

The Indwelling Spirit

by J.W. McGarvey

The indwelling Spirit is a universal promise to all Christians, and refers to a gift that is not miraculous, but a gift for all believers.

Scripture: Acts 2:38, Romans 8:9, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Galatians 5:22, 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

J.W. McGarvey preaches about the universal promise of the Holy Spirit to Christians of every age and country, emphasizing the indwelling of the Spirit in believers' bodies, making each individual a temple of God. He highlights the importance of recognizing the fruit of the Spirit in one's life as evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence, and the need for active cooperation with the Spirit to bear this fruit. McGarvey also stresses the significance of maintaining the purity and honor of our bodies as temples of God, warning against defilement and destruction, and pointing to the promise of resurrection for believers through the Spirit dwelling in them.

Transcript

The apostle Peter, in his sermon at the great Pentecost, promised his hearers the gift of the Holy Spirit on the condition that they would repent and be baptized; and he added, "The promise is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call to him." This is a universal promise to Christians of every age and every country; consequently, the gift referred to cannot be any of the miraculous gifts bestowed in the apostolic age alone, and on a few persons in that age; but a gift which is not miraculous, and which is not limited by time or place.

The apostle Paul speaks of the same gift, and affirms the universality of it when he says to the Romans, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." In this language the apostle treats the possession of the Spirit of Christ as the equivalent of having the Spirit of God dwelling in us, and he denies that any one in whom this Spirit dwells not, is a Christian.

This indwelling is located in a more precise manner when Paul says to the Corinthians: "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God?" 1 Cor. vi: 19. The Spirit dwells, then, not in our spirits, but in our bodies, in the same locality with our human spirits; and this fact makes every Christian's body a temple of God. It follows, also, that when these individual temples are

brought together in a worshiping congregation, they are regarded as jointly constituting a [10] temple of God in a larger sense. For Paul, after calling the Corinthian congregation "God's husbandry," and "God's building," says to them: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

The fact of this indwelling is not a matter of consciousness; for consciousness is limited in its operation to the cognition of the mind's own states and actions; and it is left for reason to discover the causes apart from the mind which produces them. Neither is the fact that I have a human spirit dwelling in me a matter of consciousness. I know the latter, as I know the former, only by faith. Revelation teaches me both, and without revelation I could never be certain of either. Revelation also teaches me to look for a certain fruit of the Spirit, by which I know that the Holy Spirit dwells in me, as I know that the fruit-producing power dwells in a tree by the fruit which hangs on the boughs. When I find "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness goodness, faithfulness, temperance," characterizing my life, I know that the Spirit of God dwells in me; for these are declared by revelation to be the fruit of the Spirit, and I know, by both observation and experience, that this fruit is borne by no other tree.

The connection which subsists between the Spirit dwelling in my body and this fruit in my life is not a matter of revelation. I may incidentally learn something of it, as I learn something of the connection between vegetable life in the tree, and the fruit which ripens on the extremities of its tender twigs. From that golden and crimson fruit I can trace back the sap through twig and limb, and stock a root, into the ground; and I can say that in some way the [11] connection is maintained through the sap; but the ultimate connection between the cause and the effect is hidden from my view in the depths of that mystery which is called life. In like manner I find, by revelation and experience, that the chief medium through which the Spirit that dwells in my body produces its fruit, is the word of God; but the method by which the Spirit's power is brought to bear through this medium is as inscrutable as the Holy Spirit himself. I can, and do, believe the fact, but I cannot know the process. I know, also, that in order to this fruit-bearing, I must cooperate with the Holy Spirit by an active exertion of my own will in the direction of love, joy, peace, etc., and that when I enjoy these blessed frames of mind, I am enjoying them in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. They are not his fruit alone, nor mine alone, but they are partly mine and partly his, so that he and I have fellowship in them, one with the other. My part may be a very small part, as that of the twig may be in producing the fruit which it seems merely to suspend; but yet the twig has fellowship with the sap, and I have fellowship with the Spirit which bears fruit in me. I may boldly pray, then, not only for the grace of Christ, and the love of God, but also for the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

From the solemn fact that the Spirit of God dwells in our bodies, the apostle draws some practical corollaries of the most impressive character. He rebukes the Corinthians for drunkenness, effeminacy, Sodomy, fornication, and all those sins which defile and degrade the body, and enforces the rebuke by demanding of them: "Or, know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own, for ye were [12] bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." 1 Cor. vi: 19, 20. What an exalted conception of the dignity of the human body is here indicated!

A filthy temple has always been an abomination to God and man. It was because Paul was suspected of defiling the temple in Jerusalem that the Jews seized him and went about to kill him. What, then, shall be thought of him whose body, after having been a holy temple of God, is covered with the filth and slime of drunkenness, fornication, and all uncleanness? We shudder at the thought, and we make the high resolve that our bodies, thus honored of God, shall be kept clean and pure, shall be guarded against all disease

and injury, shall be fed with wholesome food and clad in decent raiment, until God, who gave them, shall remand them to the dust whence they were taken.

The congregations of the Lord are liable to serious injury at the hands of ravenous wolves from without, and of factionists from within. The church of God cannot be destroyed, but a church of God may be. Against the destruction of the church in Corinth, Paul lifts a voice of warning, and he points to the indwelling Spirit for the purpose of giving emphasis to his cry. He says: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. iii: 16, 17. How many of these holy temples of God bad men have destroyed, the records of eternity alone may reveal; but for every one that has been distracted,, wasted and blotted out, some evil man or men who did the sacrilegious work shall be destroyed. Let all men learn, that far more [13] hazardous than the sin of Uzzah is the act of him who shall lay his hand upon the peace and prosperity of a church of God, his holy temple in which his Spirit dwells.

But the corollaries of the apostle are not confined to warning men against the destruction of the larger temples, or the defilement of the smaller. They follow the latter down to the dust of death, and they light up with a glowing promise the darkness of the grave. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. viii: 11. God's temple built by Solomon was destroyed by violent hands, and it shall never be rebuilt; but these later temples, not made with hands, but fashioned by the Spirit of God, shall be raised again from the ruins into which death shall crumble all earthly things, and shall stand forever more. Whether the original text declares that this shall be done through the Spirit that dwelleth in us, or on account of the Spirit that dwelleth in us, is uncertain; for the authorities are almost equally divided between the two readings; but either reading expresses a truth. It is through the Spirit by which the heavens were garnished of old, that the new heaven will be made beautiful with the glorified bodies of the saints; and it is on account of the Spirit which condescended to make these bodies its earthly temples, that they shall be so highly honored.

I once heard Brother Caskey, of Texas, remark that he knew not which God values more highly, the soul of man, or his body. The remark startled me at first; but if the soul is immortal, the body is to be made so; if the soul is redeemed by Christ, there is also a [14] redemption of the body; if the soul returns to, God at death, the body will return to him when death shall be destroyed. If the soul shall be filled with bliss, the body shall be covered with glory. But whether the soul or the body be the more precious to Him who created both, our prayer is that, our "whole soul and spirit and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

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