

The Temple of the Holy Spirit

Key Verse: *“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”*
—*I Corinthians 6:19*

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 6:12-20

THE VERSES CITED FOR today’s lesson relate to immorality which the Apostle Paul learned existed in the Corinthian church. “Your glorying is not good,” he wrote. (I Cor. 5:6) They evidently took pride in their false sense of brotherly love, which was causing them to tolerate such a condition.

In the case of one offender whom Paul called to their attention, he directed that the church should put that person out from their fellowship. Paul spoke of this action as the purging out of “leaven” from their midst. (vss. 2-7) Leaven in the Scriptures is used as a symbol of sin in one form or another.

That immorality would exist in a congregation of the Lord’s people perhaps seems strange, but not so when we take into account the former habits of some in Corinth who had accepted Christ and attached themselves to his people. The general population in Corinth venerated heathen gods. Among these, the Greek and Roman goddesses of love, Aphrodite and Venus, were greatly worshipped. Because immorality had likely been a part of their former worship, it would not at first have

been viewed by some in the church at Corinth with the same degree of disdain as it should have been. However, such tolerance was fully contrary to the will of God, and Paul took drastic steps to correct the disorder.

Nevertheless, this stand against wrong was taken by Paul in love. He reveals this in his second letter to the church at Corinth. (II Cor. 2:1-11) Paul was planning to visit these brethren, and he wanted nothing to mar the joy of the occasion. He commended the church for taking the action against the wrongdoer which he urged. He also considered the fact that this individual had learned his lesson. To avoid overburdening him with sorrow, Paul now suggested to the church that he be forgiven and restored to their fellowship. If the church took this action, Paul explained, he would rejoice with them in it. Thus we see not only that Paul wanted the wrongdoing corrected, but also that the wrongdoer be forgiven and recovered.

Our Key Verse states that the body is the “temple of the Holy Spirit” which is within us. Temples were well-known to the ancients, both Jews and Gentiles. In Israel, their Temple was, symbolically speaking, the meeting place between God and his people. It was looked upon by the devout of Israel as a sacred, holy place, and the faithful among them endeavored to keep it that way. However, under the rulership of wicked kings, the Temple became defiled by idol worship set up within its walls.

The temple symbolism is used in the New Testament in two ways. The first is found in today’s lesson, in which Paul refers to the fleshly body of each believer as a “temple,” the dwelling place of God through his Holy Spirit, which we must keep pure and undefiled. The second temple picture is presented by the Apostle Peter. He wrote, “Ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house.” (I Pet. 2:5) Here each consecrated believer is spoken of, not as a temple, but as a stone being prepared to be a part of a spiritual “house” or “temple” in God’s kingdom.—Heb. 3:6; Eph. 2:19-22; Matt. 6:10 ■