

FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

NO. 2572

A SERMON
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 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?
 The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”
 1 Corinthians 10:16.*

THERE is one great difference between Christ, as the Founder of the Christian religion, and all mere men who have attempted to fashion a system of belief. The difference is not merely that Christ's was a true religion, and theirs a false one; but there is another distinction. All false prophets have sought to keep their disciples at a distance, and to impress upon them, not merely a high estimation of their importance, but also a superstitious reverence for their person; yes, and sometimes altogether putting aside the thought of allowing any of their disciples to hold communion with them. Look at the false prophet, Mohamed; and you will see how he kept himself aloof from his disciples. He taught them to regard him as something superior to themselves; and the caliphs, to this day, and all those who take to themselves the titles of his successors, endeavor to invest themselves with solemn pomp and state. They forbid all to approach them without certain salaams and salutations; they never allow their followers to hold fellowship with them. It was so with the old Pagan priests; they bade the worshippers fall down before them, but they never permitted them to come near to them, and hold fellowship with them; they were for driving the people away; and, in fact, the whole system of their religion depended upon the eminence of one who kept himself distinct from every other man, and was looked up to as a god, being regarded as a personage above all the rest, with whom they might, on no pretense whatever, hold any communion at all. Look at the Pope, that great antichrist and false prophet. Does he encourage any to stand on friendly terms with him? Is he at all times accessible? Ah, no! He surrounds himself with cardinals and bishops; and keeps himself distinct from others. It must not be expected that a Pope is to be seen by everybody, nor can it be supposed that he should herd with common men. It is very much the same with the bishops of another church that we know. How they labor to put men away from them with their pomp, their tinsel, their baubles, and their parade. Christ, as the great Founder of a new dispensation, revealed the idea of communion with Himself on the part of every one of His disciples; and, today, instead of endeavoring to keep His followers at a distance, He is always striving to bring them near to Him. He blames them not for familiarity, but because they are not familiar enough; He does not praise them because they stand at a respectful distance, but He praises Enoch because he walks with God, and He loves John because he lays his head on the bosom of his Savior. Christ, our Master, loves to have all His followers live near Him; He loves to have them in sympathy with Him; He loves to make them feel that, while He is their superior and their King, He is also as their fellow, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, in ties of blood one with them. One objective of Christ's religion is, to bring all His disciples into union and communion with its great Founder, that they may have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Our present subject is the doctrine of fellowship with Christ. We think there are four degrees of fellowship with Christ. The first is, *the fellowship of communion*; the second, *the fellowship of sympathy*; the third, *the fellowship of unity*; and the fourth will be, *the fellowship of heaven*.

I. The first grade of communion with Christ is that with which all believers commence, and without which they cannot attain to any other; it is, THE FELLOWSHIP OF COMMUNION.

Probably a large proportion of those here, who love the Savior, will not be able to go much farther with me than with regard to the fellowship of communion. Let me explain myself. I meet with one or two of you, I talk with you, we discourse with one another; in Scripture phraseology it might be said, we “commune with each other,” “we hold communion with one another.” So, beloved, there are times when Christ and His people meet; when He talks to them, and they talk to Him, and so “commune with Him;” that is the fellowship of communion. Let me show you how we enter into it.

We enjoy this kind of communion when, by *faith*, we lay hold of Christ, and when Christ, in honoring faith, lays hold of us; and when, under sorrows and troubles, we go and tell our Master what our sorrows and troubles are. We are talking with Him while He cheers us, reminds us of His promises, speaks to our heart with that sweet voice which lays our fears in their graves, and makes our tears be dry; it is then that we hold with Him a fellowship of communion—the communion of faith. Mark you, this is no mean attainment, to be able to take Christ’s arm, to command His ear, to possess His heart, and to feel that, when our lips speak to Him, His lips reply to us; that when we look at Him, and are lightened, that lightening comes from the fact that He looks at us; and that we are cheered by knowing that the reason of our cheerfulness is because His right hand is under our head, and His left hand embraces us. It is a privilege for which angels might barter their crowns, to be allowed to talk with Christ as faith does, for faith asks of Christ, and Christ gives to faith; faith pleads promises, and Christ fulfills promises; faith rests wholly upon Christ, and Christ lays all His honor upon the head of faith, and is content to let faith wear His own diadem; yes, He does uncrown Himself to put His crown upon the head of faith. You young believers know how sweet it is, by holy assurance, to come near your Master. You put your hand into His side, and you say, “My Lord, and my God;” you know what it is to throw your arms around Him, and to receive that gracious smile from Him, without which your spirits could not rest. That is the communion of faith, the communion which we have by faith in Jesus Christ.

There is, too, a communion in *prayer*, which is called the communion of conversation; for, in prayer, what do I do? If I pray aright, I talk to God; and if I pray with faith, what does Christ do, but talk with me? In prayer, the heart of man empties itself before God, and then Christ empties His heart out to supply the needs of His poor believing child; in prayer, we confess to Christ our wants, and He reveals to us His fullness; we tell Him our sorrows, He tells us His joys; we tell Him our sins, He shows to us His righteousness; we tell Him the dangers that lie before us, He tells us of the shield of omnipotence with which He can and will guard us. Prayer talks with God, yes, it walks with Him; and he who is much in prayer, will hold very much fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Then, again, there is a fellowship of communion, which we derive from *meditation*. When we sit down, and in thought see Christ in Gethsemane, and witness the blood-red drops wetting the soil; when we look upon Him shamed, and spit upon, and mocked, and buffeted; when we view Him on Golgotha, and hear His death-shriek startling the darkness; then our heart goes out after Him, and we love Him. While He holds up His hands, and says, “These were pierced for you,” we hold up our hearts, and say, “Here are our hearts, Lord, take and seal them; they are Yours, because bought with Your precious blood.”

Have you never felt the sweet communion of meditation? Many Christians know little about it; they have so much occupation, such a perpetual whirl of business that they have not half-an-hour to spend in meditation upon God. Beloved, you will never hold much personal communion with the Savior unless you have a place where you can sit down and—

***“View the flowing
Of His soul-redeeming blood,
With divine assurance knowing
That He made your peace with God.”***

You cannot expect to talk much to Christ, unless your mind is freed from the cares of earth. Oh, ’tis then that Christ descends, and talks with His children, and gives us sweet communion with Him, and fellowship in meditation on His sufferings! Children of God, you know this; all of you who are His people have had some taste of this communion of conversation with God, you know much more of it than I can tell. Alas! Alas, that the great majority of the people of God are far enough from understanding even this first and faintest form of communion with Jesus Christ!

Let me make one or two remarks here, before we pass away from this communion of conservation. I would not have you despise this fellowship, because you have not attained to the rest I am about to mention; but, dear friends, take care that you hold communion with Christ. There is a ladder between the believer's soul and heaven; mind that you tread its rungs very often. There is a road between Mansoul and the Celestial City; let the track be hard-beaten with the hoofs of the steeds of prayer. Let the chariots of praise whirl along the highway to glory. Do not let your Jesus live a day without a line from you; and do not be happy if you live a day without a word from Him. I marvel at some professors who can live weeks and months quite satisfied without holding this fellowship with Christ. What! A wife happy if her husband smiles not on her; and is not Christ my Husband, and shall I be blessed, shall I be easy, if He shuts His mouth, and speaks not a word to me? Can I be content if I have not one smile all day long? Is Christ my Brother, and shall I be willing to live without the assurance of my Brother's love to me? Can I be content to pass a week without knowing that my Brother's heart is still beating with affection towards me? Verily, Christians, I marvel at you; and angels marvel, too, that you can be so foolish, so stolid, so stone-like, as to live days beyond number without holding even this most common of all communions with our Lord Jesus Christ. Stir yourselves up, beloved; you have a ticket to admit you to the King's Palace; why do you not enter it? You have an invitation to the wedding feast; why do you not go? You have constant access to the banqueting house; why do you not go and feast on love divine? There are the "apples of gold in baskets of silver;" why do you not go and take them? There is Christ's heart open, there are His hands open, His eyes open, His ears open, will you not go to Him who stands ready and waiting to bless you? And you, too, poor sinner—I have often thought that a true description of Christ on the cross would be a fine sermon to illustrate that hymn—

“Come and welcome, sinner come!”

Do you not see the Savior there? He has His arms stretched out, as though He had them wide open to take a big sinner in. There are His hands nailed fast, as if they intended to wait there till you were brought to Him. His head is hanging down, as if He had stooped to kiss you; and there are His feet pouring out streams of blood, as if His very blood would run after you, if you would not come after it. Verily, if you saw Christ by faith, each bleeding wound and quivering atom of His body would say to you—

“Come and welcome, sinner, come!”

Much more do they say to you, beloved children of God, “Come to your Savior, and hold this fellowship of communion with Jesus Christ your Lord.”

II. Now we have done with the lowest grade of fellowship, and we pass on to another; THE FELLOWSHIP OF SYMPATHY.

Let me tell you what I mean by this expression. I said before that, if we meet two or three friends, and converse together, that is communion. But there was one friend there, who had a lofty project in hand; yet, though I talked to him, I did not share his views, and I did not wish to see his project accomplished; therefore I did not enjoy such deep communion with him as I might otherwise have done. Another of my friends was exceedingly sick; but I was not suffering just then, so that, when he spoke of his illness, I could not commune with him as fully as I could have wished to do. There was another, who was upbraided, and scorned, and spit upon; but I was not assailed in the same way, and, therefore, I had only partial communion with Him, and that not of the deepest kind. I could not say that I had complete fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Now, Christians, some of you have climbed another step on the heavenly ladder of communion; you have come to hold communion with Christ in sympathy.

Here I must divide this head of my discourse into two or three points. Some of us have known what it is to hold communion with Christ in sympathy, when we have *suffered just like Christ*. Did you never find a friend fail you—a friend of whom you expected far better things, at whose table you had often sat, who had walked to the house of God with you, and with whom you had held sweet converse? Did you not find him, all of a sudden, unaccountably lifting up his heel against you, and doing all he could to bring despite and injury to you? Did you not press your hand to your burning brow, and say, “Ah! Christ had His Judas, and now I can hold communion with Christ, because my friend has deserted me, too; and I can sympathize with Christ in the desertion of men”? Did you never have a false report spread about you? Possibly, somebody said you were “a drunk, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;” or, perhaps, someone said that, on such-and-such a night, you committed such-and-such an act; or, if

they could not stain your character by charging you with immorality, they said that you were insane; and did not your spirit, at first, beat high with passion, as you thought that you would answer the calumny? But, in a moment, you put your hand to your heart, as you said, "Ah! He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." And did you not sit down, and say, "Now I can hold fellowship with Christ in my reproaches; now I can bear a part in the brunt of the battle; now I can feel as *He* did, when *He*, too, was oppressed by wicked men"? Some of you, also, have been exceedingly poor; here and there, one could say, "I have not a place where to lay my head," and looking down on your ragged garments, you may have thought, "Ah! Now I know how Jesus felt when He said, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has not where to lay His head;' and so," you thought, "I am holding the fellowship of sympathy with Him in His poverty."

There was a time, too, *when you prayed and received no answer*; your agonized spirit went backward and forward many times, while you cried to God, but no reply came. In the intensity of your importunity, you could almost have "sweat as it were great drops of blood," as Jesus did; yet God did not answer you. Rising from your knees, you only rose to fall down upon them again; and, at last, you clasped your hands in agony, and said, "O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as You will." And you started up, for you thought you heard your Lord say those words in tones of deeper woe and greater agony than you had ever dreamed of, and you said, "Ah! I, in my humble measure, have held fellowship with Him whose 'bloody sweat' has made Him ever memorable, and whose agony in Gethsemane helped to make Him my Savior." And, perhaps, too, you have known what it is, at times, to lose the sight of the countenance of God; you have said, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him; that I might come even to His seat!" Your heart melted with agony, because God seemed to frown on you; your prayers were rejected; you had no light of His countenance; you had no peace, no light, no love, no joy, no God, and you cried, "My God! My God! Why have You forsaken me?" And then you remembered that Christ said those words, too, and that you were holding communion of sympathy with Him, for you were feeling just as He felt, you had entered into a part of His agony, you had drunk some drops of the awful cup which He drained to its dregs, you had dived a little into the sea without a bottom, into which Christ plunged; you had the fellowship of sympathy, for you suffered with Him. That is the most wonderful fellowship in the world, the fellowship of fellow-suffering. Those two holy martyrs, who were burned at Oxford, have this link forever between them, because they were burned in the same fire. Oh, what sweet fellowship they had, because they were to die together! Nothing makes us love Christ like feeling the same whip on our shoulder which Christ had on His, to be pierced with the same nails, to be spit upon by the same mouth, and to suffer, though in a very humble degree, the same kind of sufferings which Christ Himself endured. O wondrous grace that we should be allowed to share in our body the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Some of us are not called to suffer so much as to serve; and we, too, have our *communion with Christ in labor*. See the Sabbath school teacher, who takes the little children on his knee; as he teaches them, though some laugh, he seems to say, as did his Lord, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." There is the same spirit in the servant as there was in his Master; and he is holding communion with Christ in labor. See the faithful evangelist. He is in an open field, and he is preaching to the people with hands uplifted and with an earnestness that makes him eloquent. Look! He has concluded. He feels a sweet stillness in his soul, he knows not the reason of it; but it is because he has been having communion with Christ, and has felt, in a measure, as Christ did. When we have wept over your poor dying souls; when, on our bended knees, we have asked God for your salvation; when we have groaned and cried to bring you near to God; when, with most impassioned supplication, we have wrestled for your souls; then, beloved, we think we have had some communion with Christ, for —

*"Cold mountains, and the midnight air,
Witnessed the fervor of His prayer."*

He, too, wept over Jerusalem, and said, "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace, but now they are hid from your eyes!" Laboring Christians have sympathy with Christ; and when they work with might and main, with good intentions, with earnest desires, with cries and tears, they can say, "O Lord, we have entered into fellowship with You!"

So, too, we have fellowship with Christ, a heavenly *fellowship of desire*, when we neither suffer nor work with Him, but yet sympathize with Him. Perhaps you are not often sick; but you often feel a fellowship of compassionate pity and love. You are not persecuted, you almost wish you were; perhaps you have very little talent, and you cannot labor for Christ; but you have sometimes said, as you have trodden the way to this chapel, "What would I not give to see sinners saved? Oh, I think I would be willing to die, if I might but have my son and my daughter converted to God." Do you know that, just at that moment, you were holding communion with Christ, for you felt just as Christ did, who loved us with a love so pure, and so perfect, that He gave up His body to death that He might redeem us from hell? You have, perhaps, also said to Jesus sometimes, "I have but little that I can give to You; but—

*'Had I ten thousand hearts, dear Lord,
I'd give them all to Thee;
Had I ten thousand tongues, they all
Should join the harmony.'*"

Ah! You had fellowship with Christ, then; for you desired to do all that you could for the extension of His kingdom.

I will show how we hold *fellowship with Christ in our designs*. You see two men in a court of justice. One man stands there to be tried; there is every probability that he will be condemned. There is a person in court who is about to plead, he is a barrister; but, besides that, he is a friend of the prisoner. The man is being tried for his life; do you see the awful agony on his face? But up rises his advocate and you notice that, as he pleads, he turns his eyes towards the prisoner at the bar; and when he sees the tears start from the poor man's eyes, out comes an eloquent period. There is a sigh just heaved by the culprit; see how the counselor waxes hot. The prisoner begins to weep excessively, and hides his face; do you notice how the advocate gets more fiery and more zealous as he proceeds, and how much more pathetic his speech becomes, and how earnestly he pleads as his tongue is set at liberty? Why is that? Because he is in fellowship with the poor man, he feels for him; he is not talking to him—that would only be the fellowship of conversation; he is feeling with him, and their hearts are near akin. Even supposing they have not seen each other before, if they feel for one another, they are nearer akin than blood-relationship could make them. Beloved, when you see a minister pleading with souls as if he were pleading for himself, when you hear him contending for Jesus Christ's Divinity as much as if he were contending for his own honor, that minister is holding communion with Christ. And when you see a saint speaking to a poor sinner of the Redeemer's death, and pointing to his wounds, why, every drop of Calvary's blood seems to make the man speak more eloquently; and every groan he thinks he hears makes him urge his plea in more desperate earnestness with men. This, beloved, is sympathy with Christ, fellowship with Him; and that I call a higher grade of communion than the fellowship of conversation. I hope some of you have arrived at it. If you have, you will be more useful than those who only understand the fellowship of conversation. God grant to us all the fellowship of fellow-feeling, the fellowship of sympathy with Christ!

III. The third point is THE FELLOWSHIP OF UNITY.

Do you see this hand? Do you see this brow? This hand and this brow are more nearly allied together than my brother's heart and mine, although he loves me with all his heart, and would plead for me even to the death; but this hand and this brow have not only a communion of fellow-feeling, they have the same feeling. The members of the body have positively the same feeling; so Christ's mystical members feel the same emotion as He does.

You ask, "Do Christians ever arrive at this stage of fellowship?" Yes, certainly they do; and the supper of the Lord was intended to set forth that highest grade of communion which Christians ever hold with their Master here below. It is not a communion with Him in His sufferings, it is not a communion with Him in His service; but it is *a communion with His Person*. You believers are invited spiritually to eat the flesh of Christ, and spiritually to drink His blood; and that is a nearer, dearer fellowship than any of which we have before spoken, because it brings you into positive unity with Him. It makes you feel that you are not only pleading for Him as your friend, but that you are a part of Himself, a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Many hearers of the gospel do not understand this great mystery; some even think it is profanity to talk of this oneness with Christ. It would be the very height of

profanity for a man to say, "I am one with Christ," if the Scripture did not warrant him in saying so. To call oneself "a friend of God," would be blasphemous presumption; but Scripture says that believers are His friends, and therefore there is no blasphemy in repeating the declaration. Some may think it is absurd to talk of our being "one with the Savior;" it is not absurd, because it is Scriptural. We *are* so; and we feel, when we drink the wine that the blood of the Savior is spiritually in our veins, as well as in His; that we are brethren in ties of blood. I hope we shall be able to say that we were one with Him when He died, one with Him when He rose, one with Him when He triumphed over the grave, one with Him when He ascended up on high, one with Him now, and one with Him eternally. I do believe that not a few of us will get so near to Christ, that we shall not only lay our heads on His bosom, but shall do more than that, we shall put our heart, not against His heart, but right into His heart, and we shall feel as much one with Christ as the little dewdrop is with the stream into which it falls. I hope we shall be as much a portion of Christ, while we sit around the communion table, as the particle of flesh is of the body; and shall feel that each pulse that beats in Him also throbs through our frame, that the blood of Christ runs through our veins, that each sigh we heave *He* heaves, and that each groan we utter *He* utters. I hope we shall hear Him say—

*"I feel at My heart all your sighs and your groans,
For you are most near Me, My flesh and My bones;
In all your distresses your Head feels the pain,
Yet all are most needful, not one is in vain,"*

Beyond this, the Christian cannot survive on earth. It is the highest style of communion, till—

*"That happy hour of full discharge
Shall set his ransomed soul at large;
Unbind his soul, and drop his clay,
And speed his wings far, far away,"*—

up where Christ dwells; and there, beloved, we shall know communion with Christ in a sense which only folly will labor to depict, for wisdom's self knows nothing of it. There at His feet we will sit, and on His breast we will lean; there from His lips will we hear sweet music; from His mouth we will breathe perpetual balm; from His eyes we will draw divinest light; we will press His hand inside these palms; we will kiss Him with these very lips; we will put ourselves within His arms; we will abide all day close by our Beloved; we will talk with Him; we will be with Him wherever He goes, while He shall lead His sheep "unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

IV. This fellowship, of which I have been speaking, is a steppingstone to that best, that beatified fellowship, which we shall have in a few more years—THE FELLOWSHIP OF HEAVEN.

O Christians! Do you ever imagine how sweet it will be to be with your Lord? I sometimes think to myself—Oh, how strange it will seem, to have a crown upon this head, to have sandals of gold on these feet, to have a vesture of white on this poor body, to have rings of everlasting love decorating these fingers, to have a harp, over which my delighted fingers shall run, making it discourse the sweetest melody in praise of Jesus; to have a throne, on which to sit to judge the tribes of Israel; to have songs, more melodious than music ever evoked, perpetually rolling from my lips; to have my heart brimful of bliss, and my soul baptized in love and glory! Above, beneath, around, within, without, everywhere, it is heaven; I breathe heaven, I drink heaven, I feel heaven, I think heaven, everything is heaven. Oh, "what must it be to be there?" To be there, is to be with Christ. Wait but a little while, dearly-beloved, and you shall realize what Paul meant when He said, "We know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Soon, world, I shall say farewell to you! Soon, beloved friends, I shall for the last time shake hands with you! Soon, these eyes shall see their last dim mists, there last tears shall have been wiped away forever; my last sighs shall have been wafted away by the breath of God; and there, ah, there! God knows how soon, there—

*"Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in,"*—

I shall be with Him forever. Do you believe that concerning yourselves, my dear Christian brethren? Then, why are you afraid to die? Why are you so often fearing? What! Men and women, brothers and sisters, do you believe that, in a few more days, you will be in heaven, and see all you love, and all you live for here below? Do you believe that, in a few more months or years, you will clasp your Savior, and

be blessed forever? Why, beloved, it is enough to make you leap for joy, and clap your hands in ecstasy! What! You troubled, you desponding? No, go your way, eat your bread with joy, be happy all your life long, for you know that your Redeemer lives, and though after your flesh, worms shall destroy this body, yet in your flesh you shall see God.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31.

Verses 12, 13. *For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

Oh, what a sacred oneness that is which subsists between all the Lord's people! We are not simply brethren, but we are one; we are not allied by affinity, but by actual identity; we are parts of the same body; we are brought into spiritual membership with each other, as real and as effectual as that membership which subsists between the various parts of the body. Yet we are not all alike, although we are all of one body; some are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are bond, some are free; and yet, in some things, we are all alike, for we have all been baptized by one Spirit. And, moreover, we have all been made to drink into one Spirit; we have had one spiritual baptism, and we have had one spiritual drinking. Would to God that we felt more one, that our hearts beat more in tune with each other; that we had a sympathy with each other in woes and sufferings; that we had a fellow feeling with all who love the Lord; and could at all times weep with those that weep, as well as rejoice with those that rejoice!

14, 15. *For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it, therefore, not of the body?*

Do not be comparing yourself with others and saying, "Ah! If I were such-and-such a person, I might then think myself to be part of Christ's body." No, you might not; if you were just like him. As there are only certain members of a sort in a man's body, so, by a parity of reasoning, there would not be more than a certain number of members alike in the mystical body. We do not imagine that there will be many members of this body, the Church, of one class, or of one character; so that, if you are different from others, you are filling a different office in the body. You may, from that fact, draw an inference of comfort rather than one of sorrow and despondency. Even should you say, "Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, are you therefore not of the body?" Oh, no! You are of the body still, though you do not think that you are.

16, 17. *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?*

If we were all preachers, if we could all see into God's truth, and set it forth in a public manner, where should we get our congregations?

17. *If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*

There must be different members to fill different offices. If we were all so one that there was no distinction whatever, if we were all of one rank, all of one age, all of one standing, the body would be incomplete.

18-21. *But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

Brethren, you sometimes think there are some belonging to the Church whom we could well spare; but there is not one superfluous member in the whole body. If they are truly united to Christ, they have all their offices, all their places. There is not a poor old woman, who has not been able to get up to the house of prayer for several years, who is not of some use to the Church; for she lies upon her bed, and there she intercedes with God. There is not a member of the Church so humble, so illiterate, so uneducated, that he or she may not be of essential service to the whole body. There is some little part, my brother, which you are to take in the great Church of Christ; you may not be able always to tell what it

may be, but still there is a place for you to fill. There is a linchpin in a chariot; who thinks much about or thanks that pin? Indeed, it is so very small and insignificant; who would imagine it is necessary to the locomotion or speed? The wheels carry it around, but who would suppose that, if it were taken away, the wheel would fly off? Perhaps you are like one of these little linchpins which keep the wheel right; you may not know what use you are; but, possibly, you prevent someone else from turning aside. Let us each keep in our station, endeavoring, God helping us; to exert the influence which He has given us.

22-24. *No, much more those members of the body, which seem to be feebler, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked:*

A moment's thought will tell you that those parts of our frame which are most tender are the most necessary parts; and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these, by clothing them more than other parts, we bestow more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; for our comely parts have no need of being covered, and therefore we leave them exposed.

25. *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*

We have heard this text urged by some who are in the Church of England as a proof that we are wrong in departing from it. They tell us that there should be no schism in the body; we beg to tell them that there is no schism *in* the body that we know of. We do not belong to their body, and therefore we make no schism *in* that body, we are quite clear of them. We have neither stick, nor stone, nor part, nor lot in their State Establishment; therefore we do not create a schism in the body. When they divide themselves into Puseyites and Evangelicals, they make a schism in their own body; but, as long as we are all united, as long as the members of a church walk together in unity, there is no schism in the body. We are different bodies altogether. They say that a schismatic is one who departs *from* a Church, and makes a rent *from* it; by no means, a schismatic is one who makes a rent *in* it, not *from* it. We, I say, are not schismatics. Those who are in the Church, and yet do not agree with its fundamental principles and its Articles of Faith, they are schismatics; but we are not.

26. *And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it;*

Is that true of our churches? I am afraid not. The members of the one Church of Christ have not been brought to that unity of feeling and sympathy which they ought to have.

26-30. *Or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?*

God intended that there should be different offices in His Church; let us look on each other as being different, and yet united in the common faith of Christ.

31. *But covet earnestly the best gifts:*

I would not wish you, brother, to repress your aspirations after these blessings; I am most anxious that you should earnestly desire and seek to possess a large share of all these spiritual endowments.

31. *And yet show I unto you a more excellent way.*

Which is, holding the truth in love, and walking in charity one toward another.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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