

MABEL CLEMENT

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Design of Baptism - Campbellite theory "Born of water" - Campbellites teach none are saved without immersion - Scriptural subject for baptism - Order of Repentance and Faith - Mr. Morgan and George

The large parlor was almost uncomfortably filled by 8 p. m. All present the evening before were on hand and a number of others ventured in, eager to hear. All were welcomed and seated.

"I am glad to see such a goodly number present to hear this discussion," began the Doctor. "It is a large theme, and if you are ready we had better proceed."

"Well, Doctor, suppose you state the design of baptism," said Mabel.

The Doctor then cleared his throat, straightened himself up in his chair and made the following statement: "The Christian church holds that *the design of baptism is in order to the remission of sins*; that it is essential to pardon, justification and salvation. Do you deny?"

"I do," replied Mabel; "but we must examine the writings of other Campbellites to see if they agree with you. Since your people contend that they have no creed, we must look into the utterances of the learned, the standard bearers among them to see what they teach on this subject. The Campbellite theory is that baptism is a condition precedent of the remission of sins; in baptism sins are remitted, sinners come in contact with the blood of CHRIST in baptism, etc. The first preachers of this denomination all agreed that baptism was essential to salvation. They universally taught that the soul is not secure till after baptism and contended that everyone must be baptized before he can have any Scriptural assurance of pardon, any solid hope of Heaven. Mr. Campbell, as quoted by Ray's *Text Book on Campbellism*, p. 239, says: 'If being born of water means immersion, as clearly proved by all witnesses, then remission of sins cannot, in this life, be received or enjoyed previous to immersion.' With this agrees Mr. Moses Lard: 'We maintain that the sinner, though a believer, is still required to repent and be baptized in order to the remission of his sins, and, consequently, that they are not remitted before and without baptism.' *Campbellism Exposed*, p. 256. Mr. Campbell also teaches that baptism is the line between the saved and the unsaved. 'On the one side they are pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted and saved; on the other they are in a state of condemnation.' When the denomination was first launched the preachers and people all believed that baptism was indispensably necessary to pardon and salvation."

"That is true," added the Doctor. "And we still teach as we began."

"There are some who demur to this teaching now," said Mabel. "There has been in the denomination a healthy reaction and the doctrine of baptismal salvation is repudiated by them."

"If so, I am not one of them," replied the Doctor. "We still believe as Moses E. Lard and Mr. Campbell taught, that without baptism the sinner cannot be born again, cannot be in CHRIST, cannot have his sins remitted, cannot be cleansed, cannot be saved."

The Doctor made these remarks pleasantly and confidently, as if perfectly satisfied these views are Scriptural and easily sustained.

"Yes," replied Mabel, "baptism in your view is the great catholicon, the panacea, without which everything else is nothing. But I wish to call attention to the testimony of Mr. Hopsen, a learned and eloquent man, bold and outspoken. In the '*Living Pulpit*,' page 281; is his sermon, accepted and published as representing the doctrinal sentiments of the denomination, entitled, '*Baptism Essential to Salvation*.' He says: 'Essential is that which is not only very important, but indispensably necessary.' So, according to Mr. Hopsen, baptism is indispensably necessary to salvation - so essential that there can be no salvation without it. Again, on page 288, I read, 'The application is easy. The Saviour in His wisdom and goodness - and all His acts are both wise and good - has seen fit to suspend the forgiveness of the sinner upon the three conditions, Faith, Repentance and Baptism. A full compliance is necessary to salvation, according to the statute governing the case; the willful neglect of a solitary condition will work deprivation of the blessing sought. These three conditions are in the law. The promise is made to depend upon full obedience to the three. They equally possess the element of a condition precedent, and, in this sense, are equally essential.' There is no ambiguity about this language. It is as plain, as transparent as sunshine. As there can be no pardon without repentance or faith, so there can be none, absolutely none, without baptism. On page 300, however, he makes the matter, if possible, still plainer. He asks: 'But will I be damned if I am not baptized?' He answers that question with the word *certainly*. He says: 'Certainly. Why not? It is the blood of CHRIST that really washes away sin. We come to the blood, into the death of CHRIST, through faith and repentance and in baptism,' Mr. Campbell and Mr. Lard both teach the same doctrine."

"You are certainly gifted," said the Doctor, "in setting forth the views of the Christian church with reference to the design of baptism. I cannot comprehend why you have been so particular to become acquainted with these facts. Certainly this is what we have always taught - that baptism is indispensably necessary to pardon and salvation; and that the man who fails to obey the Lord in baptism is unpardoned and unsaved, whatever else may be true of him. To dispute this is simply to display one's ignorance of the past history and faith of the Christian church."

"It is necessary, Doctor," said Mabel, "that I know what Campbellites teach before I can show their teaching is contrary to Scripture. But let me call your attention to one more fact. In John 3:5 we have these solemn words of our Saviour: '**Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,**' Now all Campbellites say that 'born of water' means baptism."

"Right again," interrupted the Doctor. "We all together agree here and universally interpret 'born of water' to mean baptism. This is why we put so much stress on baptism. Some contend that only the Spirit and His work are necessary to salvation; but here we see it is impossible for

anyone to enter the Kingdom of GOD without baptism."

The audience was startled here by the strange guttural voice of the spectacled man indignantly expressing disapproval of the Doctor's statement. As he said with a voice that sounded like it came out of the grave, "It is false!" The ladies shivered like a ghost had touched them. He twitched his chair vigorously, bent still further forward and fixed his piercing eyes angrily on the Doctor, who shrunk from that merciless gaze as from the stare of a skeleton. The Doctor bit his lip and was silent. The silence was broken by Mabel "The passage will come up for discussion; the thought I wish now to bring out is this: As all Campbellites teach that 'born of water' means baptism, and as our Saviour has solemnly assured us that none can enter the Kingdom of GOD without being 'born of water,' therefore it follows conclusively, indisputably, that Campbellites believe and teach that it is utterly impossible for any one to be saved without baptism. If this means baptism (as Campbellites believe and teach), then to say that one can be saved in GOD's Kingdom without baptism is *blasphemy* - it is giving the lie to the Saviour."

"That is true," added the Doctor. "Whenever one admits that 'born of water' means baptism, it is utterly absurd for him to talk of pardon and salvation without baptism. This we all do from Mr. Campbell down. Mr. Campbell says 'the HOLY SPIRIT calls nothing personal regeneration, except the act of immersion,' (See *Campbellism Exposed*, page 250).

"The matter is now settled positively," said Mabel, "that Campbellites believe and teach that none can be pardoned, saved or taken to Heaven without baptism,"

"That is freely admitted," said the Doctor. "All know we hold this doctrine tenaciously,"

"And hence," added Mabel, "Campbellites believe that all Pedobaptists-Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, etc. will be lost - will never get to Heaven."

"That is none of our lookout," said the Doctor. "If they neglect one of GOD's commands and are damned for it, surely we are not to blame."

"Certainly not," replied Mabel; "If the Bible warrants us in saying they are all damned for not being baptized, we cannot help it, of course. Baptists do not believe this, however, and I only wished to bring out the fact that the Campbellite theory shuts them all out of Heaven. And, Doctor, do you not teach that to be saved one must intelligently and in full faith be baptized in order to the remission of his sins?"

"Certainly," replied the Doctor.

"Well, no Baptist was ever so baptized; so they, too, are all lost."

"Do not misrepresent us," said the Doctor; "we believe Baptists miss the design of baptism, but we believe they will be saved."

"Thus you believe," said Mabel, "two things that flatly contradict each other."

The Doctor bit his lip in silent embarrassment. Mabel went on:

"I wish you to notice that some of the quotations we have made show that Campbellites believe and teach that *baptism is equally essential to pardon and salvation with repentance and faith*. Now is this true according to the Bible? No! I say emphatically, no. To the law and to the testimony. JESUS says repeatedly: '**Except ye repent ye shall likewise perish**' (Luke 13:3, 5). Now where is the Scripture that says 'Except ye are baptized ye shall perish?' Where? It is not to be found in the Bible. JESUS says: '**He that believeth not is condemned**' (John 3:18). Where does the Bible say, 'He that is not baptized is condemned?' Nowhere. JESUS declares, '**He that believeth not shall be damned**' (Mark 16:16). But where did CHRIST or any apostle ever say, 'He that is not baptized shall be damned?' This was never said by any one but a Campbellite, or Roman Catholic, or some one close kin to them. JESUS has taught us expressly that if persons fail to repent and believe they cannot be saved, or shall be damned; but never did He say that men cannot be saved, or shall be damned, because they are not baptized."

This speech had a telling effect, for it seemed strong presumptive evidence that baptism does not sustain the same relation to pardon and salvation that repentance and faith do. The spectacle man seemed to be in an ecstasy. Mr. Clement looked hopefully at the Doctor. All others seemed dumb with astonishment. The Doctor looked confused and was evidently trying to relieve himself by curling his mustache rapidly around his finger. But ere the Doctor could recover from his embarrassment, our heroine proceeded as follows: "Campbellites believe and teach that the best people in the world will be damned, if they are not baptized. But I hear the mingling voices of millions of Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists, flatly contradicting this Campbellite theory and stoutly and confidently declaring the Bible teaches that persons are pardoned and saved the moment they penitently believe in JESUS. And Charles Haddon Spurgeon, perhaps the greatest Gospel preacher since Paul, declares that Popery is a lie and baptismal regeneration is a lie, a lie so palpable he does not see how anyone with brains can teach it. Who are right? Are Campbellites right and all the rest of us wrong? Or are we right and Campbellites wrong? To the law and the testimony. What saith the Word of GOD?"

"Yes, my friends," said the Doctor, "that is what we want - what the Bible says. Not what men say, but what GOD says. Let the Word of GOD speak - speak out in meeting. A silent witness never proved anything."

"Well, I do hope we will all take unhesitatingly what the precious Bible says," said Mabel. "The first inquiry we should make, and for which we should seek a Bible answer, is this: Who is a proper, or Scriptural, subject for baptism? This I presume we will agree is a penitent believer - *one who has repented of his sins and believed, or trusted in JESUS.*"

"Do not invert the Gospel order," said the Doctor. "Faith precedes repentance."

"Where?" asked Mabel. in your theory, Doctor, not in the Gospel. The New Testament places repentance *first*."

"Why that is unreasonable," replied the Doctor. "How can a man repent who does not believe?"

"Doctor," replied Mabel, "we are not to be governed by reason now, but by the Bible. I have placed it where the Bible has fixed it, and there you must let it stay if you are willing to abide by the Word of GOD. I know that all Campbellites put faith before repentance and so preach it; but

when we come to the Bible we find they invert the order to make it fit their theory. There are just four places in the New Testament where repentance and faith or believing come together, and invariably repentance comes first. See Matthew 21:32; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21; and Hebrews 6:1. Thus JESUS says: **'Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.'** Was JESUS wrong? Paul preached **'repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.'** Was Paul wrong? And is the Bible wrong?"

"The Bible says," emphatically affirmed the Doctor, "that he that cometh to GOD must believe that He is.' Hebrews 11:6. Now how can one come or repent who does not believe this? The thing is an utter impossibility."

"It is a pity, Doctor, that JESUS and Paul did not have you to instruct them as to the order of repentance and faith," replied Mabel. "Certainly if any person in the world infallibly knows which should precede the other, it is the Great TEACHER Himself, and He said: **'John came unto you in the way of righteousness and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him'** (Matthew 21:32). And Mr. Wilson, the eminent Greek scholar, translated it, 'Yet you, having seen it, did not afterwards repent, so as to believe him.' This settles the order beyond all controversy, making repentance necessary to faith.

But your mistake, Doctor, is about the nature of faith. None believe or teach that persons repent before they believe there is a GOD; but one may believe that, believe there is a Heaven and a Hell, believe all the facts of the Bible, and yet not have faith in JESUS. To believe in the existence of JESUS is a faith that devils have, and wicked men on earth and lost men in Hell have. This is not the faith that trusts CHRIST. I have heard of a man that was excluded from the church for not believing in the Devil. Now the church did not want him to have any confidence in the Devil, or trust the Devil for anything; he was simply required to believe there is a Devil and because he did not he was excluded for heresy. Now as one can believe there is a Devil and not trust him, so one can believe there is a JESUS and not trust Him, yea, even hate Him. But all the faith you require is to believe JESUS is what the Bible represents Him to be. Devils and wicked men believe as much. But the faith the Bible and Baptists require is a faith that trusts, that works by love, Galatians 5:6, and purifies the heart. Acts 15:9. This faith that works by love and makes the heart pure never precedes repentance. A Baptist once preached repentance before faith and was followed by a Campbellite preacher the next Sunday. He changed the order and ridiculed the Baptist position. The Baptist came back, brought up the four passages that show the order of repentance and faith, and then told the Campbellites if they would produce one passage where faith comes first, he would leave the Baptists and join them. This put a seal of silence on their lips. Now, Doctor, if you will produce the one instance, I will give the matter up. Can you?"

The Doctor reluctantly shook his head.

"Well," continued Mabel, "the matter is settled. You must abide by the Bible and give up your untenable, unscriptural theory. Let us thus unite on the Bible and when we get through we will be together."

Mabel had made a dead shot here and all felt it. It was evident the matter was settled, and settled by the Bible. None could dare invert the Bible order after this and thus set himself against

JESUS and Paul. While this matter was being discussed there prevailed a death-like stillness. Many felt the life of Campbellism was at stake. When our heroine concluded her argument, the spectacled man tugged at the posts of his chair, rubbed his hands vigorously and grew several inches taller. Mr. and Mrs. Clement were dumbfounded: they had no idea Mabel knew so much, nor did they ever dream such things were in the Bible.

"Now, Doctor," asked Mabel, "are we agreed that a penitent believer is a Scriptural subject for baptism?"

"Yes - yes - I think so," was the reply. "We all teach the sinner to - to - believe and repent, or repent and believe, as the case may be, before he is baptized."

"Let me quote a passage or so," said Mabel, "to be certain we are on Bible ground. JESUS said: **'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved'** (Mark 16:16). This shows the last step men take before baptism is to believe. **'And the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.'** If this thirty-seventh verse is Scripture, nothing could be plainer. See Acts 8:36,37. The Samaritans believed and were baptized. Acts 8: 12. The Corinthians believed and were baptized. Acts 18:8. So the last thing a sinner is to do before being baptized is to believe. The next thing to do is to learn what is the condition of the believer; what is his state or standing before GOD. Let us find out this and then we can know whether to baptize him in order to his pardon and salvation."

"I propose," said Mr. Clement, "that you postpone further discussion till tomorrow night as it is getting late." This was agreed to by the Doctor and the crowd dispersed.

Arthur lingered to assure Mabel that he heartily endorsed all her positions so far. He was enthusiastic and encouraged her to contend for what she believed the Bible taught. Mabel retired to her room and fell upon her knees and thanked her Heavenly FATHER for light and grace and help through the evening's discussion, and prayed for help in the future. She also prayed that her parents and Arthur might be converted, if they were not.

Mr. and Mrs. Clement did not talk much. Astonishment closed their lips, tied their tongues and set the wheels of thought to rolling rapidly.

Those that were there to listen chatted freely when on the streets. Some said Mabel was wrong: some contended she was right; but all admitted she was intelligent and logical and that she had beaten the Doctor badly on every point. The Doctor felt heartily ashamed that he had allowed a young girl to plunge him into difficulties from which he could not extricate himself. He determined to be better prepared for the future. The spectacled man glided out almost imperceptibly, having nothing to say to anyone.

Jeems

There were three persons belonging to a lower grade of society who attended this discussion very promptly throughout.

They were honest, clever people, but very reserved. They were on hand each night and looked

and listened with both eyes and ears wide open. These persons were Brother Morgan, the tanner, and his wife, and George Turner, the butcher's son. They did not talk at Mr. Clement's, but the moment they got out to themselves they began a lively conversation. Mr. Morgan was a tall, lithe, stalwart fellow, high-cheeked, raw-boned and well-muscled. He always had an opinion and was always very positive. He prided himself in his supposed orthodox opinions which he expressed sometimes very darkly, but always very positively. His wife, a little, lean, cadaverous woman, who had to be dressed up in heavy feminine habiliments to cast a shadow, had unbounded confidence in the veracity and judgment of her husband. George Turner was accustomed to go over at night and smoke with Mr. Morgan and hear him tell of the wonderful feats of his life. He also believed whatever Mr. Morgan affirmed.

"Mr. Morgan," said George, after adjournment had permitted them to get out to the pavement, "what do you think - that is to say - of all that argument?"

"Why, I think," replied Morgan, "that that girl's talk is all stuff - absolute stuff. What's the use in foolin' away time in dolin' out that nonsense to us who are posted in Scriptur'? Yes, I tell you positively it's nonsense, perfect nonsense."

"Yes, Jeems, fur course it is nonsense," said Mrs. Morgan.

"Of course," said George, "you must be right - that is to say - you're bound to be right."

"Right?" queried Morgan, "uv course I'm right. Tell me that our church is not Christ's church? Tush! Tush. Why, I've got arguments that come a surgin' up in my mind that positively can't be overthrown. I'm not a man as talks much, but I know, positively know, some things; and I can prove the fact is I know I'm right and it follers a logical sequence she's bound to be wrong."

"Certainly, Jeems," chimed Mrs. Morgan; "the girl don't know nothin'."

"And then," continued Morgan, "this puttin' Gospel truths out of jint by changin' them around - why, positively it's orful. To my mind, it takes a deal of brass to argue repentance comes before faith. Now I'd be a fool, George, positively a fool, to hitch in the horse behind the kyart."

"Fur course, Jeems," said his wife.

"And yet," continued Morgan - and he stopped, laid his hand on George's shoulder and looked him in the face - "that's jist what that girl's adoin'. Tell me repentance comes before faith. Fiddlesticks! Haven't I read the Bible? Didn't my mother give me a Bible? And don't I know how it reads? I studied that book before that girl was born and there are arguments in my mind - the fact is I know I'm right and it follers she's literally bound to be wrong, George."

"I never say nuthin' plainer nor that," said George. "You've perfectly illumernated the subjek'. I never hearn nobody preach on it; but you've made it plainer than a sermon, so plain I think I could see it; that is to say, with one eye shut." Here they parted and went home in fine spirits.

~ end of chapter 7 ~