an ecclesiastical metaphor of the church as Christ's body; it is a reproof against individual believers of the assembly of Corinth for each offender using the members of his individual body to sin in joining them to a harlot. The body which is for the Lord (v. 13), will be raised (v. 14), joined to the Lord's spirit (v. 17), indwelt by the Holy Spirit, (v. 19), which body is not their own (v. 19), and in which body they are to glorify the Lord (v. 20) is the body whose

Chapter III

IN CHRIST BY SALVATION: AN EXAMINATION OF "IN CHRIST"

Introduction

"In Christ," what glorious truth is contained in these two God-breathed words! Their depth goes beyond the brink of eternity from which we receive the revelation that God has "chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). The breadth of their sphere spans time and space and places the elect on the cross with Jesus Christ, in the tomb of His death, magnificently risen together with Him, and presently seated in heavenly places. God's election of grace predestined us in Christ before there were times and seasons. The provision of God's grace " ... made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (II Corinthians 5:21). The effectual working of His grace gave us a testimony like that divinely recorded of the Apostle Paul. "I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20).

However, it is believed by many that the Biblical motif of "in Christ" is a reference to being placed into the mystical body of Christ by a so-called baptism of the Holy Spirit. This, of course, is not the meaning of "in Christ," nor is there anything of a "mystical body of Christ" or a baptism of the Spirit which places one in a mystical or local church body. In this chapter, we wish to examine briefly the "in Christ" motif putting forth its rightful meaning in order to contrast it in the following chapter with the Biblical teaching of the church as a body of Christ. We will see that one comes to be "in Christ" by God's work of a new creation in Christ and the believer's association with Christ by faith in Him.

A Survey of a Few Passages

It is believed that the Book of Galatians is actually the first of the letters written by the Apostle Paul, and it is in this book that we first find the words, "in Christ" and other closely associated ideas such as "I am crucified with." The richness of this truth as it first reached the Galatian believers was, of course, to be found in the person of whom it speaks. The totality of our salvation is found completely within the sphere of the person and work of Jesus Christ. According to Gromacki, the following Pauline epistles are listed in chronological order of composition coming after Galatians: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and the Romans.[15] No additional light is shed by 1 and 2 Thessalonians concerning the "in Christ, motif beyond what is found in Galatians. 1 Corinthians, on the other hand, provides a large bouquet of verses from which to pick and examine the "in Christ" motif.

First Corinthians

Among the many verses we could examine, two especially stand out like arrows pointing us in the right direction for understanding and comprehending the breath of the reality of our union with Jesus Christ. First Corinthians 1:30 says:

> "But of him are ye ***in Christ*** Jesus, who of God
> Is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness,
> And sanctification, and redemption."

The second verse is 1 Corinthians 15:22:

> "For as in Adam all die, even so
> ***in Christ*** shall all be made alive."

In these two verses our union with Jesus Christ is explained both as a work of God and that which involves Christ's headship. What power, wisdom, and glory are packed into the words, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus." No human cause is the source of the

Second, God sets the members in the body:

> "But now hath God set the members
> every one of them in the body,
> as it hath pleased him."
> (1 Cor. 12.18)

If there were no members there would be no body. In this context this metaphorical body has no existence outside the church at Corinth. Third, there is the practical aspect of suffering and being honored:

> "And whether one member suffer, all the
> members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all
> the members rejoice with it."
> (1 Cor. 12.26)

Verse 26 here has no practical and real application outside of the local assembly of Corinth.

Diversity of Spiritual Gifts

The question then comes, has the Apostle solved the dilemma of existing diversity of those who have unity in Christ? In 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, Paul, by developing this metaphor, resolves how diversity can coexist with unity. He first establishes the metaphor that equates a human body with Jesus Christ. He establishes that a human body has diversity and unity and then transfers this quality metaphorically to Christ. The diversity in Christ though is that of His gifts, not of His being and person. It is the diversity of His spiritual gifts that is then developed throughout the chapter. Therefore, diversity of Christ's gifts is equated with the diversity of the human body and yet just as the body is one in its unity, Christ is maintained as one in whom there is no division.

The Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 6.15

The question must be answered what then is 1 Corinthians 6:15 teaching? To understand this message, three considerations must be made. First, do not read into the text the universal invisible body teaching. Second, note the singular use of body everywhere except

I Corinthians 12.12

First Corinthians 12:12 further develops the concept of unity in diversity establishing a second metaphor. The verse reads:

> "For 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 Christ."

In this verse the Apostle presents a physical body as the basis for a metaphor. There is nothing mystical about his reference to "the body." He is speaking of an ordinary body in a generic sense as some would say "the body" is a beautiful creation of God with all its different organs, systems, and members, and yet it is a unity. When he states, "So also is Christ," the metaphor is established. There is something about a human body that is true of Jesus Christ. The Apostle is in no way seeking to establish a mystical body of Christ. The baptism of verse 13 ("For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles , whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.") is water baptism. This ordinance confirms and constitutes unity in a very real and practical way, as does the Lord's Supper. This is a unity that can be seen and experienced. Just as Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17 referred to the bread, (note that he did not refer to the **one** cup, only the **one** loaf) now he refers to the **one** drink. The nature of the observance of the Lord's Supper as given by Christ causes the participants to be made to drink one cup. The cup represents the drinking in one Spirit as the loaf represents the partaking of one body.

The Local Visible Church

The confirmation that a visible local body is being built up is seen three ways. First, Christ is not the organic head, but rather a member of the church of Corinth is head:

> "And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." (1 Cor. 12:21)

power which is able to quicken us together with Christ and raise us up together and set us in heavenly places in Christ. Ephesians 2:10 says:

> "For we are his [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."

This is an activity of God that takes place in the sphere of Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:30 says:

> "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"

We are made a new creation in the new man, the last Adam. This profound work is simply revealed as an act of God.

First Corinthians 15:22 is the first verse to give the meaningful comparative phrase "even as" with some explanatory verses following which speak of the "last Adam" (v.45) and the "second man... from heaven" (v.47). Hence, it is revealed that the understanding of this glorious motif of "in Christ" is going to be found and developed in a comparison between what we were in Adam and what we are and will be in Christ.

Second Corinthians

Additional light concerning the "in Christ" motif is given in 2 Corinthians. In chapter 5:17, it associates being in Christ with entering into the new creation:

> "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

The Holy Spirit's regeneration of the dead spirit of a man giving him spiritual life is a present blessing and evidence of being in Christ. It is in Christ that the believer enters the sphere of the new creation. The work of God in creating a new inward man is the only present

experientially realized aspect of the new creation in Christ. By faith we wait for the time when God makes all things new. And in 2 Corinthians 5:21 we are perhaps brought to the greatest height of this epistle:

"For he hath made him to be sin for us,
who knew no sin; that we might be made
the righteousness of God in him."

Here we see that Jesus Christ became our representative and provided a vicarious death for us. But as wonderful as each of these passages is, it is not until we get to Romans 5 that we find the epicenter of this profound motif. There the "even as" of 1 Corinthians 15:22 which declares a relationship between us in Adam and us in Christ is turned into a theological discourse that develops the truth of being in Christ to its fullest heights.

Romans

A study of Romans 5:10-21 develops the teaching of the headship of the human race in Adam and the headship of Christ's redeemed seed. The doctrinal basis for asking the question, "What does it mean to be in Jesus Christ?" is clearly set forth in this passage. One simply can ask, "What does it mean to be in Adam?" because our union with Jesus Christ is analogous to our former union with Adam. We were created by the power of God through procreation and entered the realm of natural life under condemnation because we were identified with being in Adam. According to Ephesians 2:10, we were by God created in Christ Jesus and entered the realm of spiritual life receiving justification because we were identified with being in Christ. Ephesians 2: 8, 9 explains that salvation is entirely of God's grace through faith. Strong writes, "As Adam's sin is imputed to us, not because Adam is in us, but because we were in Adam; so Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, not because Christ is in us, but because we are in Christ-that is, joined by faith to one whose righteousness and life are infinitely greater than our power to appropriate or contain."[16]

are one, equally receiving full redemption through his blood. But on the other hand, believers are diverse people and have diverse spiritual gifts. How can one demonstrate diversity in Christ, when, as we have already seen that "no" is the answer to the rhetorical question of "Is Christ divided?"

Many believe that 1 Corinthians 6:15 resolves this dilemma by presenting the foundation for Paul's development of the universal invisible body of Christ. This passage is thought to teach that each believer is a member of the mystical body of Christ. Such a view which pictures our unity as members of a mystical body with Christ its organic head actually pictures diversity in Christ himself. It shall be shown that it is not here where Paul resolves the dilemma of how to demonstrate the existence of diversity in believers when there is only unity in Christ. This is done in 1 Corinthians 10:17 and 12:12.

1 Corinthians 10.17

First, the Apostle uses the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 10:17 to accomplish his goal:

"For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for
we are all partakers of that one bread."

Our Lord has already established that the bread (loaf) and the cup are metaphorical of his body and blood. They are neither the real body and blood nor the mystical body and blood, but the metaphorical body and blood. Therefore an easy transference is made from a single loaf, to the body metaphor which represents Christ's body which can not have diversity, being assimilated by an assembly of diverse and diversely gifted believers. Hence, through their joint participation in the body of Christ, they are spoken of as one body.

Partaking in the one loaf representing the body of Christ through the Lord's Supper is the ground upon which the assembly is unified into one body. It is not the fact that the Lord's Supper exists, but the experiential participation of an assembly in the Lord's Supper that manifests the real unity of an assembly metaphorically spoken of now as a body based on this joint participation. By representing Christ's body, the unity of the loaf is such that it confirms the unity of the Spirit among all who participate in the eating of the one loaf.

Chapter V

THE CONSIDERATION OF SELECTED PASSAGESS

Introduction

At first reading, there are passages in the Bible that appear to teach and support the common but incorrect view of Christ being an organic head to his body, the church. This is especially true where the influence of the universal invisible church teaching has created a bias toward the organic union concept. In this chapter we wish to examine some of the passages that are thought to teach the universal invisible church concept which fosters the incorrect interpretation of the head-body metaphor.

I Corinthians 6:15

Brubaker states the first mention of the church as a body is found in 1 Corinthians 6:15:[30] This statement is thought by many to be the case, but it shall be shown that this passage speaks only of the physical body of individual believers. We believe that if we approach this passage without a bias toward the universal invisible body of Christ, it yields a meaning that is in complete agreement with what we have presented in earlier chapters. The verse reads:

> "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." (1 Cor. 6.15)

To arrive at a correct understanding of 1 Corinthians 6.15, it is necessary to examine the larger context of the Epistle.

Diversity in Unity

The Apostle easily establishes the fact that there is unity in Christ in chapter one of 1 Corinthians by simply asking the question, "Is Christ divided?" This is a rhetorical question in which the answer is so obvious there is no need for him to actually answer it. The answer, of course, is no. When thinking of being "in Christ," it is easily realized that all true believers have unity in Christ. All in Christ

Similar References

The Bible teaches the great truth of the believer being in God, in the Son of God, and in the Holy Spirit. John the Apostle writes of the believer dwelling in God:

> "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 Jn. 4:13).

The Apostle Paul associates being in God with being in Christ:

> "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. l: 1).

Paul speaks on the subject in Romans 8:9:

> "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

There are two points to be noticed here: first, this is speaking of every believer at all times. This is not speaking of being in the Spirit as something the believer goes in and out of according to his daily experience. The qualification for being in the Spirit according to this verse is only that the Spirit of God dwell in you. This leads to our second point. In 1 John 4:13, dwelling in God is equated with the reception and indwelling of the Holy Spirit:

> "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

In Romans 8:9 we have just seen that to be in the Spirit is evidenced by the Spirit dwelling in us. Romans 8:9 goes on to equate possessing all that is in Jesus Christ or having nothing that pertains to Jesus Christ as resting upon whether or not one has the Spirit of Christ indwelling them. Ephesians 2:5 speaks of us being quickened together with Christ.

It appears, then, that the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit quickening and indwelling the believer is the evidential reality of being in Christ. This coincides with Paul's discourse in Romans 5 because when human life begins it falls prey to the condemnation of Adam and its conception is in sin and death; therefore, spiritual death reigns at the conception of human life. When one of God's elect is sovereignly regenerated, his union with the headship of Jesus Christ brings the justification of the blood of Jesus Christ; hence, this spiritual life is eternal life in Jesus Christ and is neither subject to death nor corruption. Justification is not based on the quality of life of the one who receives the quickening any more than the condemnation is based on the quality of natural life that comes from conception. It is the identification with Adam that causes the conception to be in spiritual death and it is our identification with Adam that causes the conception to be a spiritual death and it is our identification with Jesus Christ that brings justification to eternal life.

Conclusion

A large number of scholars and churchmen fail to properly distinguish between being in Christ and being in the body of Christ. By carelessly making these two things synonymous, serious confusion arises. Most new converts are told today that when they were saved they were placed in the "body" of Christ. It is gloriously true that when a person is saved they are placed "in Christ," but being placed in the body of Christ is and your part is necessary to your spiritual growth. The realization that God is both concerned for your individual spiritual maturity and the corporate growth of the body of Christ where God has placed you is of primary importance.

A Problem for the Mystical Body View

If the Spirit immediately upon salvation immerses all believers into the mystical body of Christ, why is it said that God sets the members in the body as it pleases him?[28] They are spoken of as members before they are set; therefore if no members are set then no body exists, for the members constitute the body. Furthermore, if every believer is instantly immersed by the Spirit into the mystical body of Christ, why the need for the discretion of God who places or sets in the body *as it pleases Him*? This would be superfluous. When we think of a body we think of that which is organized, visible, local, and functioning. A body is diversity that expresses corporeal unity; it is organized life, full of activity, capable of growth, capable of reproducing.

The Trinity is displayed in Ephesians 4:3-6:

> "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit
> in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even
> as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith,
> one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above
> all, and through all, and in you all."

Verses 3 and 4 teach about those things which are a work of the Holy Spirit. The life and existence of the body is dependent upon the Holy Spirit. There is no mystical supramundane body of Christ that He immerses believers into. Rather, He creates the unity of body life. If all the elements of a body are united they do not necessarily have life. It is the life of the Spirit that gives the unity and the existence of the body of Christ. That is why Jesus threatened to remove the lampstand of the Ephesian Church in the book of Revelation. If the organization of the Spirit's life in bringing the gifts of Christ in living unity was removed, there would be at best a group of believers—but not a church of Jesus Christ.[29] The Spirit is associated with the one body, in kind, to which we are called (verse4 and Col. 3:15). In Ephesians 4.5 the one baptism is not associated with the Spirit nor with the Father but with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is water baptism that associates us with Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3-5 and Gal. 3:27).

Chapter IV

IN THE METAPHORICAL BODY OF CHRIST BY SANCTIFICATION

Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw that being placed "in Christ" is God's work of grace in salvation uniting us to Christ with the evidential reality of the Spirit of Christ indwelling us. It is the misunderstanding of the head-body metaphor that diminishes the glory of this "in Christ" reality to a supposed work of the Holy Spirit baptizing us into some mystical body of Christ. In this chapter we want to show what the body of Christ is and how one is placed in it.

A Misunderstanding of 1 Corinthians 12:13[17]

Many commentators believe that I Corinthians 12:13 is teaching that at conversion the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the mystical body of Christ of which Christ is the head; however, the subject here is sanctification and participation in the salvation already received. The body into which these Corinthians were baptized was a body that would have no existence if they, as members, were not constituted thus. There has never been nor is there today any cosmic body of Christ which has a transcendent reality beyond the body at Corinth. The context is clear that the Corinthians' assembly is portrayed as a metaphorical body complete with its own head which is said not to be any more necessary than any other members of the body. First Corinthians 12:21 states that "the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." Likewise, "ye are the [lit. "a"] body of Christ and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12:27).[18] This body with its own head and other members constitutes the church at Corinth. Therefore, to be placed into the "body of Christ" as set forth in Paul's epistles is a metaphor that pictures a codependency. The head cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of you." If this relationship with fellow members in the body is pressed as a salvational relationship, then our salvation depends as much on our fellow members in the body as it does on Jesus Christ Himself.

Robert Gundry

Having written an entire volume on the subject of the Biblical meaning of the Greek word σῶμα, Robert Gundry is in complete agreement with this conclusion. After describing Bultmann's faulty view that Christ constitutes the body in some mystical or supramundane way instead of Christians constituting the body, he then replies,

> A chief difficulty here lies in the failure of Paul to stress, or even to mention, the temporal priority of the Body of Christ over Christians, or its transcendence above the earthly church. In fact, Paul's comments point the other way. For all we can see, the Body of Christ has no existence apart from the historical church on earth. Bultmann appeals to I Corinthians 12:12-13: 'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.' However, these verses themselves contain a refutation of the temporal priority and transcendence of Christ's Body. For Paul here indicates that the Body has many members. Without them it would not be a body. Yet these members are Christians as the following verses set out in great detail and as verse 27 categorically states: 'Now you (emphatic hymeis) are the body of Christ and individually members of it.' Ergo, Christ is the Body only insofar as he has members, viz., Christians united to him through the operation of the Spirit. There is no supramundane body.[19]

Gundry goes on to say further in the chapter that:

> In one sense the ecclesiastical Body is just as physical as the individual body of Christ, not because it consists

More Proof

The validity of interpreting 1 Corinthians 12:13 as speaking of water baptism is confirmed by Greek scholars. For example, A. T. Robertson understands the baptism spoken of in this passage as that "outward badge of service to Christ the symbol of the inward changes already wrought in them by the Holy Spirit" Robertson further believes Galatians 3:27 and Romans 6:2 as speaking of water baptism. He says Galatians 3.27 is better translated "were baptized ***unto*** Christ" (emphasis ours) in the sense of "in reference to Christ" that is, "as a badge or uniform of service like that of the soldier." This verb "put on" he says "is common in the sense of putting on garments (literally and metaphorically as here)." Concerning Romans 6:3 which states, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" he again says it is better translated "were baptized ***unto*** Christ or ***in*** Christ" (emphasis ours). He continues, "The translation "into" makes Paul say that the union with Christ was brought to pass by means of baptism, which is not his idea, for Paul was not a sacramentarian....Baptism is the public proclamation of one's inward spiritual relation to Christ attained before the baptism."[26]

The Holy Spirit

Nowhere are we told in Scripture that the Holy Spirit would be the administrator of a baptism. Jesus prophesied that He would baptize with the Spirit. This prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when Christ sent the Holy Spirit, with accompanying signs, and immersed the church assembled by His ministry and command. This work of Christ baptizing with the Spirit was also performed on the Gentiles gathered in Cornelius' house (Acts 10:44-48). There may have been two other cases recorded in the book of Acts, but they are not confirmed by Scriptural testimony such as these two instances. This was the historic fulfillment and completion of this baptism with the Spirit by the administration of Jesus Christ.[27] The Epistles develop no doctrine of the Spirit baptizing believers. The one supposed reference in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is at best a weak foundation. The Ephesian Epistle written subsequent to Christ's fulfilling His promise to baptize with the Spirit, states that there is "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). This obviously speaks of baptism in water not baptism by the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's work is to manifest Christ, and you must be joined to Christ's body to do that fully. To do His work the Holy Spirit must lead us to an assembly (a body). One aspect of being filled with the Spirit then is not an isolated personal experience but one that directs a believer to function with other believers in an interdependent relationship. The Holy Spirit leads a believer in His work of sanctification to a dependence on the gifts and spiritual graces of others. Believers are not to remain in isolation nor does He develop believers in isolation. Sanctification is a working together as well as a working within. God is interested in developing the body (assembly) as well as developing the individual. In reality, the two are accomplished at the same time within the context of church membership.

First Corinthians 12.13

We see from 1 Corinthians 12:13 that the Holy Spirit leads the new convert to join the body of Christ and verse 18 of that chapter explains that God sovereignly sets him in the body as it hath pleased him:

> "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles\ whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (v.13)

> "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." (v.18)

Verse 13 teaches that a believer is led by the Spirit to be baptized in water to be identified with Christ.[24] This ordinance is obviously used as an entrance into the body because he is dependent on the body for the first time. The church body must administer baptism because only it has the authority to do so.[25] Also, as we arise out of the baptismal waters, we are to walk in newness of life and exemplify Jesus Christ. One cannot put on Christ unless he is placed in His body. Galatians 3:27 says that "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." This is why the Lord commanded believers to be baptized and then gave the church the authority to baptize. He purposely directed believers to His assemblies.

> in the individual body of Christ but because it consists of believers whose bodies (as well as spirits) belong to Christ (I Cor. 6:15, 19-20). In a larger sense, however, the ecclesiastical Body is metaphorical in that the equation of one member with the eye of the Body, another member with the ear, and so on can be understood (but is easily understood) only in a figurative way.[20]

Gundry is not alone in his conclusion. Yorke also, upon careful exegesis, comes to the same conclusion.[21] These two authors agree that the body into which the Corinthians were baptized was the local church of Corinth which is pictured metaphorically as a complete body. It should be noted that both men still recognize the Holy Spirit's baptism as being involved. What they both deny is that the Holy Spirit baptizes them into the universal invisible body of Christ. They see no Scriptural warrant for the belief in a mystical body of Christ.

The Importance of Church Membership

Our spiritual union with Jesus Christ takes place at salvation by a sovereign act of God and the creative work of the Holy Spirit producing repentance and faith in the hearts of the elect. The metaphor of believers being placed in the body of Christ does not teach this truth but rather displays another wonderful truth. Being placed in Christ begins an activity of sanctification which directs the believer to join a body of Christ. This is an aspect of sanctification that cannot be attained by the believer in isolation. It is the sanctification advanced by the process of a group of believers growing together in a unity created by God. The Trinity is involved in constituting such an organized group of saints for this purpose. The fullness of spiritual gifts resident within Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry are bestowed by the glorified Lord Jesus Christ through the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. Christ gives a measure to each saint out of the fullness of His gifts. The Holy Spirit endows each believer with this gift, and God places him in a particular assembly. This organized assembly is pictured as a human body in which each member pos-

sesses one or more unique gifts. Together they function as one body in Christ. The process of coming out of the world and into the church is spoken of as being set in the body. Since this organized assembly is Jesus Christ's by possession through the redemption by His blood and since they possess in unity the diverse gifts of Jesus Christ, it is called the body of Christ.

Jesus

Jesus was given the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). Consequently He possessed every gift of the Spirit in His own body. Isaiah 11:1-5 prophetically speaks of Jesus possessing the sevenfold fullness of all spiritual gifts.[22] The gospels record Jesus exercising this fullness of spiritual gifts. No one individual can manifest every gift of the Spirit. These gifts are given severally to individual believers whom God sets in each local assembly to manifest in each particular assembly the fullness of the gifts of Christ. Only in the unity of a New Testament Church, which is His body, can Jesus manifest His completeness. Ephesians 4:7 teaches that each individual is given a gift which is only a measure of the complete gifts Christ sovereignly possesses as the exalted Messiah. Ephesians 4:7-16 teaches that only in a body, a local church, can the fullness of Christ be manifested. In the unity of a body, as God has added and set each member (Acts 2:47 and 1 Cor. 12:18), each member exercises his measure of the gift of Christ by the Holy Spirit and together in the unity of the body the fullness of Christ's gifts are manifested.

A Glorious Truth

It is interesting to note that individual churches are represented by a lampstand in the book of Revelation but not individual believers.[23] The essence of what makes a group of believers a church as opposed to just being a group of believers is revealed by understanding the meaning of the lampstand. This fullness of Christ's gifts as given by Him, empowered by the Spirit, and set in place by God is the essence of the body of Christ. This beautiful truth is taught in Ephesians 1:23:

"Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

Here a glorious truth is revealed. The fullness of Christ, the one who fills the complete purpose of God in redemption, who gathers all things in heaven and in earth in Himself, even this one in whom the fullness of deity dwells bodily, and who in the days of his flesh received the Spirit without measure, manifests His fullness (i.e. His gifts) in His body (a particular local assembly).

First Corinthians 12.4-7

First Corinthians 12:4-7 teaches that there is diversity of gifts, administrations, and operations, but it is the one triune God who is working all in all:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.
And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God
which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit
is given to every man to profit withal."

The manifestation of the Spirit is for the profit of all. Every member in the church of Corinth exercised a gift or gifts and together as a complete body they were designed to reveal Christ. They were to display the fullness of Christ's gifts. This is what was in Paul's mind when he asked them in 1 Corinthians 1:13a, "Is Christ divided?" The purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is neither to exalt the Holy Spirit nor the individual but to exalt Jesus Christ. He possessed and exercised the diversity of the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the unity of His human existence.

Ephesians 5.18

This truth pervades the New Testament. In Ephesians 5:18 we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit:

"And be not drunk with wine,
wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."