

Indwelling

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Many have raised protests to the growing number of voices affirming Christ's presence in every man. The protests have ranged from almost vehement reactionary diatribes to disagreement of the nobler sort. To disagree while maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, acknowledging the need for all of us to continue to be open to adjustment by the Spirit of Truth maintains brotherly relationship, a characteristic of the believer who has his priorities in proper order.

As one of the voices affirming what brother J. Preston Eby has called, "the Seed of Christ in every man," it has occurred to me just recently that clarifying a distinction between the presence of Christ on one hand, and Him, as it were, making Himself at home where He is, is vitally important.

I would think anyone who is theologically astute at all, would maintain, at least on the basis of the indisputable truth of God's omnipresence, that God must be present within all His creation, and Christ, in God, also so present. But it is one thing for Christ to be present; it is another thing for Christ to choose when to be salvifically active where He is present.

Though that thesis ought to, and will, I'm sure, raise all kinds of questions, I believe it's a quite fundamental truth, since for instance, we have many situations recorded in the gospels where there was a time-lag between Christ being present, and Christ---if I may put it this way---making His move.

Some time certainly elapsed, for instance, between the time Jesus arrived at the scene where friends and loved ones of Lazarus were grieving over his death, and that glorious moment when the Lord called his friend forth from his entombment.

So likewise, it is one thing for Christ to be present in a man or woman before He begins, by regenerating grace, to existentially make that person a member in particular of that body which is the habitation of God in the Spirit. In the way of illustration, there was always a

difference when our family moved from one house to another, from going into the new house, and making that new house our home.

"Christ in" is fulfilled by Christ "dwelling in." Got that? "Dwell." That's the word from which we get "dwelling." "In" is one thing; "Dwelling in" goes deeper. The same essential thought is conveyed by the word, "abide." We abide in our abode. Christ abides in us as He makes us His abode from within, from within, where He has always been.

God always works from the inside out, and there's no person or particle of matter that He first needs to get into, before beginning to work from the inside out. No particle of matter could exist without Christ within as the glue holding holding it together. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe in its macrocosm and microcosm.

Of course, In Christ, we (plural/corporately) are the temple of God, but this Reality is conveyed to us by Christ in us. God has, in Christ, already raised us up and made our humanity His glorious abode through the glorification of Jesus. Christ is the abode of God, and we are the many rooms within that abode. Now we are in the process of coming to know by Christ in us, what we are in Christ.

All that Christ has done and is doing relates to Him making His home in our hearts by faith, as Paul so wonderfully explains. The Father abides in Christ who is abiding in us, making us, with Him, the "place" of God's habitation. Now that's not hard to understand, is it?

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