

1 Corinthians 6:19 (Alfred Henry Burton) 175518

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THE body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Ghost. He acts on the soul and on the heart. It is His temple and, therefore, it is to be used accordingly. A great deal of mischief springs from not recognizing this. The body is only in its right place when it is a vessel which I am just using for God.

The body of the Christian is a member of Christ (1 Cor. 6:15), because he is His, and I am this, and my body is part of Him. It is a temple of God because the Holy Ghost dwells there (1 Cor. 6:19). My body is His temple; it is a simple statement, but the Holy Ghost is to guide me. "Ye are not your own." We have the two great leading principles of Christian condition: the body the temple; and, I am bought with a price; and for both reasons we must glorify God bodily, because it is purchased, and is possessed by the Holy Ghost dwelling in it. This gives a great distinctness to the reality of the personal presence of the Holy Ghost. Too often people talk about the Spirit working in their hearts with the thought only of a mere influence. Even that does produce a certain state of heart in such, it is true, but that my body is His temple gives reality and personality clearly and in power.

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Well, then, I am not to go and abuse the temple of God. This is peculiar to saints since redemption. "He that is joined to the Lord" is a real thing. If I am joined to the Lord I get all the fullness of Him that dwells in me, which shows the great difference between life and union. People say we are united by "faith," and again by "life," but neither is true; we are united in life, but the union is by the Holy Ghost. The Old Testament saints might be united in heart and spirit, but this was no union as in the New Testament saints.

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Persons dwelling together is not a body. There could not be a body until Christ was at the right hand of God, and you must get the head before you get the body. You have a divine Son, the Son of God, quickening whom He will, but no body formed until the Holy Ghost is given. A person cannot be said to be a member of Christ until he be sealed.

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The saints were not the body of Christ till the day of Pentecost. There may be souls in that state now, quickened but not having received the gospel of their salvation, and so doubting and fearing. But we should not judge of souls because they say "I doubt" and "I do not know"; so many think it is presumption to say, "I am a child of God." They will tell you, "I am afraid to talk in that way. I have a humble hope things will be all right, and sometimes I feel happy." Now, suppose I hear at their prayers one saying "Father" when speaking to God, and another saying, "Be merciful to me a sinner," then I learn the difference.

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It is far happier for a soul to see clearly; but when a soul cries, "Abba, Father," he has just the same title to the Lord's Table as I have. The principle is very simple. The Lord's Supper has the character of the one body, insomuch as "ye are partakers of that one loaf." If one calls God "Father" he is a member of Christ, being sealed with the Holy Ghost. We are not always judges, but the principle is simple. The man that is sealed with the Holy Ghost is a member of the body of Christ, and the Lord's Supper is a sign of the unity of the body. As a member of the body that is his place.

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Intelligence is not the test of communion. I do not bring any degree of knowledge of what I have, but I come because I am a member of Christ, and if another comes, of course it is the same thing. The consciousness that God is his Father is upon the testimony of the Holy Ghost. He must have faith in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, not merely in His person; he receives the Holy Ghost and is, of course, member of the body of Christ.

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The great truth and essence of Christianity is that it takes the heart out of this world and fixes it on Christ, making us live by Christ and on Christ and to Christ. You can't live in this world without an object before you, and so Paul says, I live by the faith of the Son of God. How far can we say we live by the faith of the Son of God? Whatsoever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. That will be the faith of the Son of God.

J. N. D.