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K

AN INQUIRY

AS TO WHETHER

THERE IS EVEN ONE SCRIPTURE IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT TO PROVE THAT
"THE TEMPLE," "THE HOUSE OF GOD,"
"THE CHURCH," OR "THE SANCTUARY"
MEANS, IN THIS DISPENSATION, A BUILDING
OF WOOD OR STONE, AND THE SERVICES
A ROUND OF FORMAL CEREMONIES; WITH
A WORD ON "THE CHAPEL."

THE TEMPLE.

THE common and almost universal thought with respect to "the Temple" is that it is a material building, such as the Jewish Temple of the Old Testament. Does the New Testament in one single instance sanction the idea? No; we have not even a hint of the kind, but, as we shall see, the very contrary. But in order to see more vividly what the new temple of the New Testament is, let us first look at *the end* of the old temple of the Old Testament. We cannot wonder that a complete end was near at hand of this building. However gorgeous and splendid it really was, it was turned into a place of traffic and of thieves, instead of being a house of prayer for all nations. With what vehemence and severity therefore did the Lord both *speak* and *act* in dealing with the gross evils that were now found in the only house that God had ever sanctioned on earth. Hear His own language: "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and *cast out all them that sold and bought* in the temple; and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves,



and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called of all nations a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." And again; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Observe that the Lord entirely disowns their house. Before, He had said "*my house*;" but now He uses the dreadful language, "*your house*," and adds these awful words, "*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*" How could He call a temple of "buying and selling" His house? But now He gives to this terrible picture a finishing stroke, so to say.

The disciples come to Him glorying in the grand building and stones of this great and gorgeous temple. What is His reply? Is He pleased or delighted, as they were, with this gorgeous house, that had become a place of men's traffic? Nay, nay; His solemn words are, "*See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.*" Such should be the doom and end of that which had, in His own faithful language, become a den of thieves. And so entirely and literally verified has His word been that history declares that the very foundations of that great building were ploughed up. I may add here a previous work and witness as to the moral or spiritual ending of the temple. When the Lord Jesus yielded up the ghost, "Behold," it is written, "the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." This awful and stupendous act for ever put an end to the Jewish service, and, for God's real purposes as to His service, to the temple itself; for that service could not continue a moment after the flesh of the Lord Jesus was rent, seeing that the vail was only a type of Christ's flesh; and now that the antitype was come in the rending of Himself, the

forms must for ever vanish. The way into the holy place is a *new* and a *living* one, in contrast to the old and the *dead* one. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh." Thus, then, we have a double testimony to the setting aside and ending of the temple. The whole thing, we may say, in the rending of the vail, was rent from top to bottom; and this, as we have seen, previous to the literal ploughing up of the foundations of the building itself. The serious and solemn question now arises, Should we Christians own another stone building called "the temple of God?" The very *idea* of such a thing proves that believers in Christ know not either the character of the past or the present dispensation, in a word, they know not the difference between *shadow* and *substance*. The first was all shadow, the present is indeed true substance, if people had only the eye to see and the heart to perceive the substantiality and beauties of the Son and Lamb of God. Oh! what a state the formal temple work of the present day proves even real believers to be in. Instead of real Christianity, which is of and from Christ through the coming of the Holy Ghost, we have now only a spurious imitation of heathen, of Jewish, and of Romish forms and mummeries. No man who is not deluded or blinded can deny that the spirit and substance of Christianity are all lost. Christ and His preciousness have disappeared; the meaning and value of "His blood which cleanseth from all sin" is hidden and buried; and what have you in its place in the so-called temples of man? Nothing but millinery, tinsel, carved work, crosses, crucifixes, stained glass, holy altars, images, elevation of the host, holy garments, purgatory, candles, incense, intoning, bowings, turnings, ornaments, confessions, and even a bit of bread made into a god and worshipped, or what the Church of Rome calls transubstantiation. Is it thus that we are to

be deceived? Is it by Romish mummeries, such as we have just seen, that our Lord and Saviour is to be set at nought? Oh let Christians awake to the true worth of the Saviour, and not be deceived by those lying vanities of priests. Is the Son of God's *great salvation* to be covered over or adorned by such trumpery as many of the State temples are now setting forth? Isaiah says of such doings, "IT IS INIQUITY." The significant, weighty words too of the Lord to the old temple worshippers are equally applicable to the new: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." "Beware," said the Holy Ghost by Paul, "lest any man spoil you through philosophy and *vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*" "AND YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM." And therefore the so-called *adornments* of the ritualists are the vilest rubbish, even every one of them, which, as far as they can go, tend only to the bewilderment of the mind and the destruction of the soul, and should be treated as stench and poison. But, I again ask the question, Have we the remotest allusion in the New Testament to a building of wood and stones as a temple of this dispensation for God's worship? Never; nor could it be, because our worship is not of a temple, or stated or formal kind, but entirely spiritual, and therefore necessarily confined to no place, no time, and no building. "Woman," said the Saviour, "believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall wor-

ship the Father *in spirit and in truth*: for the Father seeketh *such* to worship him." "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him *must*," mark this word *must*, "worship him in spirit and in truth." This language of the Lord's, the reader will perceive, overthrows, root and branch, the delusive and deadly thought of temple ceremonials; for no man can say that *that* is a worship in spirit and in truth, but a mere theatrical display and farce; a solemn mockery of God, His Christ, and His gospel. But if we have no "temples made with hands" as belonging to the New Testament, we have no less than a threefold *living* temple of God's brought forcibly and beautifully into view. First of all then, it is the Saviour Himself who is our temple, and our only temple; but secondly, the whole Church is the temple of God; and thirdly, every separate and single child of God is the temple of the Holy Ghost. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spake of the temple of his body." (John ii. 19, 21.) "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16.) "What know ye not that *your body* is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" (1 Cor. vi. 19.) The former temple had only two parts, but here we have a temple composed, as we may say, of three parts, though of course it is all one temple, as it is written, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; *in whom* all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an *holy temple in the Lord*; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 20—22.) The Book of Revelation as especially occupied with Jewish and earthly scenes, refers again and again to the temple; but, speaking of the manifested Church of God, John says, "And I saw *no temple therein*, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple

of it." What can be more pernicious to the soul, than to occupy the heart with the thought that a certain building is God's temple, when God Himself says that His temple is His Son, His Church, and each and every child of His? You perceive that in this way the believer is robbed of God's enlivening and precious truth and is found believing a lie. What is the reason that God's children are so cold, so heartless, so decrepit, and pigmy-like? The real reason is that they see so little of what the Son of God has made them unto Himself, and to His Father, even His own body, His bride, and His temple; but are full of and very zealous for all the outward rubbish, and dead ceremonies of a building, falsely called the temple of the Lord. Remove this wrong thought, and give scriptural thoughts as to the blessed threefold living and eternal temple of God, and you emancipate and elevate the whole soul from the grovelling, degrading Romanism of the present day. Truth always sanctifies, but tradition and error only blind and deceive; let us then listen only to what is written, and reject the commandments of men, which make void the word of God. Christ in His death and resurrection must be everything, both to the believer, and to the unbeliever; and everything else only as chaff, as dung, and as dross: and when this is the case man's temples of dead stones will be seen in their true character, and in full contrast with God's living temple of living stones, Christ being the foundation, the corner, and the headstone of the whole building. Let us now look at

THE HOUSE OF GOD.

Have we the slightest intimation in the New Testament that "the House of God" ever means a material building of wood, or brick, or stone? Not in a single instance. It only shews how exceedingly careless and ignorant people are with respect to Scripture, when they

can so lose sight of the real house of God, and call a pile of stones and mortar God's house. Oh, it is truly melancholy to see the most important and precious truths of God so set aside and trampled on. Where can people have got to when they can speak in such a manner of that which is so plainly and fully revealed in Scripture? The injury to the soul, both of the believer and the unbeliever in this matter is much greater than any one can say. A person says, "I have been to the house of God, I have attended my duty in the house of God, I go to the house of God regularly twice every Sunday; and what more can I do?" and is thus doubly deceived and ruined as to his immortal soul. I say *doubly*, because, not knowing what *God's real house* means, he is blindly and superstitiously believing that his attendance in a certain building erroneously called the house of God, is the true and sure way to get to heaven. But supposing that man were taught the real meaning of the house of God, that instead of its being a building of brick, or stone, it meant the people of God, and never in any single instance a *material* building, would he not be very likely to say, "Oh, I have been deceived, I thought I was in the right way by doing my duty in what I was always made to believe was the house of God: but now I see that all I have been doing is contrary to Scripture, and that I am not in or of the house of God at all in reality, if I am not a converted man, born again of the Spirit of God?" There are thousands and thousands of people deceived by the notion that a certain house erected by man, means God's house, while utterly ignorant of the truth of God on this momentous point; which, if they really knew, might startle them out of their false dream, and lead them to the all-important enquiry as to whether they as yet belong to the real and only house of God spoken of in the New Testament. Any and everything which tends to deceive should surely be discarded; and what can be a greater deception than to

call a dead building the house of God, when God Himself never so calls it, but calls His own children His own house. What does Scripture say? for this of course decides the matter. Writing to Timothy Paul says, "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, *which is the Church of the living God.*" (1 Tim. iii. 15.) And to the Hebrews Paul says, "But Christ as a Son over his own house: *whose house are we.*" (Heb. iii. 6.) Peter, too, speaks in a similar strain, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." (1 Peter ii. 5.) In the face of such scriptures as these, is it not a most profane, and I may say blasphemous, thing to call a building of mortar and stone God's house? But let us pass on to the important subject of

THE CHURCH.

Whatever excuse there might be made for error or profanity in the case of the temple, and the house of God, because the terms temple and house might be misconstrued, which however, with the New Testament in the Christian's hands, ought not to have been, there can be in the matter of the Church, not even, as we say in every day life, the shadow of a shade of excuse. The words church, and churches occur more than one hundred and twelve times in the New Testament, and in not a single instance is there the remotest allusion to a pile of building erected by the hand of man. It is very difficult to conceive how such an idea ever entered the head of any man, or where he got it, or how he first forged it. My object, however, is not curiously to search after the origin of the many deadly tenets, doctrines, and principles of the Roman and Anglican communions; but simply and plainly to call attention to the soul destroying effects of teaching the people of God, and the unconverted, that it is not the Lord's elect people who are God's temple, house, and church, but the very contrary, namely, that "the temple," "the house of God," and "the church,"

mean places, or buildings where people are to go to say their prayers, and *prepare themselves* for heaven. Now only look at the cheat, and the deceit you have here, through such teaching. If they are converted they are saved already by Christ Jesus' precious blood: and are themselves the temple, house, and Church of God: and if they are unconverted, instead of deceiving and blinding them by telling them that a certain building is the temple, house, or Church of God, they ought to be taught God's truth, that believers only are God's temple, house, and church, and that going to a certain building to repeat responses, and say their prayers, &c. &c., cannot either save, or help to save them, but that on the contrary they are to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and then they are saved, and are then and there God's temple, house, and church. Thus such persons would learn the truth instead of being, as they are now, lulled to sleep in dead formalities, dead works, and dead buildings. A form of godliness and a fair show in the flesh are satanic substitutes for the reality and power of the death of Christ, in the heart, and in the soul. Therefore let both the believer and the unbeliever know that to call a building which man has erected (and as he superstitiously thinks consecrated), a Church, is to believe a lie, and to be blinded as to what God has said more than one hundred and twelve times about His Church. Take only a sample or two of what the Holy Ghost has written on this subject: "And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, *which is his body.*" (Eph. i. 22, 23.) "Even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself *for it* . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 25, 27.) "And he is the head of the body the church." (Col. i. 18.) And I may add Paul's wonderful words by the Holy Ghost to the elders at Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to

all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) Who can any longer say, in the presence of these and more than one hundred such like scriptures, that the Church is a structure made by art and man's device, and not the living children of the living God. Let us now look at

THE SANCTUARY.

As in the cases already referred to, so also in this of the sanctuary, persons, and sometimes real Christians, speak of going to the sanctuary, of being in the sanctuary; and in prayer we continually hear the words, *this* sanctuary, and *our* sanctuary. Now nothing can more clearly mark the ignorance of God's children about the present dispensation, than the language I have quoted above as to an earthly sanctuary or house. It is altogether Jewish and Romish, and not in the least spiritual, heavenly, or Christian. But the present dispensation is altogether spiritual and heavenly, and therefore exactly opposite to either the heathen, the Jewish, or the Anglican performances, all of which consist only in puerile, empty ceremonies and theatrical scenes and adornments. The Christian's sanctuary is not on earth in any sense or way, but in heaven, where Jesus is. We have indeed a double sanctuary, for both Christ and heaven are our sanctuary. "Our conversation (or, citizenship) is in heaven:" we are "quickened together, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ:" "because as He is so are we in this world." "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." He is therefore our sanctuary; and the place where He is, is our *real* place of worship. Christ is therefore, as the apostle says, "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." (Heb. viii. 2.) Thus it is plain that believers are

wronging God and their own souls by believing in a sanctuary as a Jewish and earthly building, instead of seeing that nothing less than heaven, and none other than the Lord Himself have they for a double sanctuary. It is sorrowful to behold how little Christians see their heavenly standing and calling, and therefore their worship, as it is called, can hardly be called worship at all, seeing that it consists chiefly in a round of outward duties and ceremonial performances, instead of walking and worshipping in faith and in the joy and love of the Lord. Let me add a word on the subject of

THE CHAPEL

We hear people frequently say, "I have been to chapel, I go to chapel, I attend our chapel," as if considerable merit attached to going to such a building, and belonging to such a place. Now is it not to be feared that many take the name of chapel-goers who know not, neither have enjoyed, the love of Christ in their hearts and thus, while they pride themselves because they belong to the building called the chapel, and not to the building called the Church, they lose sight of the fact that except they belong to Christ, they belong to nothing, except to outward religiousness, and a *name* to live while they are spiritually dead? The same thing, in spirit and in kind, though not in extent or degree, may be found in the house called the chapel, as is seen in the house called the church. There may be an unconverted minister there whose prayers, singing, and preaching in that case, would be only theatrical and hypocritical. But in any case, as I have said, the principle is the same as in the building called the church. You have minister and people, you have a certain round of so-called worship that must be regularly gone through. You have pew rents, a salaried ministry, and paid singers; you have human ordination, and a priestly performance at the Lord's supper: for the

minister *only* can dispense, as it is called, the bread and wine. Now, christian reader, look at the New Testament, and see if you can find anything like this in the Lord's or the apostles' teaching, or worship, or ways. It cannot be found. There, everything was spiritual, everything was simple, and everything was real. But now look at chapels, and you see them like cathedrals, with their many gable ends, their crosses, their turrets, and their painted windows, &c., &c.; all this kind of thing attracts and pleases the senses; and in this way the heart and the soul get loosened from God, and withered. Satan knows what he is doing by pleasing the pride and vanity of man, and leading the sinner and even the Christian from the Saviour, to outward vanities and formalism. Let us be aroused then, and rise up from all this mere tinsel, to the true treasures of the Lord Jesus. Let us be reminded again that *real* worship is just the opposite of all that hollowness and "fair show in the flesh," and is the bowing down and yet the lifting up of the soul before God in spirit and in truth. I repeat, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, **MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.**"

J. D.

No temple made with hands
 His place of service is;
 In heaven itself He stands,
 A heavenly priesthood His;
 In Him the shadows of the law
 Are all fulfill'd and now withdraw.

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