

ILLUSTRATIONS OF BIBLE TRUTH

by

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CHAPTER SIX

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NO OIL IN THE LAMP

“They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them” (Matthew 25:3).

Nothing is sadder than profession without possession; nothing more solemn than to have a name that one lives, while actually dead in trespasses and sins. Many are like this, they have no sense of their true condition.

The following case came to my notice while I was preaching in a middle western city, sometime ago. The lady related it to me herself. She had been for years a professor of religion, attending services frequently, reading her Bible with some degree of regularity, saying her prayers and attending to what she thought were her duties as one who belonged to a respectable church. In short, she was doing all she knew how in order to prepare her soul for eternity. But, while she hoped she was all right, she was never very seriously concerned for her conscience had not yet been reached and so, as she put it afterwards, she was contentedly hastening on to judgment, relying upon her own fancied goodness and meritorious works for salvation.

She was alone in her room one night when suddenly the lamp which had lighted went out, leaving her in the darkness. Almost involuntarily she exclaimed, “There is no oil in the lamp!” The words were scarcely uttered till they seemed to come reverberating back into her ears, but with a new and solemn meaning. “No oil in the lamp! I’ve heard that before. Ah, yes, the parable of the virgins (Matthew 25:1-12). Five of them had no oil in their lamps when the bridegroom came, and they were shut out of the feast.”

Her mind became troubled. For several days, and even nights, the thought was ever with her. She would often cry out in anguish of soul, “No, I have no oil in my lamp. What will become of me? I have not the grace of God in my heart!”

A horror of great darkness came upon her. She longed to be saved, yet knew not how. In great distress she began to pray, and God opened her eyes to see her utterly lost, undone condition in His sight, and showed her that she could do nothing to save herself.

She searched His Word for light as to how she might obtain the longed-for “oil,” and at last was led to realize that the work that saves had all been finished long ago when the Lord Jesus bore her sins in His own body on the tree (I Peter 2:24); that all she had to do to possess eternal life and to know that she had it, was to believe on Him (I John 5:13).

Glad she was indeed to be saved so simply, and yet in a way that brought such satisfaction. Sin had been all judged on Another, and she was justified from all things (Acts 13:38-39). In simple faith she rested in Christ, and can now rejoice that she is His for time and eternity. Before she had profession, now she had Christ; before she was dressed in the rags of self-righteousness, now she was clothed in the righteousness of God (I Corinthians 1:30); before she had an empty lamp only, now she was the possessor of oil of the Spirit, who has sealed her for heaven (Ephesians 4:30).

NOT ONLY NECESSARY – BUT ENOUGH

“There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time” (I Timothy 2:5-6).

In a hospital ward a lady missionary found an undersized and undeveloped little Irish boy, whose white, wizened face and emaciated form excited her deepest sympathy. Perhaps he was of about fifteen years of age; he scarcely looked to be twelve. Winning the lad’s confidence by gifts and flowers and fruit, she soon found him very willing, and even eager, to listen to the story of the sinner’s Saviour. At first his interest seemed of an impersonal character, but gradually he began to be immediately concerned. His own soul’s need was put before him, and he was awakened to some sense of his lost condition, insomuch that he commenced seriously to consider how he might be saved. Brought up a Romanist, he thought and spoke of penance and confessional, of sacraments and church, yet never wholly leaving out Christ Jesus and His atoning work.

One morning the lady called again upon him, and found his face aglow with a new-found joy. Inquiring the reason, he replied with assurance born of faith in the revealed Word of God, “O missis, I always knew that Jesus was necessary; but I never knew till yesterday that He was enough!”

It was a blessed discovery, and I would that every reader of these pages had made it. Mark it well: Jesus is enough!

- **“Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”**

- **“Ye are complete in him.”**

- **“God hath made us accepted in the beloved.”**

These are only a few of the precious declarations of Scripture which show clearly that Jesus is indeed not only necessary, but enough.

It is believed by most people that Jesus is necessary. The whole fabric of Christendom is built upon that. But, alas, how few realize that He is enough! You see, it is not Christ and good works, nor Christ and the Church, that save. It is not through Christ and baptism, or Christ and the confessional, that we may obtain the forgiveness of our sins. It is not Christ and doing our best, or Christ and the Lord's Supper, that will give us new life. It is Christ alone.

Christ and – is a perverted gospel which is not the Gospel. Christ without the “and” is the sinner's hope and the saint's confidence. Trusting Him, eternal life and forgiveness are yours. Then, and not till then, good works and obedience to all that is written in the Word for the guidance of Christians, falls into place. The saved soul is exhorted to maintain good works, and thus to manifest his love for Christ. But for salvation itself, Jesus is not only necessary, but He is enough.

DISAPPOINTMENT

“Disappointment – His appointment,”
Change one letter then I see
That the thwarting of my purpose
Is God's better choice for me.

“Disappointment – His appointment,”
Though it may come in disguise
For the end, from the beginning,
Open to His vision lies.

“Disappointment – His appointment,”
Whose? The Lord's who loves me best,
Understands and knows me fully,
Who my faith and love would test;

For, like loving, earthly parents,
He rejoices when He knows
That His child accepts unquestioned
All that from His wisdom flows.

“Disappointment – His appointment,”
“no good things will He withhold.”
From denials oft we gather
Treasures of His love untold.

Well He knows each broken purpose
Leads to fuller, deeper trust;
And the end of all His dealings

Proves our God is wise and just.

“Disappointment – His appointment,”
Lord, I take it then as such,
Like the clay in hands of potter
Yielding wholly to his touch;

All my life’s plan is His molding,
Not one single choice is mine.
Let me answer, unrepining
“Father, not my will, but Thine.”

If in thy least device
I stoop to take a part,
All unaware, thine influence steals
God’s presence from my heart.

I miss my Saviour’s smile
Whene’er I walk thy ways;
Thy laughter drowns the Spirit’s voice
And chokes the springs of praise.

If e’er I turn aside
To join thee for an hour,
The face of Christ grows blurred and dim
And prayer has lost its power!

Farewell! Henceforth my place
I with the Lamb who died,
My Sovereign! While I have Thy love,
What can I want beside?

Thyself, dear Lord, art now
My free and loving choice,
“In whom, though now I see Thee not,
Believing, I rejoice!”

Shame on me that I sought
Another joy than this,
Or dream a heart at rest with Thee
could crave for earthly bliss!

These vain and worthless things,
I put them all aside;
His goodness fills my longing soul,
And I am satisfied.

Lord Jesus! let me dwell
“Outside the camp,” with Thee.
Since Thou art there, then there alone
Is peace and home for me.

Thy dear reproach to bear
I'll count my highest gain,
Till Thou return, my banished King,
To take Thy power, and reign!

– Margaret Mauro

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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