

## MABEL CLEMENT

by

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ECONOMY PRINTERS ASHLAND, KENTUCKY

### CHAPTER FIFTEEN

It was another cloudless night in November. A brisk breeze from the West had been blowing all day; but the air for the season was quite pleasant, just cold enough to be bracing and exhilarating. The usual stupid humdrums of Sterling were all feeling a lively interest in the discussion pending. The fact is a moral and religious earthquake was being felt in Sterling, the shocks occurring every twenty-four hours. It was felt by all grades of society.

For years the people of Sterling had held the views of Scripture advocated by Mr. Campbell and his followers. No other views had been propagated. But a wedge had been inserted in the religious beliefs of the people and hammered at with such masterly strokes that Campbellism was being split open and exposed. A pry - a Gospel pry - had been put under the religious faith of Sterling and the whole thing was on the eve of upsetting.

Mr. Clement's house was again filled early with some eager to talk and others eager to hear. Dr. Stanly was a little late and nervous, but hopeful. He evidently disliked to meet the gazing scrutiny of the crowd; but he faced the ordeal very well considering, and made an effort to appear brave and cheerful to his flock. After passing remarks by several Mr. Tibbs inquired:

"What is the statement of the question before us tonight, Miss Clement?"

"It is," she replied, "that in all ages of the world persons have been saved by faith in CHRIST. And, of course, that means by faith with what is necessary to it, or by the faith that follows repentance, which is preceded by teaching of the truth and, convincement of sin."

"It is an easy matter," said the Doctor, "to show the fallacy of such a statement."

"Very well, Doctor, will you please proceed?" said Mabel.

"You have affirmed," he replied, "and the burden of proof properly lies on you; but I shall not be particular. I confess this idea of yours is entirely new to me. I do not object to it, however, on the ground of its novelty; but because it is plainly unscriptural.

Up to the time of CHRIST the people were in a sense the followers of Moses, because they followed his teaching; but when CHRIST came they were told to follow Him and His teaching. At the baptism of JESUS there came a voice from Heaven saying, "**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**" (Matthew 3:17). On the mount of transfiguration the same voice spake out of the cloud, "**This is my beloved Son; hear Him**" (Luke 9:35).

They were no longer to hear Moses and follow him; but were thenceforth to follow JESUS and do what He taught. Now if they both taught the same thing and the same way, why turn from one to the other?"

"I would like to ask," said Mabel, "what office was filled by the types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation? Were the offerers really saved by the lambs and other victims slain on Jewish altars?"

"No," replied the Doctor, "they were all typical of CHRIST, who was to come as Saviour."

"That is correct," said Mabel; "the countless gallons of blood that ran down from Jewish altars never atoned for, or washed away one sin. The LAMB slain with its warm blood flowing pointed as a fingerboard to our crucified Saviour whose blood alone could wash away the sin of the offerers. The offerer was not to trust in the LAMB taken from his flocks for pardon, for no one was ever saved thus. He was to look through that LAMB as a type to the dying CHRIST as his only hope of pardon. Thus under the Mosaic dispensation persons were saved by trusting in CHRIST - saved then just as they are now. Thus the teachings of Moses and CHRIST are perfectly harmonized - are not at war."

"Don't you know," said the Doctor, "that not one person in a hundred understood the full spiritual import of his own offering? Hence scarcely any of them were saved."

"Perhaps so," replied Mabel. "I know the Lord said of the Israelites, **'They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.'** See Ps. 95:10 and 11 and Hebrews 3:10 and 11. So I conclude few of them were saved."

"But," interrupted the Doctor, "it will not do to say there were no changes made and no difference in the two dispensations. The law and the prophets were until John, since then the Kingdom of GOD is preached and men press into it. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST. I tell you there is a wide difference - everything is changed. Why, there is as much difference in the two dispensations as in moonlight and sunlight. Then we are plainly taught that under the law those who complied with the requirements of the law were to live in doing them."

"We will agree, Doctor," said Mabel, "in much you say; but I do not see the pertinency of much you say. Answer me this question: Does not the law require perfect and constant obedience in order to salvation by it?"

"Well, yes, that is right," answered the Doctor.

"Well, did anyone ever keep the law perfectly and constantly except JESUS?"

"Well," - and the Doctor turned in his chair uneasily - "No, I think not."

"You are right," added Mabel decisively, "and it therefore follows that no one was ever saved by the law. Hence they must have been saved in some other way, if saved at all. This is true; they

were saved by faith in JESUS CHRIST, the only Saviour in all ages."

"But," interrupted the Doctor positively, "there is the Old Testament and there is the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. The New supersedes the Old. The Old is done away and the New comes in for a hearing. To the New we are to turn for the knowledge of the way of salvation; and it tells us to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. The Old nowhere gives any such instruction. In the name of common sense. I ask, why have a New, if it is the same as the Old? Where is the propriety? How can it be new?"

"Let it be understood once for all," responded Mabel, nothing daunted, "that there is a great difference in the two dispensations. Some things were required under the Old that are not under the New; and vice versa. But that does not militate against my position. The one question for us to decide is this: Were persons saved during the Old dispensation by trusting in JESUS, just as they are in the New? Now I affirm they were. Let us hold ourselves to this one point and not discuss everything peculiar to the times of Moses and CHRIST."

"That persons were saved then as now has not been proven, nor can it be," said the Doctor. "Salvation is now certainly closely connected with baptism; this was not the case in the days of Moses and the prophets. Therefore I conclude the way of salvation has been different in different ages of the world."

"Baptism is an important ordinance," said Mabel, "and ought to be observed; but baptism is no more essential to salvation now than it was in the days of Moses and the prophets, i. e., it is not essential at all. This fact glows on almost every page of inspiration and has been made as clear as noon-day; but it is still true, 'Convince a man against his will, He's of the same opinion still,' or tries to be."

"That baptism is essential to salvation is the doctrine of the New Testament," said the Doctor.

"I beg pardon," replied Mr. Tibbs; "but this discussion has shown that there is not a scintilla of truth in that statement."

The Doctor's face whitened, but he held back his boiling wrath.

"Now," said Mabel, "I propose to show that the way of salvation has been by faith in all ages. Let us notice:

1. All the sacrifices of Jewish altars were figures of CHRIST and designed to set Him before the mind of the offerer and to teach him to look to and trust in CHRIST for salvation. He who brought his lamb to the priest to be offered up for his sins did not look to that lamb for pardon, but to GOD's LAMB typified by his own. Thus he was saved by faith in CHRIST; so are we.

2. All the prophets taught the people to believe in the coming CHRIST in order to the remission of sins. When JESUS appeared to, and instructed, the two disciples on the way to Emmaus He said, **'O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning**

**Himself** (Luke 24:25-27).

Here we learn that all the Old Testament Scriptures speak concerning CHRIST. Now notice one passage bearing on the question before us. It is in Acts 10:43: **"To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."** This is clear.

Here we have the prophets - all of them - bearing witness together, teaching the people of their day to believe and promising remission of sins if they do believe in CHRIST. Thus the typical sacrifices and Moses and all the prophets agree - all say, believe and be saved.

3. John the Baptist, the forerunner of CHRIST, taught the same doctrine. He taught the people to repent and to believe in One that was to come after him, Matthew 3:1-3; Acts 19:4. John said: **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"** (John 3:36). Thus John perfectly agrees with those that preceded him, that men are saved by faith.

4. The writers of the four gospels all teach this doctrine. Matthew says in chapter 9:2 that a man was pardoned on condition of faith. Mark says the same thing, Mark 2:5. Luke in chapter 7 tells of the woman who washed His feet in tears, etc., and declares that woman was saved by faith. John taught that those who believe become the sons of GOD (1:12), that they are not condemned (3:18), but have eternal life (3:36). They are all a unit and agree with preceding witnesses.

5. The Acts teach the same doctrine. Read again Acts 10:43 and 11:14. Then see how Paul and Silas answered the question, **'What must I do to be saved?'** They said, **'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,'** (Acts 16:31).

Then see the instruction JESUS gave Paul when He first appeared unto him to make him a minister and send him to the Gentiles that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Him. (Acts 26:16-18). This is too plain to need comment.

6. The Epistles are full of this doctrine. There are whole chapters that might be read in proof. But I shall content myself with one passage bearing directly on the point in dispute. It is II Timothy 3:15: **'From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.'** The sacred writings alluded to are the Old Testament Scriptures taught Timothy from infancy by his Jewess mother. The New Testament was not extant during Timothy's childhood. Notice now closely what Paul says:

1. Salvation comes through faith. He who exercises faith in CHRIST JESUS receives salvation.

2. The Old Testament taught salvation by faith in CHRIST JESUS. This is unavoidable. This is the doctrine so clearly taught in the New. Hence there has been no change in the way of salvation; it has always been by faith in CHRIST. Unless this passage be martyred, or gagged, it is just certain to establish my position. The only way to dodge the truth here taught is to put the passage on the rack like an inquisitor and torture it till it shrieks out a meaning that it does not contain.

I might close here; but I give, if possible, additional force by enumerating,

"7. Some examples of the way persons were saved under the two dispensations. Take the case of Abraham. How was he saved? Moses tells us in Genesis 15:6, **'He believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.'**

Now Paul in Romans takes up this case to show how persons are saved under the Christian dispensation. Paul says Abraham believed GOD and it was counted to him for righteousness and that it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him: but for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe Romans 4:3 and 23, 24. If we do what Abraham did GOD will do to us what He did to Abraham, i.e., count us righteous.

So, as he was saved, we are saved.

In John 8:56 JESUS says: **'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.'** Now read Galatians 3:6-8 and you will see the Gospel was preached to Abraham. Through that Abraham believed and was saved just as we do. Paul declares also that believers walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, Romans 4:12.

- How was Abel saved? **'By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous'** (Hebrews 11:4).
- How was Noah saved? **'By faith Noah . . . became heir of the righteousness which is by faith'** (Hebrews 11:7).
- How was the jailer saved? By faith.
- How was Cornelius saved? By faith.
- How were the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, etc., saved? By faith in CHRIST JESUS.

Thus we have the way of salvation exemplified under both economies, and the way is the same. I quote one more passage by which the one way of salvation in all ages is forever settled. There were Judaizing teachers who taught that men could not be saved except they were circumcised. Paul and Barnabas after much disputation took others and went to Jerusalem to consult the apostles about the matter. It was pronounced unnecessary.

Peter said: **'Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they'** (Acts 15:10-11). Even as they! Even as the fathers were! Here then are the reasons for my faith.

"The sacrifices of the Jewish economy, the prophets, John the Baptist, the writers of the gospels, the acts of the apostles, the Epistles of the churches and a number of examples scattered through 4,000 years all testify that the way of salvation is and has ever been by trusting in JESUS. Then Peter capped the climax by declaring we are saved like the Jewish fathers were. This is a fact then made out beyond the shadow of a reasonable doubt."

While these arguments were being arrayed and piled one on top of another the audience listened with profound attention. Arthur and Mr. Tibbs showed by their beaming faces that they believed Mabel's position was correct. The Doctor appeared confused and chagrined. Mr. and Mrs.

Clement were confounded and convinced. And the spectacled man rubbed his hands together till they were almost ready to take fire. The arguments were clear, convincing and irresistible; and the matter seemed settled when Brother Jones said enthusiastically: "That's so, sure; there's not a reasonable doubt. If a body doubts after all this testimony, accordin' to my mind, he's unreasonable and unwilling to take what's plain truth, certain."

At this speech the Doctor colored deeply; but he did not say anything. It was now an undisguised fact, patent to him and to all, that either he was wrong and Mabel was right, or he was unable to cope with this school girl in discussion.

He was now sure he had found more than a match in this youthful champion of the Baptist faith. He was heartily sorry he had brought on this discussion and secretly resolved he would not be such a fool again in a hurry. But all could see he was determined to stick to his own doctrine.

"This matter seems to me," said Mr. Tibbs, "to be as clear as a mathematical demonstration. The proof is simply overwhelming. The one argument, viz., that the prophets all thought that persons must believe in JESUS and then receive remission of sins, and that Peter, living in the Christian dispensation, taught the same thing *verbatim et literatim*, satisfies my mind perfectly that the way of salvation has been the same in both ages, and I shall henceforth defend this doctrine."

"I am forever and unwaveringly settled," added Arthur, "in the firm belief of this doctrine; and I flatter myself that I have gathered information and facts enough to confute the arguments of any who do not believe it."

"Are there any other questions involved in the discussion that we should examine?" asked Mr. Tibbs.

"Inasmuch as some have said that I acted unwittingly in being reimmersed by the Baptists, I would like to show why it was done," said Mabel. "I think I can show that Campbellite baptism is unscriptural and hence worthless."

"Well, will the heavens fall next?" exclaimed the Doctor. "Of all the absurdities under the sun those held by the Baptists are the most puerile and ridiculous. Unreasonableness, presumption, bigotry, imbecility, have characterized your positions during the whole of this discussion. There is so little appreciable difference in Baptist and Christian baptism that all magnanimous minds - all save those dwarfed by sinful selfishness and proud prejudice - are agreed both are Scriptural. And I say, and say emphatically, it's the depth of nonsense, the very acme of folly, to dispute it."

The tone of this speech was full of bitterness and sarcasm. The Spirit of CHRIST was not controlling the Doctor. His mind was beyond doubt swayed by the old Adam nature. This harsh speech, spoken in a very ugly manner, made the blood tingle in the veins of those who heard it. Particularly did the cheeks of Arthur Manly burn with the hot blood of honest indignation; but he checked the cutting reply about to escape his lips.

"That is a hard speech," said Mabel, simply and softly.

"If Doctor Stanly was not a minister," added Mr. Tibbs, "I would say his remarks are highly uncivil; and, in my judgment, are not sufficiently courteous to be addressed by a gentleman to a

lady. But I have never been willing on any subject to accept mere asseverations, however solemn. **"To the law and the testimony."** I want to hear this matter out; and as it is late I propose a postponement till tomorrow night."

Silently the people dispersed, some wounded by the hard sayings, some perplexed that the discussion was planting and nourishing Baptist principles and scattering firebrands in the Campbellite society, and others wondering if it would be proven the next evening that they had not been baptized according to the Scriptures.

Mr. Tibbs and Arthur lingered behind and together bade Mabel good-night after congratulating her on another signal victory. Mr. Tibbs gallantly took Mabel's hand and said with evident heartiness:

"Miss Clement, it affords me pleasure to say that in my opinion you have so far sustained fully every position you have taken. I at first entertained much prejudice against the views you advocate; but that feeling of opposition has gradually subsided, and, like Saul, I now joyfully embrace and propagate the cause I once persecuted. Dr. Stanly has been beaten badly at every point; and I see in his irritability and sarcasm your wounded victim writhing in agony at your feet. His anger and sarcasm rebound and hurt himself rather than you." He held her plump pretty hand all this while. Arthur stared and studied those faces brought into such close proximity.

"Manly," said Tibbs as they walked down the street arm in arm, "she is the most bewitching little creature I ever met. But let me tell you, fellow," - and he stopped and squared himself on the pavement and looked Arthur in the face - "though I have gained during this discussion much useful information, I fear I've lost something irrecoverably."

He wanted to see what Arthur would say. They walked on.

Arthur did not ask, but guessed what was lost, and in his soul did not wonder at it. In front of the courthouse Arthur called a halt: "Tibbs, my dear fellow, I am sorry for what you have lost; don't lose it there, my man; don't lose it there; it is too late for you to gain by it." Arthur said: "Good night."

It was what Tibbs suspected. He stood motionless as a statue in the moonlight for five minutes. Then he sighed one of those deep sighs that seem to come up from hearts that are sad and lone.

"Mr. Morgan" - George hesitated, for he did not know just the best way to ply Jeems with questions so as to find what his notions now were, and so to shape his own accordingly - "Mr. Morgan, my mind has been struck."

"How, George, how?" inquired Jeems.

"W'y, it's struck with the fac' - that is to say - that things are growin' worse and worse."

"Hang me if they hain't," he replied.

Mrs. Morgan clasped her hands as if she was faint almost to swooning. But she didn't swoon.

"Mr. Morgan, do you think they'll ever grow any better?" asked George.

"Hang me if I know, George, and-and-hang me if I kere. I'll be what I'll be, George."

"I don't edzactly understand ye," said George.

"Do ye hear me, George?" said Jeems in an imposing and impressive manner.

"Yes, I hear yer, Mr. Morgan," said George with eyes and ears and mouth open and hands reaching out involuntarily, as if to clutch whatever Jeems might say.

"That girl," continued Jeems, "contends that the Bible's a Baptist book out and out; that it was got up by the Baptists and for the Baptists; that every sentence in that book is a Baptist sentence, and every verse a Baptist verse, and every word a Baptist word; and if we unite on the Book we'll all be Baptists. But I don't kere what she contends; it's all child's talk to me and I can't be moved."

George thought this the height of wisdom and believed it upset all the girl's arguments.

Mrs. Morgan felt like shouting at her husband's lofty and emphatic peroration.

~ end of chapter 15 ~

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