

The Indwelling of the Spirit

Few people would question the fact that the Holy Spirit in some way dwells within the Christian. Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you..." (**I Cor. 6:19**). He further wrote, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (**Romans 8:9**). There is considerable disagreement, however, as to how the Spirit dwells within a Christian. It is not our aim in this short article to deal with that issue, but we do want to suggest three facts that must be remembered as one studies the question.

(1) The age of miracles is past. The only people in the gospel age who ever performed miracles were those who either received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46**) or received spiritual gifts through the laying on of the apostles' hands (**Acts 8:5-23; 19:1-7**). No one receives either of these today. The purpose of the miracles was to reveal and confirm truth (**I Cor. 2:7-13; Mark 16:19,20**). Since all truth has been revealed (**John 16:13**) there is no further need for miracles. One's conclusion, therefore, concerning the indwelling of the Spirit must be compatible with this fact.

(2) The Christian is led by the Spirit through the scriptures, the word of God (Psa. 119:105; II Tim. 3: 16,17; Eph. 3:3,4). He does not have some inner voice, separate from the scriptures, that somehow guides him into infallible conclusions in relation to truth and right. Nor is there anything in the scriptures that suggests that God's providence somehow works through the indwelling of the Spirit. Consequently, one makes a serious mistake if he interprets his feelings or subjective thinking as some kind of message provided by the indwelling Spirit.

(3) Statements concerning the indwelling of the Spirit were not placed in the scriptures as problems to be wrestled with. They were placed there for one's assurance and consolation. A Christian sustains a very close fellowship with deity — so close that it can be said that he dwells in deity and deity dwells in him. In persecution, trials, temptations, and death his recognition of this close relationship sustains him and helps him to become triumphant in Christ. The apostles never felt the need to explain how this indwelling takes place. Pentecostalism and other misconceptions concerning the Holy Spirit force the Christian of this generation to be concerned with this problem. If, however, statements concerning the indwelling of the Spirit become primarily to him a problem to be wrestled with; if his obsession with the "how" of the Spirit's indwelling blinds him to the "fact" of that indwelling, he makes a serious mistake and may fail to find the joy and consolation that should be gained through the Lord's promise.

Differences will continue to exist, but a constant remembrance of these three facts should protect any one of us from dangerous conclusions in relation to this question.

- by Bill Hall

Glory to the Reader or the Writer?

The fruit fly has long been the mainstay of bio-medical research. An article in Newsweek Magazine lauded the scientific breakthrough of reading "almost all of the chemical letters -- 165 million of them -- that make up the fruit fly's DNA." It is called "an impressive technical feat in its own right."

My marvel at this technological accomplishment of man falls far short of my awe for the One who started with nothing and made everything that man is now discovering. The science of man is simply reading what God has written. And even at that, we are still reading at the elementary school level - humans have almost 20 times more DNA than fruit flies!

"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (Psa. 139:14).

- by David Diestelkamp

The 'Big Hammer' Mentality

We know a man whose mechanical abilities (by his own admission) lie somewhere between non-existent and totally inept. His wife says that he should have been born "before the industrial revolution". Ouch! On father's day, his family gave him a new hammer. His happy reaction was: "With a big enough hammer, you can fix anything!" Lots could be said about that, but let me simply say "Please don't let him work on my car!!"

I think that too often we may exhibit this 'big hammer mentality' when it comes to certain problems in the church. We sometimes think that hitting hard and quick will solve any problem. That's simply not true.

To justify our actions we turn to passages like Galatians 2 where Paul, in dealing with the Judaizing teachers "gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour" (vs. 5). Or when he withstood Peter "to the face, because he was to be blamed" (vs. 11). Please understand that certain situations demand this kind of quick and decisive action. Paul was clearly in the right when he responded immediately and forcefully in these instances. There are times when we will need to imitate his conduct.

But, do not forget that Paul was also "gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (1 Thess. 2:7). And he taught us to be "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

Sometimes we need to use the 'big hammer' approach. But other situations require patience and a longsuffering nature. May God give us wisdom to know the difference. Think!

- by Greg Gwin