



¹⁶ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ¹⁷ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (1 Cor 3:16-17)

When we remember the Temple of God, our thoughts may wander back to that prototype of the Temple which was the Wilderness Tabernacle, or perhaps to Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem – that magnificent alabaster structure of beauty, grace, and stone. We do not usually, with depth of sincerity, consider that we are the Temple of God as pointed out in today's leading text; but we should! To fail to grasp this truth leaves our souls vulnerable to temptation and sin, for the Temple of God is Holy, and we must as well be Holy. *For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy. (Lev 11:44) & . . . it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:16)* 'Holy' means to be separate (anointed) and sacred. How can mortal man be so? It is by means of the imputed righteousness and holiness of our Lord Jesus Christ! Unless we are One with Christ in Spirit, Body, and Mind, we shall be one with the Prince of the Air and Darkness (Satan).

The Church is the Body of Christ. He has endowed us with the grace, love, Spirit and Truth to do His work on earth according to His Word (Mind). *⁴ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. ⁷ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Eph 4:3-7)* If we are not the Body of Christ, we are not His Temple, either. His Spirit must dwell in us, and be the marching orders of our daily affairs. In the hidden and secret chambers of the heart of the Christian is the dwelling place of God – the Holiest of Holies. His Holy Ghost abides there to reign sovereign of our soul's domain (which is His). We must bring no unholy thing into the Temple of God.

We are frail and weak, and unable to keep our hearts holy and clean of sin and unrighteousness. But the Holy Ghost is able, and He acts to make our bodies that Temple which shall stand the test. We are made able to be holy by one single factor – LOVE. The very first act of God in our calling and election is that of LOVE. *¹⁹ We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)* If God had not initiated that vital connection, we

could never have loved Him. But, despite discordant voices to the contrary, that love of God requires a response from us – an echo – to be validated. ¹⁴ *For many are called, but few are chosen.* (Matt 22:14)

Jesus was speaking to the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well when He said: ²³ *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* (John 4:23) Some of the bitterest Christians I know possess, as did Saul before his Damascus Road conversion, an abundance of the knowledge of the truth, but there is a vital part missing – Spirit! They have shoveled out their theological trenches based on those verses only that support it, and engage in a circular firing squad to their fellow Christians who do not hold their own coveted viewpoint. Of course, Truth is critically important, but if it is not tempered with the graces of the Holy Spirit – faith, hope, charity – it will benefit not an iota – no more than it benefitted Saul before he came to see the Light of Christ at Damascus.

On the contrary point, we may observe many churches that boast of the overflowing presence of the Holy Spirit. Some even call themselves a 'Holy Spirit Church' and have left off any mention of the Savior to whom the Holy Spirit always points, and never to Himself. They seem to possess many so-called gifts of the Spirit, but they hold the Spirit in error and are absent the truth. They have not settled on the only source of truth which is presented in the Holy Scriptures alone.

So the Church must worship in BOTH Spirit AND Truth! If the only people going to heaven are those who interpret Holy Scripture exactly as we do, then there will be only one soul in heaven. We may have differences of interpretation, but those interpretations must be based upon an informed knowledge of Scripture.

I entertain no belief in the Arminian¹ interpretation of salvation; however, I do not believe that all Arminian-leaning believers are bound for the gapping mouth of hell. John Wesley was a great man of faith, yet he and I would disagree on the issue of the Sovereignty of God in Salvation. If I make it to Heaven, I believe I will have an opportunity to straighten John Wesley out on that point. Salvation is solely the work of God.

The Body of Christ is the Church, and the Church is comprised on many souls who are the very Temple of God. A Temple is constructed of a variety of stones of all shapes and textures. And there are vessels of various fabric in the Temple: ¹⁹ *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.* ²⁰ *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.* ²¹ *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.* (2 Tim 2:19-21)

If I can qualify as a vessel of wood in the Temple of God, I will be most happy and blessed. There is an old story that I have related before concerning a university professor of philosophy who, on the last day of the spring quarter, invited his students to his study for tea. As the students arrived, there was an inviting samovar with steaming tea-kettle atop. Around the table, on white linen, were a variety of cups – some of wood, some of brass or tin, some of stone, and others of fine porcelain. The professor watched as each student was invited to help himself to a cup of tea. Without exception, each took the finest cup available until the last man was stuck with the wooden cup. As the last of the tea was consumed, the professor said, "I have been

¹ If you particularly need confusing, you should read this article on Arminianism: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arminianism>

watching as each man went to the table and took his cup of tea. I noted that each of you were very particular to take the best cup left on the table until there was only the poor wooden cup left for the last man. There is a lesson about life in this demonstration. Life is made up of joyful experiences (like the tea). It matters not the kind of vessel into which those experiences and blessings are provided.”

The nature of composition of the vessel in the Temple of God is of far less importance as the Spirit which those vessels contain. If we are an earthen vessel overflowing with love, how much more blessed are we than a golden vessel half-full of that love!

The very Body of Christ during His earthly ministry represented the Temple of God. Christ told the Jews that if they destroyed the Temple, He would rebuild it in three days. This literally came to pass as they murdered the King of Glory and He arose from the Tomb on the third Day! *18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.* (John 2:18-22)

The church and body of Christ is an army. If we make casualties of each other, how shall we be victors over the enemy in the field? On those essentials of the Gospel, let us speak with certainty born of knowledge and tempered with love; but on the non-essentials, let us exercise some modicum of charity. It is certain that we will not convince the whole church of our own particular peeves and opinions. Otherwise, we shall be as the Scribes and Pharisees: *24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.* (Matt 23:24)

Perhaps the contentious ones would profit by the inward washing of the Word so that the outward appearance would illustrate that inward cleansing instead of cleansing the outside only for appearances sake. *25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. 26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.* (Matt 23:25-27)

God blessed Cyrus of the Medes and Persians and favored his arms for His own purpose. In fact, He called Cyrus His anointed. God will bless any people, church or nation that casts their cares and hopes on Him.