

Metaphors of the Church

In the Old Testament, Israel was the people of God. God said to them, "I shall be your God, and you shall be My people" (Ezek. 11:2-; 36:28; 37:26-27; Hos. 2:23; Jer. 32:38). The same covenantal language is applied to the Church in the NT (see Rom. 9:6; Gal. 3:7, 29; 6:16). In other words, God views us as His people and each individual as part of a spiritual community.

This community, this fellowship, this communion of God's people is created by a sovereign act of God out of His good pleasure alone. Deuteronomy 7:6-8a: "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you." Ephesians 1:4-6 tells us that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. He predestined us for adoption *according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace*.

We are God's people. We belong to God, and God belongs to us. He has chosen us to be His own possession (Mal. 3:17; Titus 2:14). He has chosen us not based on our own merit, but that He might set His affection on us and so that we might be the beneficiaries of His infinite kindness in Christ. These precious benefits are intended for His people as a community, a fellowship, a body. Surely, this truth ought to move us to the deepest gratitude and sense of privilege.

God, in gracious condescension, has supplied a gallery of pictures, images, familiar metaphors by which our minds and hearts might better comprehend the meaning, the purpose, and the beauty of the people of God. We will examine a few of the most common ones.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

In the first metaphor, the Church is portrayed as a household.

- Ephesians 2:19: So then **you are** no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are **of God's household**
- Galatians 6:10: So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the **household of faith**.
- II Timothy 3:15: I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the **household of God, which is the church of the living God**.

The idea of membership in God's household appears throughout Paul's writings. In Ephesians 1:5 he says that believers are sons and daughters of God (cf. 3:14-15; and 4:6). Reference to the believer's glorious access to the Father is made in Ephesians 2:18. The concept of family membership pertains to both our relationship to God and to each other. In I and II Timothy this idea is used to encourage appropriate and responsible behavior (I Ti. 3:15; II Tim. 2:20-21). When he says in I Timothy chapter 5, "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity" (5:1-2), he

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surely has household imagery in mind. This metaphor gives us a sense of the mutual respect and consideration with which God expects us to conduct ourselves in the Church.

In Ephesians, Paul uses the idea of being a household to stress that being a family member includes having a place of refuge, protection and security, and possessing a sense of belonging (O'Brien, 212). They are no longer far off. They have been brought near.

We are a family. Jesus referred to His followers as His mother and brother (Matt. 12:48-50).

The closeness of a family is what makes a church function as it should. First, as a family we are to care for each other (Acts 2:44-47). Second, it makes church discipline effective in bringing the erring brother or sister to repentance. God tells us to remove the person who is in sin and unrepentant from our midst (I Cor. 5:1-2, 6-13; Matt. 18:15-17). In our society if a church disciplines a member the person often just goes to another church. There is no repentance. However, the impact of being removed has a much bigger impact when the person feels like he is being removed from his family. It is separation from this love that makes the person in sin really consider his ways. It is the love of a family that draws him back and brings about repentance. Thirdly, it is also the fact that we are a family that forces us to grow and accept each other. As the saying goes, "you can pick your friends, but you can't pick your family." What this means is that you are stuck with your family by virtue of the relationship to them, whether you really like them or not. We feel no obligation to pursue relationships with people we don't naturally get along with, but we keep our family relationships BECAUSE they are family. In the plan of God "being stuck" with others is a good thing for it helps us grow as individuals, and provides a testimony to the world of our love for one-another (Jn. 13:34-35; Eph. 4:2-3; I Pet. 3:8; Jn. 17:21). Because we are all part of the same household, we are to accept those who we have nothing else in common with.

To sum it all up, a household implies interaction; it necessitates community. An individual is not a household, nor can he grow as a family member apart from the family relationship with other Christians.

THE FLOCK OF GOD

A second image of the Church is that of a flock. The image is found in the OT (Ps. 23:1; 80:1; Isa. 40:11; Mic. 2:10; 5:4; Zech. 10:3) as well as the NT. In the NT something new is added. We are also *Christ's* flock. Jesus said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear My voice." He gives His life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11; Mic. 5:2-4).

The prominent concepts are the ownership and care of the flock by the shepherd and the subjection of the sheep to the rule of the shepherd. This metaphor, of course, gives us a sense for the tenderness with which the Church is to be treated.

Christ, the Shepherd, has not only purchased the flock with His blood, He provides for its every need. The shepherd's task is to lead the sheep to pasture and water, heal the sick, bind the wounded, and seek the lost.

While Christ is the ultimate shepherd, the work of shepherding is also given to undershepherds. He told Peter to "feed My sheep" (Jn. 21:16). Peter in turn instructed the elders in I Peter 5:2-3 to shepherd the flock of God among them (5:2) and to be examples to the flock (5:3). Paul gave the same charge in Acts

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20:28; “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” The ascended Christ also gives “pastors” to the church (Eph. 4:11) [the word “pastor” is Latin for the word “shepherd”].

The primary task of the shepherd is that of providing nourishment for the sheep. This takes place through the ministry of the word. Paul told Timothy to “preach the Word” (II Tim. 4:2). In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, it is written that “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

The shepherd also rules over and leads the flock (I Pet. 2:25). 1 Peter 5:1-2 commands the elders to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly.”

A further task is protection. The shepherd carries a rod and a staff (Ps. 23:4). The rod was a club to ward off threats to the flock. In Acts 20:29-30 Paul said, “I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.” (cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-13; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

The metaphor of a flock applies to the sheep as well as the shepherd. The sheep are exhorted to submit to the shepherd. Hebrews 13:17: Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Both a household and a flock reinforce and enlarge the idea that the Christian life is designed by God to be lived in community. The appointment of shepherds indicates the need for oversight by some and submission by others. This structure is created by God. It is His divinely appointed means of nurturing and protecting His people and cannot be accomplished by independent Christians living apart from a Christian community.

THE BUILDING (THE TEMPLE) OF GOD

In yet another image the Church is portrayed as the building of God. I Corinthians 3:9 says, “For we are God’s fellow-workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.” In I Peter 2:5 it says, “you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Ephesians

2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

2:20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

2:21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

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2:22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

In Ephesians 2:19 it tells us that we are of God's household. In verse 20 the apostle's imagery changes; believers not only have a position of intimacy with God, they are also part of the structure where God Himself dwells.

This metaphor seeks to explain the relationship of Christ to the church, the members to each other, and the presence of God in their midst. The building that he describes is comprised of both inorganic and organic elements. He speaks of the building as being "joined together" (typical building construction terminology) and the materials as "growing" and as "living stones" (the organic component). These elements express the ongoing activity of the divine community. The building is still under construction and is growing and expanding.

The foundation for the new temple consists of the apostles and prophets (2:20).

More significantly is the fact that the early church was built upon Christ Himself. In I Corinthians 3:9-17 Paul referred to himself as the master builder and to Christ as the foundation upon which he and others built. Here Jesus is the chief cornerstone. This text is related to Isaiah 28:16: Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.' (cf. I Cor. 3:11; Psa. 118:22; Mk. 12:10; Acts 4:11; I Pet. 2:6-8). The expression draws attention to Christ's special function and importance. The cornerstone was the most crucial part of the building construction, for all other dimensions were taken from it. By implication, the rest of the temple (the church) is built upon Christ who determines the shape of the whole.

Verses 21 and 22 expand upon the significance of the building. It is not just a building; it is the dwelling place of God.

There are two words commonly used in Greek that are translated as "temple;" naos (ναός) and hieron (ἱερόν). Naos (ναός) most often refers to the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary, where the presence of God resided, or to the holy place that was next to the holy of holies and contained the altar of incense, the table of show bread, etc. The hieron (ἱερόν) is a broader term that includes both the temple precinct and the sanctuary. In the OT the temple building was in the midst of Israel and signified God's personal presence among His people, but the people were never called "the temple." However, in the NT we find that believers are called the naos (ναός) of God, the holy place where God Himself dwells; "Do you not know that you [PLURAL = you people, collectively, that is, the church] are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (I Cor. 3:16) II Corinthians 6:16 says, "we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.'" He also used it to refer to individual Christians as the temple of God. I Corinthians 6:19: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"

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The magnificence of this metaphor should not be overlooked. Here we learn of the eternal destiny of the church. We are not simply saved to live with Christ forever – as wonderful as that will be. Nor are we going to just enjoy God forever. We will become the very sanctuary – the dwelling place of the living God. We will become “A Shrine, a divine Presence-Chamber; ‘a permanent habitation of God.’ In measure, the wonderful fact has already begun to be; already He ‘dwells in’ His people, and ‘walks in them’ (see II Cor. 7:16); already . . . the eternal Son resides in the very heart of the true member of the Church, by faith” (Moule, 94). “The saints of the Asian Churches have appeared . . . as stones built one by one into the wonderful structure. Rising upon their foundation in Christ, and compacted in Him their corner stone, they are destined at length to form, forever, the complete and faultless sanctuary to be inhabited by the eternal presence, the Shrine for the manifestation of God to the universe in the endless ages” (Moule, 105).

This is a picture that even the youngest can understand. Each of us is a stone, when carefully chiseled and fitted together by God, the Master Builder. Together, we become a suitable dwelling for Him. Like the metaphor of the household and the flock, it is simply impossible to think of the Church as people not connected to each other; individual stones lying around by themselves are called a ruin, not a building.

THE BODY OF CHRIST

Of all the metaphors of the church, the most familiar is that of the body. I Corinthians 12:27 says, “Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.” The body concept is treated in the books of Romans, I Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians. The dual emphasis in Romans and I Corinthians is the “connection of the church, as a group of believers, with Christ” and “the interconnectedness between all the persons who make up the church” (Erickson, p. 1037). Clearly, the theme of the metaphor in Romans and I Corinthians is expressed by the phrase “one body, many members.”

Romans 12:4-5: For just as we have many members in one body, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Like the other metaphors we looked at, this metaphor expresses interconnectedness and the dependence of each believer upon every other believer. Some believe, “If I’ve just got God, that’s all I need.” Paul said the opposite; in 1 Corinthians 12 he wrote, “Don’t say . . . ‘I have no need of you.’”

All believers are universally joined together through the baptism of the Spirit. 1 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 in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free- and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” However, although all Christians are members of Christ’s body, functionally the body can only work in a local congregation.

There are many important truths that can be drawn from the body metaphor.

The first is unity.

The body has many members, but it is one body. This is especially brought out in Paul’s discussion about spiritual gifts.

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From his discussion of spiritual gifts we learn that:

1) Each person is given a gift (I Co. 12:7, 11; I Pet. 4:10; also see Matt 25:14).

The Bible teaches that the church works like a body (I Cor. 12:12). Each member is necessary (I Cor. 12:21-25) and each has a slightly different function (I Cor. 12:12-20). In order for the body to be complete and work as a unit, God had given each believer a spiritual gift, or a spiritual capacity to minister to others (I Cor. 12:7, 18). The gifts are listed in I Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12:3-8, Ephesians 4:7-16, and I Peter 4:10-11. God's design is that, through these gifts, His tender mercies flow to the community of His people (see Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 1:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31; I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6).

2) All spiritual gifts are given for the edification (building up) of others in the church to the glory of God, not for our own benefit (I Cor. 12:7; 14:12, 17, 19; 26; Eph. 4:11-12; I Pet. 4:11).

In order for the body to be complete and work as a unit, God had given each believer a spiritual gift, or a spiritual capacity to minister to others (I Cor. 12:7, 18). Using our gifts is one of the means by which we glorify God (I Pet. 4:11). The purpose for a gift is fulfilled; the reality of a gift is validated only in and by ministry. In other words, one cannot claim the gift of teaching, for example, with no approval *from* the body, no ministry *in* the body, and with no benefit *to* the body.

I Peter 4

¹⁰ As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

¹¹ Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Needless to say, "edification" necessitates interaction and community. I Corinthians 12:7 says they are "for the common good." Gifts do not work in isolation.

Peter says that our gifts are to be employed in "serving one another." It is obvious that the ones who serve need others to serve. In verse 11, he mentions speaking gifts. This gift cannot be used at home by yourself. Those who speak need others to "hear" or the gift has no value whatsoever.

The "manifold grace of God" is referring to the varied spiritual gifts given to us by His grace (see discussion above on I Cor. 12:4 and see Ro. 12:6). As Michaels says, "The grace of God comes to us in small increments through the varied ministries of those who speak and those who serve in every congregation" (I Peter, p. 249).

When our gifts are used as they were intended, we are being good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Stewardship is the faithful management of God's possessions which He has entrusted to us. A good steward is one who faithfully manages the resources he has been given in a way that benefits his master, not himself. Paul says that it is required in stewards that they be found faithful (I Cor. 4:2) and Jesus says that it is the faithful and wise steward whom God puts in charge of His household (Lk. 12:42-44, cf. Lk. 16:10). Of course, this is just common sense. Who would put a servant who squandered their wealth in charge of their whole

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household? God has given each of us at least one spiritual gift. That gift is to be used as God intends it to be. When we are NOT using our gifts, we are not being good stewards.

The result of us using our gifts is found in verse 11 and is signaled by the words “so that.” We use the gifts God has given us SO THAT God is “glorified through Jesus Christ.” God’s design is that He be honored through the exercise of our respective gifts. Christians who think that their lives are pleasing to God apart from the church are grossly mistaken. God has given you a gift to steward. That stewardship involves building others up and results in the glory of God. Not using our gifts is a failure to be a good steward and glorify God.

The weight of these verses should not be brushed over. Do you want to glorify God? Use your gifts through the empowerment of the Spirit to build others up in the faith. Do you want to be a good steward of what God has given you? Use your spiritual gifts.

Tom Ferrell draws some convicting conclusions. These are summed up in the following eight points:

1. The final clause in I Peter 4:11 indicates why Peter stresses the words of God and the strength God provides. “The ultimate purpose of service in the church is that, in everything, God will be glorified. God should be seen at work in the speaking and in the serving, so that people will praise Him and not praise the speakers and the servers. . . . God’s design is that He be honored through the exercise of our respective gifts. To the degree that we neglect to minister these gifts, we, like clouds blocking the sun, obscure the glory of God among us.
2. These gifts are gratuitous expressions of the kindness of God. To neglect the exercise of your grace gift is to take this divine kindness for granted. Is God not grieved that we treat His mercies so lightly?
3. If faithfulness is our highest priority, then it stands to reason that neglect in the exercise of your gift constitutes a breach of trust. God has entrusted you with a gift to be passed on to others for their profit and His glory.
4. Withholding that which is intended by God for the benefit of the church family is to act selfishly toward your brothers and sisters in Christ. I John 3:17, But whoever has the world’s goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? If withholding material stuff reflects our lack of love how much more does withholding God’s grace gift from those who need it reflect a lack of love? When you look at things from the standpoint of gifts, the depth of our self-centeredness is glaring.
5. To the degree that you minister your gift, your church is stronger or weaker. As gifts are conscientiously exercised, the body of Christ is built up, strengthened in faith. As members of the body are slack in exercising their gifts, the body atrophies, weakens, and eventually dies.
6. Your gift determines your primary ministry commitment. God’s design is that your ministry be shaped by your gift. Your major investment of time and energy ought to be given to this ministry.
7. To fail to exercise your gift is to break covenant with the other members of the congregation. By calling and by vow we share a mutual obligation to one another. Often, unwittingly I hope, we are guilty of taking advantage of our brothers and sisters in Christ. By not exercising your gift you force other members of the family of God into double and triple duty to make up for your slothfulness.

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This is not only a difficult arrangement, but ultimately, an impossible one. A local congregation simply cannot long sustain such inequity without suffering damage.

8. The exercise of a grace gift should (ideally) become a lifestyle. In other words, your gift is to be exercised in a continual, consistent ministry to the saints. If you are waiting to be asked to do something, that attitude, that delay is proof positive that your understanding of both spiritual gifts and life together as a community of faith are way off the mark.

3) Each gift is given by God, so each person ought to be content in his or her role.

I Corinthians 12:18: But as it is, *God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose.*

1 Corinthians 12:11: All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually *as He wills.*

“Each member occupies in the body the position which God has seen fit to assign it, and which is most conducive to the good of the whole” (Hodge, p. 257).

4) Each member is important to the functioning of the body (I Cor. 12:21-25; Ro. 12:6-8).

A dismembered body is not fully functional. A body missing a toe loses its balance. A person who has both eyes that are fully functional has an advantage over someone who has lost an eye. The body of Christ grows and accomplishes more when all the members are operating correctly.

5) Each member is dependent upon others in order to fulfill the plan of God.

In I Corinthians 12, Paul stresses that every member is necessary for the body to function; by implication, this also means that no individual is able to accomplish God’s purposes alone. When 1 Corinthians 12:17 says, “If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?” he is pointing out that not all members have the same function; if they did, the body would be incomplete. However, this also means that if I function as an ear I am missing the ability to see apart from the member that is an eye. Likewise, the “eye” can’t move without legs and feet. It is dependent upon those body parts as well. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:22, “the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.”

All this to say that you and I are dependent upon each other to fulfill God’s purposes. Without being an active member of a local body of believers, I will lack the ability to fulfill any meaningful role. I may be able to hear, but an ear by itself is useless unless it is attached to a body. The only practical way that ear can “be attached” to a body is when the believer is involved in a local assembly of believers.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

In the last image, we see that the church is pictured as a bride. The image of the bride is an ancient one. The Old Testament speaks of God and Israel in terms of a marriage relationship. Isaiah 62:5: “And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you” (see also Hos. 1-3; Is. 54:5; Ezek. 16). Jesus boldly uses the same imagery of Himself and replaces Yahweh (God) with Himself (Mk. 2:18-20; Jn. 3:29).

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As God's bride, the church is God's most precious possession. God does not rule His people as a tyrant, using His authority to promote His own self-centered motives, but exercises love, forgiveness, selflessness, and grace.

Possibly the most well-known passage that pictures the church as the bride is in Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

The model for the husband's love is Christ's love for the church. Christ's goal for the church is described by three purpose clauses: (1) *that* He might sanctify her, (2) *that* He might present the church to Himself in splendor, (3) and *that* she might be holy and blameless. Ezekiel 16:1-14 describes similar aspirations of God in relationship to Israel.

5:26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

5:27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

The first reason that Christ gave Himself up for the church is so that He might sanctify her. To sanctify something is to make it holy for God's service. I Corinthians 1:2 calls believers "those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus." Although believers are also sanctified progressively as God reveals sin in their lives and they learn to walk in a manner that pleases Him, the sanctification here is a permanent act brought about by the death of Christ on the cross. It is the result of Him giving Himself up for the church (v. 25).

The cleansing spoken of in verse 26 is not baptism, as some see it; it is washing of the Word. That is, it is cleansing effected by the Word and is probably a reference to the gospel (cf. Eph. 6:17; Ro. 10:8, 17; Heb. 6:5; I Pet. 1:25). Christ gave Himself to the church and His death cleansed the people of God from their sins and set them apart for God's service. This came about through the proclamation of the Gospel. It is analogous to the bridal bath prior to marriage pictured in Ezekiel 16:8-14. Christ's death cleansed the believer from sin just as God cleansed Jerusalem in Ezekiel 16:9 before He entered into a marriage contract with her.

Christ's purpose in cleansing the church is so that He could present her to Himself in all her splendor, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing (cf. Col. 1:22; II Cor. 11:2; Ezek. 16:10-14). Paul doesn't say when this will happen, but it will most likely occur at the second coming of Christ since "without spot or wrinkle" describes the church in its perfected state. II Corinthians 11:2 also speaks of the pure virgin of Christ and is similar to Revelation 21:9-11. Right now the church has many faults and sins that mar her beauty, however, someday she will be holy and blameless.

The result is that the church may be holy and blameless. This is Christ's final purpose for us.

Hodge, in his commentary on Ephesians points out:

The church is regarded as the bride of Christ. This is designed to teach—

1. That it is an object of a peculiar and exclusive love. As the love which a bridegroom has for his bride is such as he has for no one else; so the love which Christ has for his church is such as he has for no other order of creatures in the universe, however exalted.
2. As the bride belongs exclusively to her husband, so the church belongs exclusively to Christ. It sustains a relation to him which it sustains to no other being, and in which no other being participates.
3. This relation is not only peculiar and exclusive, but the union between Christ and his church is more intimate than any which subsists between him and any other order of creatures. We are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones.
4. The church is the special object of delight to Christ. It is said of Zion, "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over you," (Is. 62:5). He is to present it to Himself as his own peculiar joy.

Such being the high destiny of the church, the proximate end of Christ's death was to purify, adorn, and render her glorious, that she might be prepared to sit with Him on his throne. She is to be as a bride adorned for her husband. These are not imaginations, nor exaggerations, nor empty figures. They are simple, scriptural, sanctifying, and saving truths. And what is true of the church collectively, is true of its members individually. Each is the object of Christ's peculiar love. Each is placed in a peculiar, exclusive, and intimate relation. Each is the object in which he thus delights, and each is to be made perfectly holy, without spot, and glorious.

