

HOW TO CARE FOR GOD'S LIVING TEMPLE

Introduction John 2 : 13-16: Jesus cleanses the Temple in Jerusalem.

Christ's cleansing of the Temple was a dramatic illustration of the work He came to do in the human soul. God's original ideal was that man should be a living temple for His indwelling, but sin defiled the body-temple and marred God's plan. Jesus came to drive out the demons of selfishness and lust that had made their home in man, and to restore him as a clean temple for God's possession.

Many people think of Christ's work as applying only to the cleanliness of our hearts, as if He were indifferent to the way we treat our bodies. It therefore comes as a complete surprise to learn that God views our whole personality—body, soul and spirit—as His temple, and that He is just as keenly interested in the health and welfare of our bodies as He is in the health of our souls!

I Cor. 6 : 16: "Ye are the temple of the living God"

How does God want us to care for His living temple? Let us open the Bible and see.

Discussion 1.—GOD'S CLAIM TO THE BODY-TEMPLE

God's claim is based upon the fact that He is our **Maker, Owner, Preserver and Redeemer.**

I Cor. 6 : 19, 20: "Your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost . . . Ye are not your own . . . Ye are bought with a price . . . Wherefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Ps. 100 : 3: "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves."

Acts 17 : 28: "In Him we live and move and have our being."

Rom. 14 : 8: "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."

What impact does this Divine claim have upon us? It should hush our hearts with gratitude and awe. The greatest day in our lives comes when this realisation first dawns over our souls. Life can never be quite the same again for us from the moment we say: "I BELONG TO GOD. MY BODY IS HIS TEMPLE!" This is surely the most powerful, life-changing conviction that can ever lay hold upon our hearts. If God places such a high value upon us, can we continue to have a cheap regard for ourselves?

2.—GOD'S CONCERN FOR THE BODY TEMPLE

Ex. 20 : 5: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

It is fundamentally right for God to be jealous about His property. We are jealous about our property, aren't we? If we owned a beautiful temple, of intricate design and matchless craftsmanship, would we not be concerned to guard it from abuse?

Accordingly, God says that the health and welfare of His people is His highest wish for them.

III John 2: "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

This concern is prompted solely by love and a desire for His people's good.

Deut. 6 : 24: "For our good always, that He may preserve us alive."

God places a high value upon our physical bodies. He does not subscribe to the false view of man which regards the human body wholly as a source of evil, and despises it as a vile and worthless husk. God created our bodies "in His own image", and pronounced them "very good" (Gen. 1 : 31). Therefore, His redemptive work takes in our bodies, and He will not rest until they are fully reclaimed from sin, disease and death.

Rom. 8 : 23: "The redemption of the body."

I Thess. 5 : 23: "Your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless."

God's concern for the body temple is reflected also in His warnings and prohibitions against its wilful abuse.

I Cor. 3 : 16, 17: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy."