

INTRODUCTION: More than ever we need a true conception of the church. Our conception of the church usually is based upon:

1. What we think about the people we know belong to the church. What they are, what they do. So:
 1. Some have a high conception of the church.
 2. Still others have a very low conception of the church.

2. WE VIEW SOME NEW TESTAMENT PICTURES OF THE CHURCH

1. WE VIEW THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AS A BODY.

1. This would suggest unity. The human body used to teach us concerning the working principle of the church. 1 Cor. 12:12-21
2. Body must be in subjection, well trained for the best work, if we expect to win. 1 Cor. 9:24-27
3. Christ is the saviour of the body. Eph. 5:23
 - (1) The importance of being in the body.

2. WE VIEW THE CHURCH AS A BUILDING. This suggests stability.

1. Jesus said, "I will build my church." Matt. 16:18
2. Jesus the Architect and Builder: this gives aid and unity to the building that cannot be found in man's doings.
3. Regarding the stability of the building:
 - (1) Jesus said, "Upon this rock, I will build my church." Matt. 16:18
 - (2) Paul described, "Jesus Christ himself being (Eph. 2:19-22) the chief corner stone...in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.
 - (3) Peter said, "Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house" 2:5
4. The attacks of men, persecution, "the gates of hell" cannot shake her foundation because: She is built upon the rock of the deity of Christ.

3. WE SEE THE CHURCH AS A BRIDE: This suggests purity.

1. The Bridegroom sees a beauty in his bride which is not seen by the world. Eph. 5:27.
2. Without spot, wrinkle, blemish... Eternally young and beautiful.
3. Peter speaks of the bride as "chosen." 1 Pet. 2:9
4. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Eph. 2:10

