

DENOMINATIONAL PULPITS

In what is becoming a current trend among some of the more enlightened scholars in the Lord's church, invitations to preach in Baptist, Methodist, Assemblies of God, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian, Calvary churches, etcetera, are becoming more frequent. Such invitations have been accepted by prominent preachers in the Lord's church in the last few years in Abilene, Houston, Fort Worth, Oklahoma City, Nashville, Birmingham, and a host of other cities.

This presents some very interesting ideas. Though nothing can be found within the Lord's Word about any of these denominations, there is the desire to be friendly and cooperative. So far as is known, the sermon subjects by our men are left up to their choice. Reports characterize these sermons as being friendly, non-controversial, and non-challenging as to practices and doctrines of the various denominations.

So, consideration is given as to what might happen in a Baptist church. Suppose our man is invited to speak at a Baptist congregation and he chooses to speak about "Grace." He gives a fine lesson pointing out that salvation is by grace and that Jesus has issued a call for all to come and be saved by His grace.

Suppose a lady comes forward at the conclusion asking to become saved. Now what? Does the gospel preacher handle this response or does the Baptist preacher? If the gospel preacher is left to help this lady, some further questions come to mind.

What does he ask the lady to confess? Does he ask her to confess that she believes Jesus to be the Son of God? If that is all he asks her prior to baptism, that will not satisfy this Baptist congregation. Would this Baptist church allow the gospel preacher to use its baptistry in this instance to baptize a lady into Christ for the remission of her sins upon a simple confession of her faith? If so, it would get them into deep trouble with the Baptist associations. Further this baptism would not put her into the Baptist church where she responded, nor into any other Baptist congregation. It would, however put her into the Lord's body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Such a confession satisfied Philip (Acts 8:36-38) and the apostle Paul (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:12), but it will not satisfy any Baptist church.

Does the gospel preacher then ask the lady if “God for Christ’s sake has pardoned her sins?” This is nowhere found within Scripture, and such a confession would be a denial of the purpose of baptism as including the remission of sins. It would support salvation by faith alone and at the first instance of faith. Would he then baptize her? The Baptist preacher would have to speak up and call for a vote of the church on whether to baptize her (*Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, Edward T. Hiscox, The American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1958, pp 22-23, or *The Hiscox Standard Baptist Manual*, The Judson Press, Valley Forge, Pa., Eighth Printing, 1979, p. 37). So, the gospel preacher could not at that point baptize the lady prior to a vote.

Now the vote brings up other questions. Does the gospel preacher vote for her acceptance? If he does not vote for her acceptance, would he offend the Baptists? If he votes for her acceptance, then he cannot believe sincerely that baptism is “for remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), that it saves (1 Peter 3:21), that it is something that “must” be done (Acts 9:6), that it “washes away...sins” (Acts 22:16), and that it is part of being saved (Mark 16:16).

If the gospel preacher votes for her to be baptized upon the Baptist confession, and if either he or the Baptist preacher baptizes the lady upon that vote, has she been baptized “into the one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13)? This could hardly be true, for there are many bodies (read “denominations”), and she is only a member of this Baptist church. She surely is not a Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, or a member of any other denomination.

She is not even in fellowship with the congregation of the church of Christ where the gospel preacher works, if he were the one to baptize her! Do you suppose the Ethiopian was not a member of the same church (added together by God as in Acts 2:41, 47) as the man who baptized him (Acts 8)?

Sad, sad it is that a lady has been deceived into thinking her sins are now forgiven when she has not obeyed the gospel (Romans 10: 16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 6:17; Hebrews 5:9).

Sad, sad it is that she has joined a church not even built by Jesus, not even mentioned in the Bible. The gospel preacher is a member of the church that Jesus built (Matthew 16:18), but she has been baptized into a church not mentioned in the Bible.

How could a gospel preacher be a part of something like this? Does his desire to be friendly extend to compromise? He has the courage to criticize his own brethren in the Lord’s church for not being

open to the denominations, but does he have the courage to criticize his denominational preacher friends and their churches for teaching false doctrines?

This and similar scenes in other faiths could happen easily when our men preach for denominational churches and do not exercise their right to preach to them the truth about their errors in doctrine and practice.

Sad, sad it is that a gospel preacher would compromise God's truth.

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