

Refuting the Hollow Log Doctrine

Written by Bernard Gowens

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In yesteryear, a doctrine existed that sometimes plagued the Old Baptists in certain areas of the country. This belief was referred to as the Hollow Log Doctrine. The scenario is that a rabbit runs into a hollow log and out the other end. This rabbit that runs in and out of the hollow log provides no change to the log whatsoever. This is called the Hollow Log Doctrine.

This erroneous doctrine is used by some to describe the act of regeneration in the new birth of the elect. The analogy is that the new birth does not provide a change of essence or substance in the soul of the regenerate. This Hollow Log Doctrine is a redefining of Biblical terms such as regeneration, new birth, new creation, new creature, translation, Divine sanctification, born again, quickened, application of the blood of Christ (sprinkling), passed from death unto life, etc., etc....

If, in regeneration, there were no change to the soul (inner man) of the elect, absent would be any evidences of grace in one's life: no manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), no conflict between the two natures of the one born again (Paul in Rom. 7), no evidences of a change in Paul's life (Acts 9), no evidence of a change in the Penitent Thief on the cross (Luke 23:40-42), no opening of Lydia's heart (Acts 16:14), no preparations of the heart in man and no answer of the tongue (Prov. 16:1), no bearing of good fruit (Mt. 7:17), no manifesting of one to another's conscience (2nd Cor. 5:11), no convicting of one's conscience (Jno. 8:9), no living in all good conscience (Acts 23:1), no exercising of Paul to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men (Acts 24:16), no showing of the work of the law written in the mind or heart, no conscience also bearing witness, and no thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another (Rom. 2:14-15), no conscience to bear witness in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 9:1), no subjecting of one's self for conscience sake (Rom. 13:5), no rejoicing in the testimony of our conscience (2nd Cor. 1:12), no pure heart and good conscience (1st Tim. 1:5 & 19), no holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1st Tim. 3:9), no serving with a pure conscience (2nd Tim. 1:3), no purging of one's conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14).

If there were no change received in regeneration, then when the worshippers are once purged, they would still be conscious of their sins. However, Hebrews 10:2 says, "When once purged, there should be no more conscience of sins." If there is no change in regeneration, "what" is "purged"? Without a change, nothing would be purged. The truth is that the essence of the soul is purged. The product of this purging is a change. The Holy Spirit needs no purging. If there were no change in the quickening of the inner man, one would not have a true heart with which to draw near in full assurance of faith and their hearts would not be sprinkled from an evil conscience (Heb.10:22). The Holy Spirit does not stand in need of "full assurance of faith". Why would the Holy Spirit need the answer of a good conscience toward God (1st Pet 3:21). It is the good conscience of the translated inner man that needs this answer.

It is the nature of the soul substance in the inner man that needs changing. The Holy Spirit that is implanted in the soul of the inner man does not need regenerating (re-gensis). The Holy Spirit (H.S.) does not need the new birth. The H.S. does not need translating. The H.S. does not

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need quickening. The H.S. does not need passing from death unto life. The H.S. does not need to be recreated. The H.S. was never created, it is eternal, without beginning or ending. The H.S. does not need Divine sanctification. The H.S. does not need to be born again. The H.S. does not need the application of the blood of the Lamb. It does not need to be sprinkled. It is the Holy Spirit that accomplishes this nature change in the spirit essence of the inner man of God's elect when they are translated into Divine Life. The soul substance of the inner man needs changing. In the new birth, this inner soul substance is regenerated, born again (from above), translated, saturated with the Holy Ghost, Divinely sanctified, set apart to a Holy use, quickened, has the blood of Christ applied, passes from death unto life, becomes a new creature (creation), receives the effectual calling, is made sinless and holy, becomes righteous. The inner-sanctum of this "soul essence" can no longer commit sin (1st John 3:9). Christ in you, the Hope of Glory, is seated on the throne of your soul. If the H.S. does not change one in regeneration, then the H.S. is ineffectual. There is a "resurrection" of the inner man in regeneration. The H. S. of God needs no resurrection. The inner man receives a change in regeneration, and the body will receive its change in the final resurrection.

"In times past, I once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved me, even when I was dead in sins, hath quickened me together with Christ, (by grace I am saved;) and hath raised me up, and made me sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:2-6). In my new birth, God wrought a tremendous change IN ME. In Psalms 40:2, He makes me realize that
"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."

He changed me. He gave me a new nature and set the direction of my compass points on a new course of life.

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:3-5). The H.S. in us does not need saving. There is a CHANGE wrought in salvation. I trust this washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost has wrought a massive change in me.

This brief effort falls far short of "crusting the ground" of this inexhaustible subject. I pray this will be of some benefit to you.

Love for the Truth's Sake,
Bernard Gowens

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