

## MABEL CLEMENT

by

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### CHAPTER ELEVEN

Design of Baptism - "Born of water" and "washing of regeneration" - Campbellism shuts door of Heaven against the unimmersed - Mr. Wilds converted - Arthur in courtroom - Jeems and George

It was night again in Sterling. The day had been pleasant; and, as the sun set behind the western hills, the families in the neighborhood of the Clements began to get ready to hear the discussion. Great crowds surged in, till every nook and corner was filled. Arthur Manly took his seat as usual, Bible, paper and pencil in hand. Mabel appeared somewhat pale and anxious, but hopeful. Dr. Stanly made an effort at cheerfulness; but he was nervous and uneasy. The spectacled man filled his accustomed corner; and as he shrugged his shoulders, it looked as if the stoop was all coming out. Mr. and Mrs. Clement were crowded out of the room, but sat in the next peering in at the door eagerly. There were several of the Campbellite faith present who had not attended the discussion before, notably, Mr. Wilds and Farmer Grubbs.

The conversation was opened by Arthur Manly. He said:

"I hope the discussion will not continue so long as it did on Saturday evening. It was near midnight when we retired to our homes. Sleep and rest are essential to mental vigor; and we certainly need that in this Bible investigation."

"I heartily approve what you say," said the Doctor; "and I hope our discussion will close by ten o'clock. I think we should examine critically a few passages each night."

"I hope the Doctor will lead off then and specify some texts to be examined," said Mabel. "I believe he is in the affirmative."

"Very well," replied the Doctor; "I shall select for our consideration John 3:5, and Titus 3:5. The two passages evidently mean the same thing and should be examined together. I shall read them that you may see they are akin: **'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God'** This is the language of JESUS as given by John. In Titus we have different phraseology, but it is plain that precisely the same thing is meant: **'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'** If anyone thinks these passages are not parallel, I would like for that one to speak before I proceed to an exposition."

"The passages seem to be parallel," said Arthur. "At least I can perceive no material difference,"

"They doubtless refer to the same two great truths," added Mabel.

"Then let us inquire," continued the Doctor, "what is meant by '**born of water**' and '**washing of regeneration**' To my mind nothing is clearer than that each of these expressions alludes to baptism. The one teaches us that we must, not only be born of the Spirit, but must be born of water, i. e., be baptized, before we can enter the Kingdom of GOD. The other teaches that we are not saved by the '**renewing of the Holy Ghost**' alone, but by '**the washing of regeneration**,' i. e., by baptism.

I wish all to observe that baptism is one of the means by which we enter the Kingdom of GOD, and one without which the Saviour has solemnly averred no one can enter.

Notice, again, that baptism is one of the means by which we are saved, and, consequently, one without which we cannot be saved. And mark you, this is not what Dr. Stanly says, but what the Bible says!" And he felt triumphant.

"We shall see who says that presently," replied Mabel; "but before I confute your position, I wish all present to note well this fact: Dr. Stanly does not expect to meet any Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, or pious Pedobaptists in Heaven. He believes firmly they will all miss Heaven and land in Hell.

That is what Campbellism believes and teaches - that all pious Pedobaptists will be shut out of Heaven; that not one will join

'In that chorus of fire,  
That bursts from GOD's choir,  
As the loud hallelujahs leap up from the soul'

around the throne of GOD; but all of them take up the wail of the lost the moment the breath leaves the body."

"No, no!" interrupted Mr. Wilds fiercely, "we do not teach - we do not believe any such thing and never did."

Mr. Wilds' wife died an inveterate Presbyterian. So it touched him in a tender place; for he was confident his wife was a pious Christian and he expected to meet her in Heaven.

"Brother Wilds," asked Mabel, "do you believe that '**born of water**' means baptism?"

"Certainly I do," he responded.

"Well, if that means baptism, JESUS has solemnly affirmed that no one can enter the Kingdom of GOD without baptism. Now are you going to flatly contradict the Saviour?"

"My wife was as good a woman as ever lived and I am sure she went to Heaven. She told me not an hour before she died that JESUS was with her and that the angels were hovering around her bed. Her last words were 'meet me in Heaven,' and I am sure she is there."

"Doubtless," said Mabel, "she is in Heaven awaiting your arrival; but your theory as certainly shuts her out as we are here tonight. You must give up your theory, or give up the hope of meeting your wife in Heaven. For your sake I ask the Doctor to state whether I am right or wrong."

"She is right," replied the Doctor; "if '**born of water**' means baptism, then all who have not been immersed are shut out of the Kingdom of GOD."

"Then I denounce the doctrine," said the brother excitedly; "I never believed such doctrine as that, - I believe firmly and joyfully that persons can be saved and get to Heaven without baptism; and I have no doubt about the Bible sustaining me."

"Thank the Lord," said Mabel; "that is one convert reclaimed from the blighting beliefs and deluding errors of Campbellism. I hope Bro. Wilds will hold firmly to what he says, for he stands on Bible ground."

"Well," said the Doctor, "what have you to say about these passages? You seem to intimate that something else is alluded to than baptism. Tell us what it is and give us the proof."

"No, no," replied Mabel; "you have affirmed that each of these expressions signifies baptism; now I deny and call on you for the proof. You have given us nothing but your own unwarranted, unsupported assertion, and that is not satisfying as we mean to receive nothing but Bible truth."

"I believe," said Arthur, "that baptism is called a burial in the Scriptures; but so far as I know it is never denominated a birth. I am not well up in Scripture, however, and may be mistaken. I hope Doctor Stanly will inform us if baptism is ever called a birth in the Bible."

"N-no, it is never called a birth, unless it is here; but the fact that water is mentioned here, and that we have nothing to do with water except in baptism, seems to be proof amply sufficient."

"You are too easily persuaded, Doctor," replied Mabel; "it is easy for us to believe what we wish to. Water is mentioned many times in both Old and New Testaments, where baptism is not alluded to. Now grant me leave to quote other passages that have the same meaning and throw light on these two under consideration.

I will then proceed to show that these expressions cannot mean baptism.

There are two things GOD does for us in saving us, in making us His children:

1. He cleanses us from moral pollution, from sin;
2. He gives us a new nature, or heart.

Let us see if these truths are not written plainly in GOD's law. **"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"**

(Ezekiel 36:25, 26).

Here are the two ideas put as plainly as the Divine hand could write them.

Again David says: **'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me'** (Psalm 51:2, 7 and 10).

Here are the two ideas again plainly stamped in the Divine record. the two great things GOD does for us are to wash us from moral pollution and give us a new heart, or spirit. **'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God'** (John 3:5).

Here are the same two ideas.

JESUS here taught Nicodemus that those two things for which David prayed, which GOD promised through Ezekiel and others, were indispensably necessary to an entrance into the Kingdom of GOD. Now hear Paul:

**'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'** (Titus 3:5).

Here the same two ideas are explicitly specified. That these passages are parallel will hardly admit of a doubt."

"I do not admit it," said the Doctor vehemently. "I do not think the passages are parallel. There is a big difference in the Old and New Testaments. What have we to do with the old, anyhow? We are not to hear Moses, but JESUS. We are to find the way to Heaven in the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"Very true, Doctor," replied Mabel, very positively; "but we are not to throw away the Old, but are to read it for our instruction. It is calculated that the New Testament quotes or alludes to the Old Testament 855 times; Bagster puts it 889 times. JESUS began at Moses and expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27).

"I must admit," said Mr. Tibbs, "that there is a close resemblance in the passages."

"I am clearly satisfied that is correct," added Arthur.

"Well, it looks that way," said Mr. Wilds.

"That's so," said Brother Jones, "that's so, sure."

"I wish you all to observe," said Mabel, "that JESUS explained **'born again'** to Nicodemus by saying it signified **'born of water and of the Spirit.'** He also censured Nicodemus for not knowing what born of the water and of the Spirit meant. Was this censure deserved? It certainly was.

But Nicodemus had no source of information save the Old Testament. Hence he ought to have learned from the Old Testament what born of water and of the Spirit meant.

And the Old Testament does not teach the duty of baptism. It is silent on this subject. Hence **'born of water'** does not mean baptism.

It and **'of the Spirit'** mean washing away sin, or moral pollution, and imparting a new nature, or heart. This is what is meant by the other parallel passages."

"We are all agreed, I believe," said Mr. Tibbs, "that these passages are parallel, unless Dr. Stanly objects. But why may we not say they signify we are washed in baptism, or that baptism is that washing? What are your reasons for saying baptism is not alluded to?"

"They cannot allude to baptism," replied Mabel,

"1. Because there was no baptism in the days of David, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. David did not pray for baptism, nor did GOD speak through the prophets, telling them He would baptize them. But David prayed for a washing from sin and GOD said through the prophets that He would wash, cleanse, forgive the sins of the people.

2. Nicodemus had only the Old Testament to learn from. JESUS censured him for not knowing what **'born of water'** signified. Now the Old Testament does not say one word about baptism; Nicodemus could learn nothing about it. So if it means baptism, JESUS administered an undeserved and unjust reproof. Therefore we conclude it cannot refer to baptism.

3. Baptism is an act of righteousness which we do. **"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"** (Matthew 3:15). But we are told that GOD does not save us by works, or acts of righteousness which we have done, but by the washing of regeneration and **'renewing of the Holy Ghost'**, as we see from Titus 3:5. Therefore baptism cannot possibly be alluded to.

4. Regeneration is something GOD does. It is not what men or ministers, priests or popes, angels or devils do. To be born again is to have GOD do something for us. Those born again are born of GOD. See John 1:13. Now it follows that **'born of water and of the Spirit'** which is an explanation of **'born again'** is also the work of GOD. Therefore baptism is entirely out of the question, for GOD does not baptize.

5. The HOLY SPIRIT is the author of this washing. See I Corinthians 6:11. But the HOLY SPIRIT never administered water baptism; therefore this cannot mean baptism to fair-minded people.

6. The Saviour pardoned and saved without baptism. See Mark 2:5 and Luke 7:50. Now JESUS would not enact a law, say one must be baptized before he can enter the Kingdom, and then violate that law by taking persons into that Kingdom and into GOD's family without baptism. This He did. See John 1:12. Now in saving us GOD both cleanses us from sin and renews us in the spirit of our mind.

These two truths are included in **'born again'** but expressed in **'born of water and of the Spirit'** also in **'the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost'** All this is just as plain to my mind as it can be. If people will look these facts candidly in the face, I do not think they will see them in any other light."

"That's so, sure," chimed in Brother Jones; "It's all mighty plain to me now, sure."

Here was a pause. The spectacle man shrugged his shoulders and grinned, while his spine curved like a rainbow. All disputants seemed convinced, unless it was the Doctor, who looked grimly into the fire. He was soured and sullen from the dish of unpalatable food Mabel had forced him to swallow silently.

"Our time is out," said Arthur, "and I move we adjourn till Wednesday evening. I have some urgent business on hand that demands all my time and attention; and I am so reasonably and deeply interested in this discussion I cannot afford to be absent a single meeting. I shall be obliged if my request is granted. It will furnish time for rest and sleep and thought."

"I do not object," said Mabel; "let us learn if it suits the Doctor."

"I have no objection," said the Doctor, gruffly.

The audience dispersed, feeling that Campbellism had lost another battle and had one of its main pillars taken away.

On the following day Arthur Manly was kept in his room preparing for a case in court, which was to come up early next morning. At 3 p. m. he made a speech before a jury and in the presence of over a thousand people, against a man charged with the crime of murder. For sagacious shrewdness, soundness of judgment, irresistible logic and brilliant eloquence, the speech was never surpassed in Sterling. He seemed to have jury and audience in his power to sway them as he wished. This speech elevated Arthur in the estimation of the people and added laurels to those he had already won as a brilliant lawyer.

The colloquy of Jeems & Company, after the foregoing discussion was amusing. They glided out into the darkness, for the moon was buried in a sea of clouds. George pressed close to the side of Mr. Morgan and inquired:

"What's your mind now, Mr. Morgan?"

"I'm not a man as talks much" - he generally introduced what he had to say in this way, especially when he felt he had something telling and irresistible to say - "George; but hang me ef I couldn't head off that ere girl far more completer than the Doctor. Why, I'd a clome right over that subjec' in a way that would have astonished all Sterlin.'"

"I know it, Jeems," interrupted the little wife. "There's never a man in Sterlin' would a routed that lass quicker."

"I tell you, George," continued Jeems, "that girl tw'ns and twists the Scriptur' orfully, she does positively. She garbles and mutilates and tortures it. She puts jist sich pieces of Scriptur' together as stamps her theory as Scripteral, and - and - why George, what couldn't I prove by follerin' sich a line uv argument?"

"Nothin', Jeems, nothin' airthly," said the wee wife.

"I could prove oxen are in Heaven," continued Jeems without heeding his little wife, "I can prove it, George, positively."

"Certainly, Jeems, certainly," said Mrs. Morgan. "Can you, Mr. Morgan?" asked George.

**"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn,... for of such is the Kingdom of heaven;"** replied Jeems.

Jeems appeared to think this very wise and George thought it the summit of wisdom, and evidently believed Dr. Stanly never could have proved such an absurdity, that is, if it was an absurdity. George was somewhat puzzled to know how to prove it was not true. He was not at all conversant with the Scriptures, and yet he knew Jeems had quoted Scripture. There it was; the Bible said it undoubtedly. George said nothing but wondered if it was true. Jeems moved rapidly, gesticulating and speaking very positively:

"Uv course our doctern's true, George, uv course it is. Do you s'pose I've been readin' and talkin' and thinkin' and disputin' twenty years on what wasn't true? I'd be a purty fool, wouldn't I?"

"Mr. Wilds," said George, satisfied with matter in hand, "has gone a glimmerin' - that is to say - Mr. Morgan."

"I'd say he had George; but it wasn't the doctern that took him, but that dead wife."

"She **'being dead, yet speaketh'** - that is to say" - said George.

"Ye-es," replied Jeems. "The old feller was hemmed in, had no retreat, couldn't think his way out on the spur of the moment, I s'pose. But mark you what I say, George, he'll be back on the old path before another moon cheerin' the rest uv us on to victory."

There they parted; but it was a late hour before sleep visited their couches. The truth is they were uneasy. They were really shaken as to their faith in Campbellism; but prejudice rejected all arguments and Jeems held on and held out boldly.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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