1940

Denominationalism's Greatest Mistake

Claud F. Witty

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books

Part of the Biblical Studies Commons, Christian Denominations and Sects Commons, Christianity Commons, and the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books/274

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Stone-Campbell Resources at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Stone-Campbell Books by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.
WEST SIDE
CENTRAL CHURCH OF CHRIST
5300 GRAND RIVER AVE., AT KIRBY
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Bible School 10 A.M.; Worship, 11 A.M.;
Preaching, 8 P.M.

Denominationalism's
GREATEST MISTAKE

OR

WHERE DOES AN ALIEN,
PENITENT SINNER MAKE A CONNECTION WITH
GOD AND RECEIVE THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS?

* * *

CLAUD F. WITTY
5524 Oregon Ave.
DETROIT 4, MICHIGAN
DENOMINATIONALISM'S GREATEST MISTAKE
CLAUD F. WITTY

So far as I know, all professed Christians, of whatever creed or belief, are agreed that there is a time when an alien sinner is separated from God.

They can say with Isaiah, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Isa. 59:1.

They are not agreed, however, on the place where reunion takes place when the alien sinner returns to God.

Some of them teach that it is when the sinner, in answer to prayer, receives the Holy Spirit into his heart. Others teach that it is when the sinner touches the blood of Christ.

As I view the matter, this is one of the most important differences confronting the religious world today. On it hangs the destiny of millions of human souls. If the penitent sinner is reunited to God by the Holy Spirit coming into his heart in answer to prayer, then I unhesitatingly affirm that Christ shed his blood in vain. Salvation is a bloodless salvation. But this cannot be, for God's word says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Heb. 9:22.

Now let us look this proposition squarely in the face. Is a penitent, alien sinner reunited with God, and does he receive salvation or the remission of his past sins when he touches the Holy Spirit, or is it when he touches the blood of Christ before he contacts the Spirit? Just when and where is the connection made?

I may have a telephone on my desk, but I cannot talk over it and be heard. Why? It has not been connected with the system. As soon as a connection has been established I can talk to another person miles away, and be heard. It is the same with the alien sinner. A connection must be established between his soul and God.

I have a light fixture in my room, but the room is in darkness. Why? Because there has been no connection established between the light bulb and dynamo. The moment this connection is made, that moment I will have light.

Now the alien sinner is like the telephone receiver and the light fixture. There is no communication with God, or light from him, until a connection has been established. Just where is this connection established?

Perhaps seventy-five per cent of the preachers in America today will tell you that it is when God sends the Holy Spirit into the heart of the sinner and the sinner passes from death unto life. The sinner himself may believe this, and become very happy, and from that day forward live a prayer-
ful, consecrated life and finally die, believing with all his heart that he has been saved from his alien sins. But has he? Not, if the blood of Christ has anything to do with his salvation. And who will say that he can be saved independent of the blood of Christ?

Now here are the facts. The sinner is touched by the Spirit of God before he is touched by the blood of Christ, or he is touched by the Spirit of God after he is touched by the blood of Christ. If he is touched by the Spirit first, and that spirit saves him, then he is saved before he reaches the blood.

In Leviticus 14:14-18 we have a description of the cleansing of a leper. No one could cleanse from leprosy but God. No one can cleanse from leprosy of sin but God.

When God cleansed a leper, as described in Leviticus 14:14-18, the priest first applied the blood of an animal which was a type of the blood of Christ, and then he applied the oil, which was typical of the Holy Spirit.

We read, "And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass-offering and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot: And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand: And the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord: And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toes of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass-offering: And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord."


In verse 17 we read that the oil was to be placed on the blood. The blood first, and afterward the oil.

When the children of Israel were in Egypt, they put the blood on the door posts, and were protected by it. Afterwards the pillar of fire hovered over them and led them on their journey to the Promised Land. This cloud or pillar of fire was typical of the Holy Spirit. The blood of the pass-over lamb was typical of the blood of Christ. The blood came first and then the cloud representing the Holy Spirit. We now come to the New Testament. On the day of Pentecost the law of pardon for the alien sinner was made known.

Where was the connection between God and the sinner established? In the Spirit or in the Blood?

Peter and the other apostles first preached the gospel to the multitude. Those who heard them were pierced in their hearts, and cried out, "What
shall we do? Peter, speaking by inspiration, gave the answer. What did he say? Did he tell them they should pray, and then God would send his Spirit into their hearts and take away their sins and they would know they were saved? He did not.

He said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." But you say, there is no mention of the blood of Christ; only repentance and baptism are mentioned in connection with the remission of sins. True, but baptism is connected with the blood of Christ, and you reach the blood of Christ only by being baptized. Now notice carefully. In Romans 6:3-4, we read, "Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Here the inspired apostles says plainly that we are baptized into the death of Christ. He says we are buried with him by baptism into death. Now this much has been made clear. When an alien sinner has been pierced in the heart and wants to know what he must do to be saved, he is first told to repent, or turn away from his sins: he is then told he must be baptized for the remission of sins. He is informed by Paul in Rom. 6:3-4 that this baptism is to be a burial and that the baptismal burial is into the death of Christ. But what happened in the death of Christ? It was there that he shed his blood. While he was on the cross the Roman soldiers came to break the legs of those who had been crucified. They broke the legs of each suffering thief and were in the act of doing the same to Jesus. "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." John 19:33-34.

Jesus, then, shed his blood in his death, not in his life. This being true, it follows that if I would reach his blood, I must do so by getting into his death. In all of God's word we are told of but one way to get into the death of Christ. And that is to be baptized into it.

Now the question we are discussing is this. Where does a penitent, alien sinner make connection with God? Is it in the Holy Spirit or is it in the blood of Christ? Denominational churches teach that the connection is established when God, in answer to prayer, sends the Holy Spirit into the sinner's heart and takes away his sins.

The Bible teaches that the connection is made when the penitent sinner is buried with Christ in baptism into his death, where his blood was shed and where it is reached.

In Daniel 3:24-25 we read, "Did we not cast three men, bound; into the midst of the fire?"
They answered and said unto the King, True O King. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the son of God." Three men only were put in the furnace, but four men were known to be in there together.

We bury but one person in the waters of baptism, but two meet in the watery grave. The sinner and the Son of God. In that mystical meeting of the penitent sinner and the Saviour of men, in the waters of baptism, the sinner touches the blood of Christ and his sins are all taken away.

Peter told the people on the day of Pentecost that if they would repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promise was unto them and to their children and to all that were afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Acts 2:38-39.

Notice the order, first, repent and be baptized. Second, receive the remission of sins. Third, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Baptism into the death of Christ, reach the blood of Christ in his death, receive the remission of sins in his blood, arising from the burial in baptism free from sin, the Holy Spirit comes into the heart.

Which comes first, contact with the blood of Christ or contact with the Holy Spirit? In Gal. 4:6 we read, "And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Sons first, then the Holy Spirit because we are sons.

I have in my hand a vessel containing a dark fluid. I pour a chemical preparation into the fluid. Instantly the dark color in the fluid vanishes. The vessel represents the heart of an alien sinner. The dark fluid represents the sins in his heart. The chemical that I pour into the vessel represents the blood of Christ, the only chemical in the universe that can take sin out of man's heart. As soon as the sinner's heart has been cleansed by the blood of Christ, it becomes a fit dwelling place for the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit comes into the heart and the happy recipient begins to cry Father, Father. He begins to pray, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, etc.

Suppose we reverse this order. The penitent sinner knows his heart is full of sin. He is taught to pray God to send the Holy Spirit into his heart, and God hears his prayer and sends the Holy Spirit into his sin-filled heart. The Holy Spirit must either take the sin out of the man's heart or remain in the heart with the sin. If the Holy Spirit takes the sin out of the man's heart, then Christ died in vain. Sins are remitted without the blood of Christ. But this cannot be, for "without the shedding of blood, is no remission." Heb. 9:22.

If I were to call all the denominational preachers in the world together, and ask them where the penitent, alien sinner receives the forgiveness of
his sins, the great majority of them would say, "At the Altar", meaning that the sinner prays to God, that God hears his prayer, and sends the Holy Spirit into his heart. The Holy Spirit takes the sin out of the heart and the sinner is then and there saved. He can now be baptized or not, as he sees fit, by sprinkling or immersion, or as the church he wishes to become a member of requires, but it is understood, at least by the preachers, that baptism has nothing to do with his salvation. This was taken care of at the altar. That was taken care of when the Holy Spirit entered his heart.

If these preachers are right, the Bible is wrong, for the Bible does not teach it that way, and I will go on the public platform with any denominational preacher in the land and examine every case of conversion since Christ died, and prove that not one of them agrees with this theory.

If these preachers are wrong, then it follows that they are leading millions of sincere and honest people into the ditch of error for the blind are leading the blind, and all will fall into the ditch.

We are saved by the blood of Christ, or we are saved independent of it. If we are saved by it, then we are saved when we reach it, or are connected with it. We reach it, or are connected with it when we are baptized by a burial into the death of Christ, where the blood was shed. And since there is not a man living that can put his finger on one word of scripture that shows any other way to get into the death of Christ, than by a burial in baptism, it follows that there is no other way.

Personally, I think the Church of Christ should go before the entire denominational world and insist that they answer the question, "Where does a penitent, alien sinner receive the remission of sins? In the blood of Christ, that was shed in his death and that can only be reached in the waters of immersion, or does he receive it at the altar in answer to prayer, by God sending the Holy Spirit into his heart?"

I stand ready to discuss this question with any honorable worthy denominational preacher, or belief. My address is 5524 Oregon Avenue, Detroit 4, Michigan.

* * *

This booklet may be obtained from the author at the following prices postpaid: Single copy 3c, two copies 5c, twenty-five copies 40c, fifty or more copies 1c each.