

And then the joy of salvation returns; the meeting again between the soul that had deeply grieved the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit who rather than let go the soul of God's child, had allowed himself to be grieved. It is well with him who has experienced this with regard to his own sin. He alone understands what it is to have the Holy Ghost as his Comforter.

“KNOW YE NOT THAT YE ARE THE
TEMPLE OF GOD?”

In prophecy it is said, that God “turned aside to tarry for a night” (Jer. 14:8). This figure is borrowed from the wayfaring man who at sundown turns in to spend the night, and when, in early morning the sun appears above the horizon, he leaves the hospitable inn and pursues his way. Applied to the Holy One of Israel, this means that at times the prophets were aware of the indwelling of the Spirit in the soul; but that it was not permanent, that it was transient, and that soon the God close by had become again a God afar off. By the side of this experience of a God who turns in to tarry for a night, and then leaves the soul again, Jesus puts the promise, that on the day of Pentecost, God the Holy Ghost, shall come to the people of the Lord, and shall not go away, but abide with them forever. St. John, in his Gospel (7:39), states this forcibly, when he says: “The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” This can not mean, of course, that the Holy Spirit did not as yet exist, but signified that the Holy Ghost

had not yet taken up his abode in the church permanently, because, only after his ascension, Jesus would send the Comforter from the Father to the church.

And so it must be understood when the Apostles speak of the church as of a "Temple of God" and as a "dwelling place of God in the Spirit." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you" (I Cor. 3:16), not merely signifies that the Holy Spirit turns into the hearts of the saints, but much more and much more strongly, that having entered the heart, he abides there permanently; that he never more leaves the heart that has once been enriched with his indwelling, but according to Jesus' promise he remains there forevermore.

It indicates a new state of things, an entirely different dispensation of the Spirit. What under the old dispensation took place transiently, what was an occasional descent from on high into the hearts of a very few, under the new dispensation is an age upon age indwelling in the whole church. Under the old dispensation the separation between God and man was maintained. The only dwelling of God among men which was permanent was in Zion. But under the New Covenant, in virtue of the sacrifice of Golgotha, the wall of separation has been done away for good; what separated man from God has forever been brought to nought. God has not merely come to his people, but has come into his people. The temple of Zion has ceased to exist, and in the place of it has come the church of the living God. She is now God's temple. God dwells in her.

Thus humanity is divided. There is the unregenerated world, with which the separation continues, and which has no more temple on Zion. And there are the people of the Lord, who are no longer carnal, but live their lives in the spirit. Among this people, in this Church of the Lord, all separation has fallen away. She is more closely allied with heaven than with the world. She has become the permanent, abiding, the never-ending dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

But care must here be taken. This does not mean that God's spirit reveals his operations in God's saints alone. He who says this, denies the omnipresence of God, the Holy Ghost, and limits his activities. The Holy Ghost is himself God, and therefore there is nothing in God's creation in which this Spirit does not operate. Not alone in everything human, but in every creature, where there is a working of the Son and of the Father, there is likewise a working of the Holy Ghost. With every other representation the unity of the Threefold Divine being is lost. In creation itself the omnipotence of God is evident; that is to say, the omnipotence of the Father, as well as the omnipotence of the Son, and the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit. From the Father is the fullness of power, from the Son the fullness of thought, from the Holy Ghost the fullness of energy. There is no force of nature, no organic working, no Divinity evident in the richness and beauty of nature, but the Holy Ghost glorifies himself in it. And if this is evident in the inanimate creature, it is much more strongly evident in the conscious creature. To think of an angel apart from the fact, that all talents and gifts which operate in

him, are derived from the Holy Ghost, is absurd. The same applies to man. No general has ever excelled, no poet has ever sung, no scholar has ever reaped the admiration of the world, no artist has ever enriched life with his creations, but it was the Holy Spirit, who caused the spark of genius to glow in him.

Such and not otherwise is the teaching of Scripture. It even goes to far, that no gift of the Spirit, and no talent among men has ever been used against God, but it was the Holy Ghost who not only apportioned this talent, but also maintained it, and caused it to work. Hence this is the awful judgment which awaits the man who has misused his talent against God, that once he shall know what it is, with a gift of the Holy Ghost to have turned himself against God.

The indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul is altogether different from these gifts. Entirely apart from our gifts and talents we have a personal life. This personal life enables us to company with the three persons in the Godhead personally. As among men we company with one another, so that they and we enter into conscious fellowship, and undergo one another's influence, mutually receive and return love, enter into their thoughts and acquaint them with our own, suffer their superiority, enter into covenant and relation with them, devote ourselves to them and make sacrifices for them, so it is given man to enter into personal intercourse with the Holy One, in secret fellowship and in holy communion. This indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us signifies, that God not only allows himself to be sought of us, but that he himself has come to us; that by

regenerating us he has enabled us to obtain personal fellowship with him; that he did not wait till we had found him, but that he made the approach to us and touched us not from without, but from within, and that in the deepest secrecy of the life of the soul he established the tie which made us to taste his presence in the very roots of our being, in the deepest ground of our sensations, in the immediacy of our first perceptions and feelings.

This Divine fellowship does not depend on natural gifts and talents, for he who is most richly endowed with genius may suffer the lack of it, and the plainest among the plain may enjoy it to the full. In humanity itself God has implanted the disposition for this. Sin alone has disturbed it. In regeneration God restores this disposition. Then fellowship is possible again. Then fellowship comes again. Then in the deepest secrecy of his soul man is one again with God.

This is the work of the Comforter. It is not yet the heavenly state, which will be all joyous when even the memory of our sin not only, but of the fact of our ever having been sinners, will be taken from us, and will be cast into the depth of the sea. Here we still feel that we undergo a Divine, artistic operation. By having our understanding darkened and by being blinded and forsaken we are reminded again and again of the antithesis between this glorious indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and the fact that we have been born in sin. With us the Holy Spirit continuously reacts against our sinful nature. And therefore here on earth he is and remains our Comforter. For this is the blessed comfort of a child of dust,

that while on one side he still sinks away in misery, yet under it all and with it all he remains conscious of the blessed presence of the Holy Ghost. That the Holy Spirit does not go away, that he does not allow himself to be sent away, that he does not give us up, but continues to dwell with us, and to take us as we are, is his infinite, his Divine love. That he did not merely "turn in to tarry for the night," but that he abides with us forever, is our joyous bliss, and the glorious richness of our comfort.

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"ACCUSTOM NOW THYSELF TO HIM."

The exhortation that we should accustom ourselves to God, carries a reproach that brings shame. It is as though one would say to a child: "Accustom yourself to your mother!" This might be said with regard to a stepmother, stepfather or stepbrother, but we do not accustom ourselves to our own mother, who has carried us under her heart. We love her with all the fidelity and affection of the heart of a child.

We only accustom ourselves to what is strange to us, or what by estrangement has become so. When, therefore, we are exhorted to accustom ourselves to God, it implies that our Father who is in heaven has become a stranger to us; that this estrangement is still a barrier in the way of our fellowship with God; and that we should endeavor, the sooner the better, to accustom ourselves again to God, in order that this obstacle might be removed.