

Andrew Murray: The Temple of the Holy Spirit

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?”--I Cor.3:16.

In using the illustration of **the Temple** as the type of God's dwelling in us by the Holy Spirit, Scripture invites us to study the analogy. The Temple was made in all things according to a pattern seen by Moses on the Mount, a shadow cast by the Eternal Spiritual Realities which it was to symbolize. One of these realities-for Divine Truth is exceeding rich and full and has many and very diverse applications- One of these realities shadowed forth by the Temple, is man's threefold nature. Because man was created in the image of God, the Temple is not only the setting forth of the mystery of man's approach into the presence of God, but equally of God's way of entering into man, to take up His abode with him.

We are familiar with the division of the Temple into **three parts**. There was its exterior, seen by all men, with the outer court, in to which every Israelite might enter, and where all the external religious service was performed. There was the Holy Place, into which alone the priests might enter, to present to God the blood or the incense, the bread or the oil, they had brought from without. But though near, they were still not within the veil; into the immediate presence of God they might not come. God dwelt in the Holiest of all, in a light inaccessible, where none might venture nigh. The momentary entering of the High Priest once a year was but to bring into full consciousness the truth that there was no place for man there, until the veil should have been rent and taken away.

Man is God's temple. In him, too, there are the three parts. In the **body** you have the outer court, the external visible life, where all the conduct has to be regulated by God's law, and where all the service consists in looking to that which is done without us and for us to bring us nigh to God. Then there is the **soul**, with its inner life, its power of mind and feeling and will. In the regenerate man this is the Holy Place, where thoughts and affections and desires move to and fro as the priests of the sanctuary, rendering God their service in the full light of consciousness. And then comes within the veil, hidden from all human sight and light, the hidden inmost sanctuary, ' the secret place of the Most High,' where God dwells, and where man may not enter, until the veil is rent at God's own bidding.

Man has not only body and soul, but also **spirit**. Deeper down than where the soul with its consciousness can enter, there is a spirit-nature linking man with God.

So fearful is sin's power, that in some this power is given up to death: they are sensual, not having the Spirit. In others, it is nothing more than a dormant power, a possibility waiting for the quickening of the Holy Spirit. In the believer it is the inner chamber of the heart, of which the Spirit has taken possession, and from out of which He waits to do His glorious work, making soul and body holy to the Lord.

And yet this indwelling, unless where it is recognised, and yielded to, and humbly maintained in adoration and love, often brings comparatively little blessing. And the one great lesson which the truth that we are **God's temple**, because His Spirit dwells in us, must teach us, is this, to, acknowledge the Holy Presence that dwells within us. This alone will enable us to regard the whole temple, even to the outmost court, as sacred to His service, and to yield every power of our nature to His leading and will. The most sacred part of the **Temple**, that for which all the rest existed and on which all depended, was the Holiest of all. Even though the priests might never enter there, and might never see the glory that dwelt there, all their conduct was regulated, and all their faith animated, by the thought of the unseen

Presence there. It was this that gave the sprinkling of the blood and the burning of the incense their value. It was this made it a privilege to draw nigh, and gave confidence to go out and bless. It was the Most Holy, the Holiest of all, that made the place of their serving to them a Holy Place. Their whole life was controlled and inspired by the faith of the unseen indwelling glory within the veil.

It is not otherwise with the believer. Until he learns by faith to tremble in presence of the wondrous mystery that he is God's temple, because God's Spirit dwelleth in him, he never will yield himself to his high vocation with the holy reverence or the joyful confidence that becomes him. As long as he looks only into the Holy Place, into the heart, as far as man can see and know what passes there, he will often search in vain for the Holy Spirit, or only find cause for bitter shame that his workings are so few and feeble. Each of us must learn to know that there is a Holiest of all in that temple which he himself is; the secret place of the Most High within us must become the central truth in our temple worship. This must be to us the meaning of our confession: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.'

And how is this deep faith in the hidden indwelling to become ours ? Taking our stand, upon God's blessed Word, we must accept and appropriate its teaching. We must take trouble to believe that God means what it says. I am a temple ; just such a temple as God commanded to be built of old ; He meant me to see in it what I am to be. There the Holiest of all was the central point, the essential thing. It was all dark, secret, hidden, till the time of unveiling came. It demanded and received the faith of priest and people. The Holiest of all within me, too, is unseen and hidden, a thing for faith alone to know and deal with. Let me, as I approach to the Holy One, bow before Him in deep and lowly reverence. Let me there say that I believe what He says, that His Holy Spirit,

God, one with the Father and the Son, even now has His abode within me. I will meditate, and be still, until something of the overwhelming glory of the truth fall upon me, and faith begin to realize it: I am His temple, and in the secret place He sits upon His throne. As I yield myself in silent meditation and worship day by day, surrendering and setting open my whole being to Him, He will in His divine, loving, living power, shine into my consciousness the light of His presence.

As this thought fills the heart, the faith of the indwelling though hidden presence will influence; the Holy Place will be ruled from the Most Holy. The world of consciousness in the soul, with all its thoughts and feelings, its affections and purposes, will come and surrender themselves to the Holy Power that sits within on the throne. Amid the terrible experience of failure and sin a new hope will dawn. Though long I most earnestly strove, I could not keep the Holy Place for God, because I knew not that He kept the Most Holy for Himself. **If I give Him there the glory due to His name, in the holy worship of the inner temple, He will send forth His light and His truth through my whole being, and through mind and will reveal His power to sanctify and to bless. And through the soul, thus coming ever more mightily under His rule, His power will work out even into the body.** With passions and appetites within, yea, with every thought brought into subjection, the hidden Holy Spirit will through the soul penetrate ever deeper into the body. Through the Spirit the deeds of the body will be made dead, and the river of water, that flows from under 'the throne of God and the Lamb, will go through all the outer nature, with its cleansing and quickening power.

O Brother, do believe that you are **the temple** of the living God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ! You have been sealed with the Holy Spirit; He is the mark, the living assurance of your sonship and your Father's love. If this have hitherto been a thought that has brought you but little comfort, see if the reason is not here. You sought for Him in the Holy Place, amid the powers and services of your inner life which come within your vision, And you could hardly discern Him there. And so you could not appropriate the comfort and strength the Comforter was meant to bring. No, my brother, not there,

not there. Deeper down, in the secret place of the Most High, there you will find Him. Within you! in your inmost part! there faith will find Him. And as faith worships in holy reverence before the Father, and the heart trembles at the thought of what it has found, wait in holy stillness on God to grant you the mighty working of His Spirit; wait in holy stillness for the Spirit, and be assured He will, as God, arise and fill **His temple** with His glory.

And then remember, the veil was but for a time. When the preparation was complete, the veil of the flesh was rent. As you yield your soul's inner life to the inmost life of the Spirit, as the traffic between the Most Holy and the Holy becomes more true and unbroken, the fulness of the time will come in your soul. In the power of Him, in whom the veil was rent that the Spirit might stream forth from His glorified body, there will come to you, too, an experience in which the veil shall be taken away, and the Most Holy and the Holy be thrown into one. The hidden glory of the Secret Place will stream into your conscious daily life: the service of the Holy Place will all be in the power of the Eternal Spirit.

Brother, let us fall down and worship! 'Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord; for he is waked up out of His holy habitation.'

Most Holy God! in adoring wonder I bow before Thee in presence of this wondrous mystery of grace: **my spirit, soul, and body Thy temple.**

In deep silence and worship I accept the blessed revelation, that in me too there is a Holiest of all, and that there Thy hidden Glory has its abode.

O my God, forgive me that I have so little known it.

I do now tremblingly accept the blessed truth: God the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who is God Almighty, dwells in me.

O my Father, reveal within what it means, lest I sin against Thee by saying it and not living it.

Blessed Jesus! to Thee, who sittest upon the throne, I yield my whole being. In Thee I trust to rise up in power and have dominion within me.

In Thee I believe for the full 'Streaming forth of the living waters.'

Blessed Spirit! Holy Teacher! Mighty Sanctifier! Thou art within me. On Thee do I wait all the day. I belong to Thee. Take entire possession of me for the Father and the Son Amen.