

The Divine I: What an Old Man Was Told as a Child and Almost Forgot

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There was a time when a child might hear something so simple, so sacred, that it shaped their soul for life: *“He lives in you.”* These four words carried more weight than sermons or doctrines, echoing the ancient truth that the divine is not distant, but present — within. In many traditions, especially early Christianity, this was not metaphor but revelation: the human soul was made in the image of God, a vessel of divine presence, a living “I” that reflects the great “I Am.” Yet this truth, once spoken plainly to children, has faded. Institutions replaced intimacy. Theologies grew complicated. And the language of inner holiness was softened, abstracted, or lost. But sometimes, later in life, a person remembers. A forgotten phrase surfaces, and with it, a powerful realization: the divine “I” still lives — quietly, patiently, within. This paper explores that sacred memory, the theological and psychological depth behind it, and why recovering it might be one of the most important spiritual acts of our time.

Keywords: divine I, imago Dei, inner divinity, God in us, Christian mysticism, childhood spirituality, sacred memory, Christ within, spiritual identity, lost teachings, divine self, biblical anthropology, theology of the self, sacred language, God’s image, Christian formation. A collaboration with GPT-4o. CC4.0.

1. Introduction: The Echo of a Forgotten Truth

From the earliest moments of language, children listen not only to what adults say but to *how* they say it. Words spoken with warmth and conviction carry a lifelong charge, becoming internal companions — or ghosts — that shape self-understanding for decades to come. Among the most powerful of these are spiritual affirmations: phrases that situate the child not just in a family or a world, but in the sacred. Once, it was common for a child to hear something as simple and profound as *“He lives in you.”* But now, those words are rare — and for many, forgotten.

1.1 The power of formative words in childhood

Children absorb meaning through tone, repetition, and emotional context long before they can parse theology. A phrase like *“God is in your heart”* or *“He made you in His image”* may sound simple, even sentimental to adults, but for a child, it is a foundation. It becomes part of the architecture of selfhood, shaping how one relates to suffering, purpose, and others. When these words are absent — or replaced with threats, guilt, or distance — a subtle alienation takes root. The child grows up estranged not only from God but from their own inner worth.

1.2 A fading spiritual memory: “He lives in you”

The phrase *“He lives in you”* is not drawn from doctrinal confessionals, but from spoken warmth — the kind found on a grandparent’s lap, in a quiet bedtime prayer, or a moment of wonder beneath the stars. It was once part of a living oral tradition, passed along with lullabies and blessings. Now, many elders only dimly recall hearing it. It comes back, if at all, not as a theological statement but as a soul-deep memory. The power of this forgotten truth lies in its clarity: it affirms God’s nearness, God’s likeness, and God’s ongoing creative work through the self.

1.3 Why this truth is rarely taught clearly today

The spiritual simplicity of the divine “I” has been obscured by several forces: the rise of institutional religion, which often prioritizes doctrine over intimacy; the cultural shift toward secularism, which treats inner divinity as fantasy; and the psychological framing of the self as flawed, broken, or suspect. In many churches, the focus has narrowed to guilt, obedience, and salvation from sin — leaving little

space for a child to hear that God is already within them, that they are not empty until filled by grace, but already sacred because they are born of it. The result is a spiritual vacuum where shame grows more easily than confidence, and where many adults spend a lifetime trying to recover the truth they were told, once — and then forgot.

2. Theological Foundations of the Divine “I”

The idea that a human being can authentically say “I” — and in doing so reflect something divine — is not a modern invention or mystical abstraction. It is grounded in the very structure of Judeo-Christian theology. The Divine “I” is rooted in the Imago Dei, made explicit in the writings of Paul and John, and culminates in the deeply personal and reciprocal union described as Christ within. These foundations offer a powerful, often overlooked vision of humanity: not merely fallen, but also indwelt — not only sinful, but also sacred.

2.1 Imago Dei: Humanity Made in the Image of God (Genesis 1:27)

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

The Imago Dei is one of the most radical affirmations in Scripture: every human being is made in the image and likeness of God. This is not a surface similarity, nor a purely functional resemblance. Rather, it is an ontological claim — that the very essence of humanity reflects the Creator. Historically, this has been interpreted to mean that humans share in God’s reason, relational capacity, creativity, and even moral awareness.

But beyond these attributes lies something deeper: the capacity to say “I”, to act in freedom, to create, to love, and to recognize truth — all of which echo divine prerogatives. The Imago Dei means that human personhood is a mirror of divine being. Thus, when a child is told “He lives in you,” it resonates with this ancient declaration: you are not only made by God, you are made to carry God.

2.2 God Dwelling in Humanity: Biblical Support from Paul and John

The New Testament reveals that God's relationship with humanity is not distant or merely external — it is intimate and internal. Paul's letters and the Gospel of John are particularly rich in this theology of divine indwelling.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:16:

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”

And in Galatians 2:20:

“It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”

For Paul, the Christian life is not imitation of an external Christ, but participation in an indwelling Christ. The human body becomes a temple — not metaphorically, but literally, as the place where God now chooses to dwell.

Similarly, the Gospel of John offers the language of abiding:

“Abide in me, and I in you.” (John 15:4)

“In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”
(John 14:20)

This mutuality — God in us, us in God — is the very heartbeat of divine intimacy. The “I” is not abolished in this process, but elevated. The self becomes the place where God chooses to make Himself known.

2.3 Christ Within: A Theology of Mutual Indwelling and Divine Identity

In its most profound expression, the Divine “I” is articulated through the theology of Christ within — the belief that Jesus Christ does not merely save from the outside, but lives within each believer as a source of identity, guidance, and transformation.

This is captured in Colossians 1:27:

“To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

And again in Romans 8:10:

“But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

This theology affirms that the truest version of the self is not the isolated ego, but the “I” that is in communion with Christ. It is not self-deification, but self-transformation through union. The divine “I” becomes a shared space — a dwelling where human and divine coexist.

This theology is not sentimental. It is scriptural. It is not an optional mysticism, but the core of Christian anthropology: to be human is to be made for divine presence, to be a living reflection of the “I Am” who spoke the universe into being — and who still speaks, softly, from within.

3. The Loss of Sacred Language in Modern Teaching

The spiritual power of the Divine “I” has not vanished from Scripture, but it has largely vanished from instruction. What was once conveyed to children in direct, awe-filled language—*“He lives in you”*—has been buried beneath centuries of theological abstraction, institutional control, and moralistic emphasis. In this transition, the language of mystical union has given way to the language of compliance. The sacred intimacy that once affirmed the divine image within each soul has become difficult to find, especially in the spiritual formation of children.

This loss has had consequences: spiritual alienation, a weak sense of identity, and a diminished capacity for reverence—not just toward God, but toward the self and others.

3.1 From Mystical Union to Moralistic Control

Early Christian mystics spoke in bold terms about union with God—a relationship not of fear but of shared being. Saints like Athanasius proclaimed, *“God became man so that man might become god,”* articulating the transformative potential of

divine indwelling. But as Christian authority structures developed, particularly in the post-Constantinian Church, emphasis shifted from participation in divinity to obedience under authority. The mystical “I” —capable of knowing God from within—was reinterpreted as a dangerous form of pride or heresy.

This paved the way for a moralistic pedagogy: the goal became behavioral correction, not spiritual awakening. Children were taught right from wrong, often through fear of punishment or exclusion, but were rarely reminded that they carried a spark of the divine, let alone that their identity was rooted in a shared “I” with God.

3.2 The Institutional Eclipse of Divine Selfhood

The theological focus on human fallenness—especially after Augustine’s doctrine of original sin—eclipsed the affirmation of divine likeness. Institutions increasingly defined people as corrupted by nature, in need of correction from without, rather than bearing the image of God, in need of awakening from within.

Over time, religious institutions took on the role of intermediaries, asserting that divine presence was mediated through sacraments, hierarchies, and clerical authority. The language of personal, internal divine connection was not necessarily denied—but it was restricted, regulated, or cloaked in ritual inaccessible to the uninitiated. This transformed the relationship between the soul and God from immediate and indwelling to distant and conditional.

Consequently, children were more likely to hear “*You are a sinner*” than “*You are sacred*.” The divine “I” became something reserved for saints, prophets, or Christ alone—not something to be nurtured in every child.

3.3 How Abstraction Replaced Direct Spiritual Affirmation

As theology professionalized, spiritual truths were increasingly expressed through complex abstraction—systematic theologies, doctrinal confessions, and

denominational formulas. These structures, while intellectually rich, often fail to translate to the heart of a child or the soul of the everyday believer.

Where once a grandmother might whisper *“He lives in you,”* a catechism now says, *“God is omnipresent and works through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, contingent upon the regenerative act of salvation.”* Even when accurate, this formulation lacks the intimacy and clarity of the original truth. It teaches about God, but does not touch the soul.

In this abstraction, the child’s spiritual imagination—once able to envision God as a loving presence within—is left without images, without language, and without a personal sense of holiness. The sacred becomes theoretical. The “I” becomes isolated. And a foundational truth is lost: that to be human is to be the place where God has chosen to live and speak.

4. How Children Once Heard It

The spiritual formation of a child does not begin with theology books or creeds. It begins with tone, repetition, presence, and story. It begins when someone who loves them speaks a truth plainly enough to remember. For centuries, the divine “I” was passed down not through institutional channels, but through ordinary speech made sacred by intention. Grandmothers, village priests, mothers, uncles, and family friends planted this truth into the hearts of children using words that felt personal and immediate.

And the most powerful of these was often: “He lives in you.”

4.1 “He lives in you”: Spiritual Truth in Plain Words

This phrase carries the entire weight of divine theology without any of its jargon. It affirms presence, relationship, and identity all at once. It tells a child:

- God is not far away.
- God is not only for special people.

- You are not empty or alone.
- What you do matters, because God is with you and in you.

Unlike abstract language about omnipotence or theological constructs like atonement, this phrase speaks to the child's innate sense of wonder and belonging. It invites them to see their own body and spirit as meaningful — not just in need of discipline, but already holy.

This kind of speech gave children a frame of reference for conscience, creativity, and compassion. A child who believes “He lives in me” is more likely to treat themselves and others with reverence, and to interpret their inner life — dreams, questions, emotions — as a site of sacred activity.

4.2 The Role of Elders, Parents, and Faith Communities

Before formal religious education, children learned about God through the words and actions of trusted adults. Elders once served as the carriers of mystery, speaking simple truths wrapped in affection. Parents often repeated phrases like:

- “God sees your heart.”
- “You are made special by God.”
- “You’re never alone. He’s right here.”

Faith communities reinforced this through songs, blessings, and rituals that encoded divine intimacy:

- “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine...”
- “Jesus loves me, this I know...”
- Tracing the cross over a child’s forehead before bed.
- Saying, “God goes with you,” as they walk out the door.

These actions weren’t just sentimental. They were early spiritual technologies, built to imprint the sense that God was with them, in them, and for them.

Even when churches held doctrinal complexity in the background, the front-facing language to children was once gentle, poetic, and resonant. It translated Scripture into daily life, embedding a theology of presence into a child's growing awareness of self and world.

4.3 Language That Nourished the Soul Before It Hardened

Childhood is a time when the soul is still porous—open to meaning, receptive to awe, and hungry for love. The words spoken in this window of time shape how a person sees the divine, the self, and others for the rest of life. If those words are rigid, distant, or transactional, the soul begins to harden. But if those words are tender and sacred, the child learns to associate God with trust, wonder, and belonging.

The divine “I” was once planted in that window — not with theological force, but with human warmth. It was a wordless theology written in songs, eyes, and embraces. It was truth without argument. This language fed the soul before the world demanded defenses. It was clear enough for a child and true enough for a lifetime.

And though it has been largely forgotten, it can be spoken again.

5. Remembering Later in Life

When sacred truths are spoken in childhood but not nourished through adulthood, they often fall dormant — not dead, but waiting. These buried truths can resurface with great emotional and spiritual force, especially in old age, when the noise of ambition quiets and the inner life deepens. In this stage of life, a person is often drawn to reflect on the meaning of their existence, and it is here that a forgotten phrase — *“He lives in you”* — may return, not as sentimentality, but as revelation. This rediscovery is not uncommon, and when it happens, it can be profoundly healing.

5.1 The Return of Sacred Memory

Spiritual memories from childhood often return unbidden — a phrase, a gesture, a melody. For many older adults, these moments are like flashes of light breaking through a fog that has gathered over decades. They are often triggered by:

- The birth of a grandchild
- A walk through nature
- A brush with mortality
- A return to a family Bible or an old hymn

What returns is not just the memory of being told that God was near, but the feeling of it — that deep, intuitive knowing that God was not just “up there,” but “in here.” This memory comes not as a theological realization but as a visceral truth, long buried under years of doctrine, distraction, and disappointment.

5.2 The Divine “I” as a Healing Realization in Old Age

Old age brings with it both clarity and fragility. As physical powers diminish and worldly roles fall away, a person is left face to face with who they are, not what they have done. This confrontation with the essential self often reveals both grief and grace. For some, the realization that the divine has always been within them becomes a radical act of healing.

To say “I” — and mean it — becomes an act of spiritual wholeness. It is no longer an egoic claim but a sacred affirmation: “I am here. And God is here, in me.”

For those who have spent a lifetime chasing worthiness, this rediscovery can ease the burden of shame. For those facing death, it brings comfort that what is most real is already united with the eternal. And for those who have lost faith in institutions, it is a quiet return to something more ancient and personal than any system: a divine presence that never left, even when forgotten.

5.3 Stories and Testimonies of Rediscovery

Many spiritual autobiographies contain some version of this moment — the return of the divine “I” late in life. It may come during a silent retreat, a period of illness, or in the stillness of solitude. Some describe it as a re-awakening, others as a homecoming.

Examples include:

- A man who, after decades of religious doubt, suddenly remembers his grandmother whispering “*He lives in you*” as she tucked him in. He weeps, not from sorrow, but from recognition.
- A woman in hospice care who, no longer able to recite prayers, simply closes her eyes and repeats, “I am... I am... I am,” feeling herself united with the presence of God.
- A retired teacher who, after years of scientific skepticism, looks at a grandchild and spontaneously says, “You are sacred,” realizing in that moment he believes it again — and always did.

These rediscoveries are not intellectual events. They are recoveries of original trust, of a truth that was too simple to defend and too sacred to destroy. They reveal that the divine “I” is not something we achieve; it is something we remember — and return to, when the soul is finally quiet enough to hear it again.

6. Psychological and Spiritual Consequences

The presence—or absence—of the Divine “I” in early formation leaves a permanent imprint on the human psyche. Children who are affirmed in their sacredness grow up with an internal compass that orients them toward wholeness, while those denied this truth often live with an unnameable void. Whether recognized or repressed, the question of *who am I?* is not merely philosophical; it is the ground upon which spiritual and psychological health is built.

To believe that “He lives in you” is to start life with a truth about the Self that anchors meaning, connection, and resilience. Without this anchor, the self becomes untethered—drifting between performance, shame, and fear. With it, a person becomes capable of bearing the tensions of life without collapsing into despair or pride.

6.1 The Damage of Growing Up Without This Core Truth

Children who are not taught that they carry the divine within often grow up with one of two distortions:

- Unworthiness: believing they are inherently bad, broken, or rejected by God.
- Ego inflation: overcompensating through achievement or control, mistaking performance for identity.

Both distortions stem from a failure of spiritual mirroring—the deep need for someone to say, with love and authority, *“You are sacred. God lives in you.”* Without this affirmation, the child may become overly compliant (to earn love) or rebellious (to protest alienation). Spiritually, they often develop transactional relationships with God: “If I behave, maybe He’ll love me.”

Such individuals may find it difficult to:

- Trust their own conscience
- Experience authentic intimacy
- Forgive themselves
- Accept mortality without fear

This isn’t due to sin alone, but to the absence of early language that located their identity in God. Without the Divine “I,” the ego becomes the only “I” they know—and it’s never enough.

6.2 The Resilience of Identity Rooted in the Divine

Conversely, those who grow up with the deep sense that “He lives in me” often develop a quiet strength that is not dependent on external approval or success. Their identity is rooted, not constructed. Their worth is received, not negotiated. As a result, they tend to:

- Act from conscience rather than fear
- Seek beauty and meaning, even in suffering
- Treat others with a baseline of reverence
- Endure failure or aging without losing their sense of self

This doesn’t mean they are perfect or unshakable, but that they have an inner alignment—a sense that their life is held by something both greater than and within themselves.

When life breaks them open, they don’t fall apart. They remember.

6.3 Jung, Individuation, and the Sacred Self

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung spent much of his career exploring the Self—not the ego, but the deeper center of the personality that integrates both conscious and unconscious experience. For Jung, the Self is the image of God within. It is the organizing principle of the psyche and the goal of individuation: the lifelong process of becoming who we truly are.

Jung observed that many neuroses stem from a disconnect between the ego and the Self, and that healing often requires reconnecting with this inner divine center. He was deeply influenced by mystical Christian thought and often lamented that modern religion had lost the capacity to affirm the divine within. He wrote:

“The decisive question for man is: Is he related to something infinite or not? That is the telling question of his life. Only if we know that the thing which truly matters is the infinite can we avoid fixing our interest upon futilities... If we understand and

feel that here in this life we already have a link with the infinite, desires and attitudes change.”

In Jungian terms, the Divine “I” is the real Self, waiting to be remembered. And when it is remembered, life itself becomes a sacred story—one in which suffering, love, aging, and death all participate in the unfolding of divine meaning.

7. Reclaiming the Divine “I” for Future Generations

If the Divine “I” has faded from spiritual instruction, it is not because it lost its power, but because we stopped speaking it plainly. Reclaiming this truth is not about reviving old dogmas or inventing new ideologies—it is about returning to the language of reverence and re-rooting spiritual identity in something inherent, shared, and indwelling. The path forward is not complicated. It begins, as it always did, with how we speak to children—and how we teach them to speak of God, of themselves, and of others.

This reclamation is not only theological or pedagogical—it is moral. If God lives in the human “I,” then every person is a sacred vessel, and society must be rebuilt on that premise.

7.1 Teaching Children Plainly: Spiritual Truths They Can Carry

Children need more than rules and rituals—they need words that name their sacredness. Teaching the Divine “I” requires no special vocabulary, only intentional simplicity:

- “You are made in God’s image.”
- “He lives in you, and He always has.”
- “Your heart is where God whispers.”
- “You’re not just good—you’re holy.”
- “You were made to love like God loves.”

These phrases offer more than comfort—they form a spiritual framework. Children who hear them often and consistently develop an identity that is not easily shattered by failure, cruelty, or confusion. When taught early, these truths become internal companions, returning in times of crisis or doubt.

Children do not need to understand theology to believe that God is near—they only need to be shown that this nearness is real. When they feel loved, seen, and spoken to with dignity, they learn that love and dignity are divine in origin.

7.2 Liturgical, Educational, and Familial Practices

Reclaiming the Divine “I” for the next generation involves embedding it into daily life—not just sermons or classrooms, but songs, gestures, and patterns of speech. Some practical practices include:

In liturgy:

- Reviving blessings that speak of indwelling presence.
- Creating child-focused prayers that emphasize God within.
- Structuring sacraments (baptism, confirmation) around identity in God, not just membership in church.

In education:

- Designing curriculum that affirms children’s sacred worth, alongside teaching Scripture and ethics.
- Teaching students that learning and creativity are spiritual acts—expressions of the divine “I” unfolding in the world.

In families:

- Using bedtime rituals to affirm divine presence (“God is with you, and in you.”)
- Encouraging children to speak directly to God as if from within, not toward an external being.

- Framing discipline not as shame, but as alignment with who they truly are in God.

These practices restore continuity—a sacred rhythm that reaffirms, day by day, that the child is not growing toward worthiness, but from it.

7.3 The Ethical Implications of Knowing God Lives in Others Too

To say “He lives in me” is only half the truth. The other half is harder, and more urgent: He lives in others, too.

If the divine presence is not limited to any one person, faith, or group, then it follows that:

- Every child is sacred, not just those raised in the faith.
- Every enemy carries the image of God.
- Every oppressed person is, by definition, a profaned temple.
- Every act of violence, neglect, or humiliation is a theological crime—an affront not only to human dignity, but to God within.

Teaching the Divine “I” is not just an act of spiritual restoration—it is a foundation for justice. It reframes how we approach poverty, education, war, incarceration, and reconciliation. It demands that we see beyond appearances and categories. As Jesus said in Matthew 25, *“Whatever you did to the least of these, you did to me.”* That statement makes sense only if God truly dwells in others, not just symbolically, but actually.

A world that teaches its children the Divine “I” will be slower to hate, quicker to forgive, and harder to manipulate through fear. It will be a world where sacredness is not reserved for the few, but recognized in the many—and where the holy name of “I Am” echoes gently, unmistakably, in every human voice that dares to say, *“I exist.”*

8. Conclusion: The Old Man's Gift

There are truths so simple, so quietly luminous, that they escape doctrine, evade argument, and live on only in memory. The divine “I” is one of these truths. It is not found in a theology textbook or systematized catechism—it is found in the words a child once heard whispered at bedtime, or written in the smile of a grandparent, or embedded in a song whose melody never left. When an old man remembers what he was told as a child—that *“He lives in you”*—he does not just recall a phrase. He experiences a revelation. And that revelation is not for him alone.

8.1 Memory as a Form of Revelation

Spiritual memory is not nostalgia. It is a form of inner resurrection. It reveals not just the past but what was always true, even when forgotten. When a person remembers the divine “I” after a lifetime of theological complexity or emotional drift, they are not discovering something new—they are recovering their original dignity. In that moment, memory becomes revelation: a reminder that God was never far, and that the soul never fully surrendered its sacred knowing.

For the old, this kind of memory brings peace. For the young, it can become inheritance. Revelation does not always come in thunder. Sometimes, it returns as a half-remembered sentence that brings tears to the eyes and healing to the heart.

8.2 A Truth Too Simple to Be Forgotten

The divine “I” was never complex. That’s why it could be told to a child. That’s also why it was overlooked, mistrusted, and eventually displaced. But in its simplicity lies its indestructibility.

You can silence sermons. You can reform liturgies. You can outlaw creeds. But a child who hears “He lives in you” will carry something that outlives systems. That

phrase becomes a quiet flame. It may flicker. It may go unseen for decades. But it rarely goes out.

Why? Because it doesn't merely describe a belief—it names a reality. It resonates with the deep truth of Genesis, the mystery of Christ in us, and the enduring presence of the Holy Spirit. It affirms not just who God is, but where God is. And once that place has been named—the human heart—it becomes impossible to fully deny it.

8.3 Letting the Divine “I” Be Heard Again — in Children, and in Us

The old man's memory is not an end—it is a beginning. It is a gift meant to be passed on. The divine “I” must not remain a private revelation or a final comfort. It must be spoken aloud again, in words the next generation can understand.

We must begin saying again:

- *“You are not empty.”*
- *“You are sacred.”*
- *“He lives in you.”*

This is not sentimentality. It is spiritual survival.

When children hear it, they grow up with a foundation that the world cannot easily shake. When adults hear it, they begin to see themselves—and each other—with reverence instead of rivalry. And when the old hear it again, they finally understand that they were never far from God... only from the memory of being told.

Let it be said again. Let it echo not only in churches, but in kitchens, playgrounds, and quiet rooms at the end of life. Let it rise again from the mouths of those who once heard it and almost forgot.

Let the divine “I” live again—first in memory, then in speech, and finally, in every life that dares to believe it true.

9. References

The recovery of the Divine “I” is not a novelty or invention—it is grounded in Scripture, enriched by mystical theology, affirmed by depth psychology, and carried forward in cultural memory. These sources, when viewed together, reveal that the idea *“He lives in you”* has always been present—sometimes in doctrine, sometimes in story, sometimes in silence. This section gathers representative examples from those streams of wisdom.

9.1 Biblical Passages

- Genesis 1:27 – *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*
A foundational declaration of human identity as divine likeness.
- Exodus 3:14 – *“God said to Moses, ‘I Am who I Am.’”*
The original “I” as the eternal self-existent being, echoed in Christ’s later declarations.
- Psalm 82:6 – *“I said, ‘You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you.’”*
A provocative verse later quoted by Jesus, affirming divinity as a shared inheritance.
- John 14:20 – *“I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”*
A vision of mutual indwelling between God and humanity.
- John 15:4 – *“Abide in me, and I in you.”*
Divine presence as an internal relationship, not an external doctrine.
- Romans 8:10 – *“If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”*
- Galatians 2:20 – *“It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”*
- Colossians 1:27 – *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*
- 1 Corinthians 3:16 – *“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”*

- Matthew 25:40 – *“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”*
A radical ethic of divine presence in others.
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9.2 Theological and Mystical Writings

- Athanasius of Alexandria, *On the Incarnation*: *“God became man so that man might become god.”*
 - Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses*: On the soul's capacity to ascend toward the divine likeness.
 - Meister Eckhart, sermons and treatises: Frequent references to the “divine spark” or “ground of the soul” where God and the soul are united.
 - St. Teresa of Ávila, *The Interior Castle*: Describes the soul as a castle where God dwells at the center.
 - Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*: Emphasizes God's intimate presence within the soul and affirms: *“God is nearer to us than our own soul.”*
 - Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*: *“At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God.”*
 - Karl Rahner, theological writings on the “supernatural existential”: Humanity as innately open to God’s self-communication.
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9.3 Psychological and Philosophical Sources on Selfhood and Divinity

- Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* and *Answer to Job*: Explores the archetype of the Self as the image of God within and the journey of individuation as a spiritual path.

- James Hillman, *The Soul's Code*: Proposes that each person carries a “daimon” or guiding spirit—aligned with the idea of an inner divine purpose.
 - Martin Buber, *I and Thou*: Proposes the idea of relational identity—true selfhood emerges only in relation to the eternal “Thou” (God).
 - Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*: While not overtly theological, affirms that dignity, meaning, and transcendence are real and anchored in something beyond the ego.
 - Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*: Speaks of attention as a form of prayer and of the soul's mysterious receptivity to divine presence.
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9.4 Oral Traditions and Testimonies Where This Phrase Endures

- Children's hymns and spirituals:
 - “This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine...”
 - “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so...”

These songs encode a theology of God's presence in the child.
- Family blessings and bedtime prayers:
 - “God be in your heart.”
 - “He lives in you.”
 - “You are special because God made you.”
- Testimonies from elderly Christians:

Many report hearing these affirmations from grandparents or Sunday school teachers in their early years—often forgotten until rekindled later in life.

- African spiritual traditions (Christian and indigenous):
 - Concepts like the “divine breath” or the indwelling *chi* or *ashe* resonate with the idea of God living within.
- Mystical elements in Eastern Orthodoxy and Celtic Christianity:
 - Use of icons, repeated prayer, and the notion of *theosis* as union with God in the soul.
- Contemporary recovery movements and spiritual memoirs:
 - Individuals who reclaim a sense of worth through the memory of childhood affirmations, often catalyzed by trauma, aging, or reflection.

Together, these references testify to the deep historical, theological, psychological, and cultural resonance of the Divine “I.” It is a truth too widespread to be dismissed, and too quietly powerful to be forgotten forever.



Азъ –

Бог, воплощенный в человеке,
живущий и созидающий на земле.

Az̑ –
God, embodied in man,
living and creating on Earth.