

A Dove or a Pigeon?

Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him." **—John 1:32**

The Bible does not say that the Spirit came down from heaven as a pigeon. There would probably have been nothing unusual about a pigeon descending on an individual—or even remaining. There are some differences (at least in temperament) between pigeons and doves. A pigeon—at least the pigeons of Trafalgar Square—would adjust to nearly any situation, but almost certainly a turtledove would not.

I often wonder how often many of us have confused a pigeon for a dove at a spiritual level. We may hastily assume that the Dove has come, but a more objective examination might just show that it was a pigeon! Such possibility has given me a new phrase—"pigeon religion."

I fear that so much today purports to be the presence of the Spirit—but in reality it is nothing more than pigeon religion.

It is my view that the genuine presence of the Holy Spirit is not as common as we may want to believe. It is also my fear that many of us have run slipshod over this matter and have forgotten that the Holy Spirit is a very, very sensitive person. I know that I have been very guilty in this area. I have done some things—and not done others—that I later realized have grieved the Spirit.

We all claim to want God's blessings on us—and even take strong public stands for the truth! But often there seems missing a real conscientiousness with regard to grieving the Spirit by attitudes and words. It is as if we think our official positions or titles exempt us from having to watch what we say. The sober truth is, God will not bend the rules for any of us, whatever our positions may be.

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