

DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY, THE CHURCH

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Part 1

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, *not discerning the Lord's body.*” 1 Cor. 11:28-29. In our time it is common to hear all the various denominational bodies of professed Christendom collectively referred to as the body of Christ. The problem with this concept, however, is that it fails to comprehend the essence of what Christ's body really is. The essence of Christ's true body is directly related to spiritual status, and spiritual meat and drink. Let us now examine the Word of God and examine our own selves to see if we discern the Lord's body and if we are really a part of it.

The Word tells us that the Lord's body is the Church (Col. 1:18, 24). But what is *the Church*? The divinely inspired apostle Paul exhorts us in Eph. 4:1-4, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 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.” Also in 1 Cor. 12:13 he says, “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.”

The Bible is very clear about the fact that **the Lord only has one body**, and that body is sustained and maintained by His own life that flows into it from Himself, through the one Spirit He sent for that purpose. **The unity and oneness of God's people is as simple as getting in harmony with and being led by His one Spirit.** His Spirit never fails to baptize into one body. God's Spirit causes people to “come and sing in the height of Zion, and flow together to the goodness of the Lord” (Jer. 31:12). By His Spirit we are brought “to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:22-23).

The word “body” in all the scriptures quoted above comes from the Greek word “soma,” and refers to “the body as a sound whole.” The word body in the English language takes on various shades of meaning, but to narrow it down to its meaning relative to these scriptures I will quote the following from Webster's dictionary: “the whole physical substance of a man, animal, or plant; a group of people or things regarded as a unit; a corporation; a number of men united by a common tie, by one form of government.”

In the light of the scriptures above and Webster's definitions it is safe to conclude that the body of Christ is a group, unit, or corporation of people united by the operation of the Spirit of God (that being its common tie), having one form of government (that is, Christ's government – see Isaiah 9:6-7), its object being to convey to the world the whole spiritual substance of who Christ is in a physical, visible manner. The **body of Christ IS CHRIST** manifested in the flesh through the indwelling of His Spirit in human flesh (see 2 Cor. 4:10-11; 6:16, etc.). “He that is

joined unto the Lord is one spirit” and thereby “your bodies are the members of Christ” (see 1 Cor. 6:15, 17). Yes, we are even members “of His flesh, and of His bones” (see Eph. 5:30). Therefore, no one is part of the body of Christ who does not possess the spirit and life of Christ. And furthermore, no religious system or organization has any place in the body of Christ except the one that is led, directed, controlled and organized by the Holy Spirit in accord with the Word of God. All humanly devised, humanly controlled systems and organizations are excluded from the Lord’s body. Christ is the Head of His body, and it’s government rests entirely on His shoulder. He has never given that authority to any other.

In Matt. 16:13-18 it is recorded, “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for **flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven**. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and **upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**”

Also in Luke 10:21-22 we read, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and **he to whom the Son will reveal him.**”

Just as Christ and the Father can only be recognized by a divine revelation, so the church can only be recognized by the same. The body of Christ discovers and embraces itself by Jesus Christ and God the Father being revealed to the human heart and soul through the Holy Spirit. It is upon this solid rock of divine revelation that the church is built, and the gates of hell can never prevail against that revelation. It is a revelation of spiritual understanding and knowledge. Inasmuch as Christ indwells and inhabits our own spirit, soul and body and we walk in fellowship with Him in the Spirit, we will be able to discern His body. The apostle John said, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1:3.

When Jesus Christ was in the world, the world perceived Him to be but another man among men. But the thing that made Him the real Christ was His divinity. Although “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not” (John 1:10), Jesus was the real Christ because He was indeed that “holy thing” that was conceived of and anointed by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35; John 1:32-34). When Joseph and his mother, Mary, brought Him to the temple in Jerusalem, there were only two people, out of the many hundreds that frequented that place, who recognized who He really was. They recognized Him because they were in tune with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit bore them witness by revelation (see Luke 2:25-38). To the rest of the folk there, He was just another baby boy.

It is the same with Christ’s body, the church, today. It is perceived by the world as just another church among churches, another sect among sects, its system as just another religion among

religions. To the Jews it was but “the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5). But the thing that makes the church the real church, the body of Christ, is its connection with divinity. Although “the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not” (1 John 3:1), the church is indeed the real body of Christ because it is conceived of, anointed and led by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8; 1 John 2:27; 4:13; Rom. 8:14).

In Eph. 2:18 it is stated that through Christ we all “have *access by one Spirit* unto the Father.” Those who truly access God by the Spirit gain the revelation of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Thereby they are able to discern the body that is conceived, led, and organized by Him. Christ’s sheep recognize and know His voice (John 10:4-5). There is but one fold and one Shepherd, and “unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. 49:10). All who are gathered unto Him become spiritually quickened with Him, and they all are raised up *together* and made to sit *together* in heavenly places in Him (Eph. 2:1-6). Sharing this heavenly fellowship with Jesus in the Spirit makes these spiritually quickened ones all of one heart, soul, and mind. “For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Heb. 2:11. They have their ears tuned to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches (congregations) (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). There is no discord or confusion when and where people sit in heavenly places in Christ and are connected with, tuned to, and led by His Spirit.

Please read 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, and then read Ephesians 1:3-4, 10-23; 2:13-22; 3:14-21; 4:1-16 and 2 Cor. 6:14-18. In reading these passages it becomes very clear that the body of Christ is the actual habitation of God and Christ here on earth through the Holy Spirit. Christ’s body, the church, is the manifestation of God in human flesh. The animation of His body is the Spirit that proceeds from God. Every member of the body is born of the Spirit (John 3:3-8) and is set into the body as it pleases God. As each member follows on to drink of that Spirit of which he or she is born and made part of the body, fully consecrating his or her personal body and soul to the will of God, he or she becomes “sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). He or she will then receive “unction” or “anointing” from the Spirit that inspires, illuminates, teaches, and interprets the Word of God. And that which each member learns from this anointing is all truth – never a lie included (1 John 2:20, 27). The revelation of understanding that comes from the Spirit’s anointing causes both sons and daughters of God to prophesy (Acts 2:17-18), that is, “speak under inspiration” and “by illumination and motion of the Spirit” (see “prophesy” in the Greek Dictionary of the New Testament and “prophet” in Smith’s Bible Dictionary). There is no respect of gender with God relative to the spiritual gifts He wills to bestow on the various members of Christ’s body for its edification and profit. When it comes to the Spirit’s manifestation “there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). This promise is “unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39). “And all thy children (both male and female) shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established ... This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.” Isa. 54:13,14a, 17b.

By the Spirit every member is set into Christ’s body, individually gifted and endowed according to the will and purpose of God for the overall benefit and profit of the entire body. The whole body is alive with the presence of Christ flowing in and through each member by the

Spirit. Thereby God (whose fullness dwells in Christ – Col. 1:19) is “through all, and in you all.” Those who are inspired and directed by the Spirit to prophesy “speak unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort,” and “ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” 1 Cor. 14:3, 31. Thus “the whole body ... according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” All its growth, advancements or increases are “with the increase of God” (Col. 2:19). “The churches ... were edified; walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” Acts 9:31. Christ’s body only increases where God increases.

Christ’s body is not a loosely flung, segregated body, disjointed and in opposition with itself in various areas of doctrine and practice, but on the contrary it is “fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth.” Its focus is the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” It clearly reflects “the knowledge of the Son of God” here on earth. In it men and women are “able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” and “be filled with all the fullness of God.” Any religious body that does not meet this criterion is not the Lord’s body.

Just as God made the human body to operate in perfect harmony as signals flow by nerve impulses from the brain to every member, telling each member just how and when to move and act, thus motivating and directing the body in an organized and objective manner, so it is with the body of Christ. Signals flow from the Head, Jesus Christ, by the impulses of the Spirit to every member and joint of His body, thus it is motivated and directed in an organized and objective manner according to the purpose of God. Christ’s body is just as organized and objectively motivated as is a sound, healthy human body because of the actual connection every member has with Christ through the Spirit. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Rom. 8:14. Our vision, perception, or discernment of the Lord’s body will be proportionate according to our fellowship and communion with the Lord in the Spirit. Where there is a loss or lack of this, there will be a proportionate loss or lack of discerning the body of Christ. Backsliding, apostasy, and sectarianism are the inevitable results.

Part 2

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly (clearly), that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, *giving heed to seducing spirits*, and doctrines of devils.” 1 Tim. 4:1. Whenever children of God become seduced by “other spirits” and begin to listen and give heed to “other voices” discord, confusion, schisms, and divisions always occur. The voice of a seducing spirit desensitizes one’s spiritual ears to the voice of the divine Spirit. A spiritual illusion then takes place. Spiritual landmarks that were once clear by virtue of the eye salve of the Holy Spirit’s anointing become foggy and dim. Understanding that was once revealed to the inner man by divine inspiration begins to give way to human reasoning and philosophical criticism. Sacred standards and boundaries that were once perceived clearly begin to move or disappear. The voice of the seducing spirit now reveals doctrine from a different perspective, in a “new light,” suggesting to the mind a different slant or interpretation of the scriptures. The illusive spirit may even produce an emotional high to accompany that new light. But yet the fruit of that new light is “variance” and “discord,” which “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17) declares to be “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19-21) and “abomination” (Prov. 6:16-19). It is vital and essential that we keep our spirits tuned and our souls in harmony with the Holy Spirit, as well as our physical bodies subjected to the Spirit at all times. Otherwise we will lose our direction and cease to discern the Lord’s body. Whoever becomes out of joint with the divine Spirit is out of joint with Christ and His body. Therefore “grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Eph. 4:30. Any *work* of the flesh or unholy *provision* we make for the flesh grieves the holy Spirit of God and will break the seal of our redemption if not repented of.

The divine Spirit always brings His subjects under one government, into one body that conveys the essence of Christ in a visible manner. Therefore, “beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.” Col. 2:8-10.

As surely as there exists the Holy Spirit and other opposing spirits, so there also exists the Lord’s body and other opposing bodies. Every religious group, unit, or corporation is animated and united by some kind of religious spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit animates all who are led by Him, uniting them into one corporate body and making them partakers of the fullness of the Godhead in Christ, so other spirits also unite those who are led by them into corporate bodies, units, or groups, making them partakers of the essence of what they are all about. Each schismatic group pivots on some point of theology or ideology. The animation of each is the spirit that promotes whatever “heresy” or area of doctrine or practice it has been seduced in. The words “heresy” and “sect” come from the same Greek word, “hairesis,” which literally means “a choice, a party, or disunion.” A schism is ALWAYS the result of disunion from the true Spirit on the part of someone, or some ones. We can become disjointed with the body of Christ because of spiritual choices we make. God wants none of His children to have any connection or identification with any heresy, sect, or schism. To do so is to grieve the Holy Spirit and make one’s soul vulnerable to other spirits.

A common approach to religion is, “it doesn’t really matter what group you fellowship with just as long as you love and serve the Lord.” Beware! Is that a Bible doctrine, or is it part of a deceitful, humanistic philosophy? Is that not the same as saying you can choose to fellowship any schism, sect, or heresy you please and still serve the Lord? Your choice in this matter will mean the difference in whether or not you attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Be sure that if you take your spiritual meat and drink at a table that is not spread by the Spirit of the Lord you will soon be spoiled! You will soon cease to discern the Lord’s body. The Bible says, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Cor. 6:17-18. In coming out from among them, where should we go? Just simply resort to the Lord’s body! You’ll find it, identify it, and be a part of it simply by conforming to every precept and principle of God’s Word and being led by His Spirit. “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” 1 John 5:6. Listen now.

In 1 John 3:24 and 4:1-3 we read: “He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And *hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

This is how we can tell whether or not a spirit is in harmony with God’s Spirit: if it confesses through its manifestation in human flesh an identity with the life of Christ, in all humility, holiness, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (which is what the anointing of the true Spirit of grace teaches us – Tit. 2:11-12), and in keeping unspotted from the world (James 1:27), then we know this is by the influence of the real Spirit of God. But if a spirit manifests evidences of carnality and self-interest, a love for the things of the world, a making provision for the lusts of the flesh, or a disposition to reason around the requirements or the principles of the scriptures, we know that this spirit is not of God, but is a spirit of antichrist. Whoever is not joined to the Lord in one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17), always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his body (2 Cor. 4:10) is not confessing that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, therefore cannot be identified as part of His true body. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Gal. 5:24. They identify as real members of His flesh and of His bones (Eph. 5:30) because they are crucified with Him (Gal. 2:20; 6:14). They are dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3; 2 Cor. 4:11).

But Paul said, “Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” Phil. 3:18-19. Peter said, “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them *liberty*, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” 2 Pet. 2:18-19. Whoever chooses to give liberty to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life will certainly be brought in

bondage to corruption and will imbibe a spirit of antichrist. The apostle John, after warning against the love of the world and the *things* that are in the world, said, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” 1 John 2:19. Jude said, “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.” Jude 19.

Just as the human body rejects foreign material, so does Christ’s spiritual body. Physically speaking, our bodies will not retain a substance that is foreign to their own composition. Also, our bodies release and eliminate all dead cells. The body has no use for those cells that are no longer receiving the nourishment that flows through the blood. They die and the body disposes of them by natural process. And so it is with the spiritual body of Christ. He said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ...” John 15:5-6. As He also said regarding the lukewarm, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Rev. 3:16. This means a complete removal from His body.

It is through the Holy Spirit that the life of the Vine flows to every branch in Christ. The Holy Spirit is like the blood that flows through the body and feeds and replenishes all the living cells. The Holy Spirit feeds every living cell of Christ’s body, the Church, the very substance of Christ. “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Gal. 5:16. Jesus said, “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” John 6:56. Through His Word and through His Spirit we eat His flesh and drink His blood and *abide* in His body. Otherwise, we are released from the body by the natural process of elimination.

Song #404 in the *Evening Light Songs* says, “Jesus gave His life to purchase For Himself a spotless bride – All who fear Him and obey Him, Cleansed beneath the crimson tide. To preserve her pure and spotless, He must make a sacrifice; Give to evil spirits supper, All who give to sin a place. See, His sword is bathed in heaven, And the mountains strewn with dead; ‘All ye birds and beasts assemble,’ Lo! A feast for you is spread.”

What deep, solemn words! They are based on the prophecies of Isa. 18:4-6, Ezek. 39:17-20, and Rev. 19:17-18. Jesus also said in Luke 17:33-37, “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body (carcass – Matt. 24:28) is, thither will the eagles (vultures) be gathered together.”

Rev. 18: 2 says, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” This spiritual Babylon consists of all the *carcasses*; the dead religious bodies where men and women are “taken” who have ceased to abide in the true Vine by failing to drink into the one Spirit who baptizes into the Lord’s one living body, the Church. Babylon the great is where the vultures are

gathered together. All manner of unclean birds and beasts (foul spirits and religious devils) assemble and feed there. They feed on the souls of the backslidden and spiritually fallen, the degenerate and “twice dead” (Jude 12), and console them in their delusions. Therefore God says, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Rev. 18:4.

Sometimes, through lack of understanding, or through lack of having their spiritual “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14) sincere and honest Christians become misled and entangled with fallen religious bodies that they suppose to be the body of Christ, or at least a part of it. Yet, when carefully scrutinized by the Word of God, the systems by which those bodies operate are found coming short of the divine system – **they either endorse some kind of heretical doctrine, make provision for sin in the flesh, or some element of human or satanic control is involved where Holy Spirit leadership ought to be. The Word and the Spirit of God do not have free course there.** All who are truly born of the divine Spirit are by virtue of that heavenly birth actual members of Christ’s body. They are God’s people – the ones that He is calling to “come out” of Babylon, that is, degenerate and fallen religious bodies animated by false spirits that work confusion and deception.

God knows that “Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness” (see 2 Cor. 11:13-15). False prophets always appear as ministers of righteousness and will deceive even the very elect, if possible. Many of the prophets do not realize that they themselves are deceived, and suppose that they are doing the Lord’s work. Part of Webster’s definition of a “prophet” is “an interpreter; one who explains or communicates sentiments; a spokesperson for some cause, group, etc.,” whether divinely inspired or not. A false prophet is simply one who, without Holy Spirit inspiration and guidance, has become a false interpreter – one who explains and communicates wrong sentiments relative to God’s Word. There are many trained and eloquent speakers (prophets) prophesying in the interests of the many various religious bodies, each seeking to sell the ideology of the body he endorses as Christ’s body. Each proclaims the vision he believes is right, as he vies for proselytes. But “they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord” (Jer. 23:16). He whose heart is not purified and taught by the Spirit of the Lord cannot rightly interpret the Word of the Lord nor discern the Lord’s body. One whose spiritual eyes have not been anointed with the eye salve of the Holy Spirit (Rev. 3:18) cannot proclaim the vision of the Lord, nor will his preaching carry the Spirit’s life-giving unction and transforming power. Therefore, many unfortunate proselytes never attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And no wonder, for the prophets they heeded never attained to it either! While they profess a faith in Christ they are not really crucified with Him, nor is their life hid away with Him. They themselves are yet servants of sin (John 8:34) and fleshly and worldly lusts, not realizing that “if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36), and “they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:17.)

How, then, shall we rise to the plane of fellowship with “spirits of just men made perfect” (that is, “made complete” in Christ) and discover the “general assembly and church of the firstborn” that we read about in Hebrews 12:22-23? Be led by the Word and the Spirit. Allow the Spirit to interpret the Word to your heart, and follow and apply the Spirit’s interpretation.

Drink deeply of that one Spirit that supplies the living essence of Christ's blood to all the members of His body. That divine substance is one of a kind and, just as the human body naturally recognizes its own blood as its life, so the Christ body naturally recognizes its own blood as its life. There is no substitute for it. There is no other taste like it! As inspired songwriters of the past have said, "I have learned the wondrous secret Of abiding in the Lord; I have found the strength and sweetness Of confiding in His Word; I have tasted life's pure fountain, I am drinking of His blood, I have lost myself in Jesus, I am sinking into God. I am crucified with Jesus, And He lives and dwells in me, I have ceased from all my struggling, 'Tis no longer I, but He; All my will is yielded to Him, And His Spirit reigns within, And His precious blood each moment, Keeps me cleansed and free from sin." – A. B. Simpson. "I am drinking at the fountain, Where I ever would abide; For I've tasted life's pure river, And my soul is satisfied; There's no thirsting for life's pleasures, Nor adorning, rich and gay, For I've found a richer treasure, One that fadeth not away. ... And I love to follow Jesus, Gladly counting all but dross, Worldly honors all forsaking For the glory of the cross." – Author unknown. "I am clinging to Jesus, my Redeemer and Friend, Ever trusting His promise, standing firm to the end; Oh! I love to obey Him, live alone by His grace, Feeling His sweet approval and the smiles of His face. Oh, the Lord is so sweet, I will live at His feet; I am resting in Jesus, In His favor complete." – B. E. Warren.

Living and walking in the Spirit and rejecting every spirit, element, or system that grieves or hinders the Holy Spirit, or is foreign to the Christ-life, keeps us in the Christ-body. We are members of His body inasmuch as we are in harmony with His spirit, nature, and life. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. **And above all these things put on charity**, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." Col. 3:12-15. This charity suffers long, and is kind; envies not; boasts not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unbecomingly, seeks not its own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and never fails. (see 1 Cor. 13:4-8).

"God is love" (1 John 4:8,16). He that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him. Also, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). And, "if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). We are safeguarded against becoming entangled in some kind of heresy or work of the flesh, which is darkness, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Rom. 5:5. The Spirit guides into all truth (John 16:13). In this blessed place (living and walking in the Spirit) a clear discernment, vision, or perception is opened to the soul of the Lord's body, the Church. D. S. Warner found that blessed place many years ago and penned the following words of inspired song: "He that dwelleth in love ever dwelleth in God, Sweet home never clouded by fears; And this heaven of love is our native abode Through time and eternity's years. I'm at home, blessed home, I am safe in the bosom divine; Oh the home of the soul, Thy heaven of glory is mine." And for that very reason, "We will enter no door that is opened by men Who promise a home for the soul; For ***in***

Christ we abide in the church that will stand While ages eternally roll. *Evening Light Songs*
 #30. Consider, also, the words of the following Holy Spirit-inspired songs.

“Holy Fellowship”
 (1 John 1:3)

“Sweet fellowship, thy crystal tide, Flows joyful in our souls;
 Baptized in one, naught can divide, While heav’nly peace controls.

“God over all, and through us all, In floods of blissful light,
 Is fellowship in ev’ry soul That’s pure in heaven’s sight.

“O fellowship, my brethren dear, In bonds of perfect love;
 How blest the seal of union here With all the saints above!

“This fellowship with Father, Son, And all who love the Lord,
 Is heaven here on earth begun, ‘Tis Paradise restored.

Chorus: “O brethren, how our spirits blend In fellowship so dear;
 Though sundered far by God’s command, We feel you still so near.”

-- D. S. Warner

“Fellowship”

“Sweet fellowship unites our souls as one,
 It is the bliss of heaven now begun;
 When heart to heart by this blest tie is bound,
 We seem to stand each day on holy ground.

“The mingling flow of kindred minds and hearts,
 That only from the fount of true love starts!
 The sweetest but most fragile gift of grace,
 Which only with the blood-washed has a place.

“Unseen thy beauty and unknown thy worth
 To all who have not yet the Spirit birth:
 Where ranketh hate and sitteth lordly pride,
 Thy gentle presence doth not there abide.

“All hearts where thou dost dwell must be as one,
 For thou dost flee where strife is but begun:
 Nor wilt thou show again thy timid face
 Where there may be of wrong or sin a trace.

Chorus: “Sweet fellowship with God on high, And with His Son, who came to die,
 With all His saints in ev’ry clime – Be this my portion all the time.”

-- C. W. Naylor

Thus we discern and experience the Lord’s body, the Church. Amen!