

MABEL CLEMENT

by

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ECONOMY PRINTERS ASHLAND, KENTUCKY

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

"I can't tell what will become of us and our church," said Mrs. Barker to Mrs. Wood, as they walked in the twilight to Mr. Clement's. We've already been proven to be infidels and heathen, and we are to be convinced tonight that Campbellite baptism is unscriptural.

Baptists, of course are the people; and when they die wisdom will be buried with them. What a blessing to mankind they are!" And she curled up her lip in contempt and defiance of Baptists and Baptist principles.

"I've been mortified nigh to death by the results of this discussion," responded Mrs. Wood; "but I confess I've been almost ready several times to give in and be a Baptist."

"Mrs. Wood!" exclaimed Mrs. Barker. It was a cry of pain and alarm as well as surprise.

"Just think a moment, Susan Barker," continued Mrs. Wood.

"Dr. Stanly is a learned man, a man of age and experience; he has studied closely the Bible; and after all this if he cannot defend our suffering cause from the attacks of a young school girl, it can't be defended and deserves to perish!"

"Henrietta Wood!"

"Exclaim as much as you like, Susan; exclamation points do not make a way to go to Heaven by, and astonishment is not argument. I tell you, Susan, I have been, and am now, sliding over on Baptist ground, drawn, or driven, as you please to term it, by the honest and unshaken power of resisted but conquering conviction. I can't - and won't fight longer against conviction and hazard my soul by advocating what I now believe is not in the Word of GOD. And I won't lend the influence of my life to this doctrine either, for I will have to answer for it at the judgment. So I won't, and they say when a woman won't she won't, and that's an end on it."

Here they arrived at Mr. Clement's and found a large and eager but silent audience.

Arthur and Mabel sat pensive, casting furtive glances at each other, and their movements were soon observed by Mr. Tibbs, who had a rather woe-begone expression on his face. Poor Tibbs! is there a cure for wounded hearts?

O for some deep Lethean fount,
In which to bathe away the memories!

Of souls on which our vision focused years ago;
Which cling to memory's tablet as if fixed
By twice ten thousand clinching nails.

All were eager for the theme that had brought them together.

It was stated by Arthur:

"I believe our subject for tonight is, What is a Scriptural baptism, and who has such a baptism. Am I right in the statement?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Tibbs, "and we should all feel a deep concern about this question. I am sure I have no desire to live and, die without a Scriptural baptism."

Dr. Stanly was slow to speak; he had been seized with remorse for the harsh words of the night before, and had come out to be genial and fair and mollify the irritation caused by his unkind words. "Yes," he finally said, "this is an important question and we should give it a patient and candid investigation. In my opinion, Miss Clement is wrong; but we should be eager, not for human opinion, but for the teaching of the only Book of which we profess to follow."

This speech had a good effect; it showed the Doctor was in a real good humor and desired to remain so.

"I confess," continued the Doctor, "that I have never been able to see points of difference in the baptism of our denomination and that of the Baptists to justify the assertion that one can be right and the other wrong."

"Suppose, Doctor," said Mabel, "you give us the points of likeness to be seen in these baptisms."

"Very well," said the Doctor cheerfully, "I'll take quite a pleasure in doing so."

Let us notice then:

"1. That both denominations baptize a believer. Neither we nor they would baptize one who did not profess faith and repentance. Hence both are set against infant baptism, for which there is found in the Word of GOD neither precept nor example. Here then we are agreed, and so far our baptisms are alike.

"2. Both denominations immerse. Nothing but a burial with CHRIST in baptism will satisfy either of us. Here again we agree.

"3. In both cases the baptisms are administered by persons who believe in baptism and have themselves been baptized. This is not the case with Methodist baptisms, for instance. Here again we are perfectly agreed. So I conclude there is no material difference."

"I admit, Doctor," said Mabel, "you make the matter look plausible, but I think you are not sufficiently inspective. In these days when the world is running after a thousand leaders we should give a vigorous examination to all mere theory before we accept it.

Ingenious sophists by fallacious reasoning may lead us all astray, if we be over credulous. There certainly lurks fallacy somewhere. If the Bible is an inspired book somebody is wrong, for it does not contradict itself and men's views are as far apart as the poles.

No one who carefully examines the facts in the case can fail to discover a marked difference in a genuine Campbellite baptism and a genuine Baptist baptism. There must be trouble between us somewhere or what means all this discussion? We do differ very widely. Notice:

1. Both denominations cannot be right. Baptists baptize for one thing and Campbellites for another. This no one can doubt. Now, it is a moral impossibility for both to have the Scriptural design. Hence both cannot be right. If the Campbellites are right about the design of baptism, it follows necessarily that Baptists are wrong; and if they are wrong about the design of baptism, their baptism is wrong; and if their baptism is wrong, Campbellites ought not to receive it. If Baptists are right about the design of baptism, Campbellites are wrong; and if they miss the design, their baptism is wrong, is unscriptural, and Baptists should not receive it. Here is exactly the ground upon which Baptists reject Campbellite baptism: they believe they baptize for the wrong thing, and hence their baptism, to say the least, is irregular, destitute of Scriptural meaning."

"If there is any loop hole through which to wriggle out of that argument I am not able to discover it," said Mr. Tibbs.

"Is that all the objection?" inquired the Doctor.

"Oh, no," said Mabel, "that is just the beginning."

There was a ripple of laughter that confused and annoyed the Doctor.

"2. Campbellite faith is objectionable. Their faith simply acknowledges the Bible to be true. They are ready to baptize any one who will confess he believes JESUS CHRIST to be the Son of GOD. This is not evangelical faith. Wicked men have it. The Devil has it and has confessed it (Mark 1:24). The faith that fits one for baptism is real trust in, reliance upon, CHRIST for salvation. And as one can believe Satan to be the Devil and believe all the Bible says about him without trusting, depending upon, or reposing any confidence in him, and may even hate him; so one may believe JESUS to be the Son of GOD and all He professed to be, and still may not trust Him, depend upon Him, or repose any confidence in Him as the Saviour, and may even hate Him.

When one seeks baptism at the hands of Baptists they wish to know, not whether he believes JESUS is the Son of GOD (for we take it for granted that all persons, both saints and sinners, unless they be downright infidels, believe as much), but whether he trusts JESUS as his personal Saviour.

Again, Campbellite faith is such as men can have without divine assistance, without the aid of the HOLY SPIRIT. On this point Mr. Campbell, as quoted by Ray in his *Textbook on Campbellism*, page 167, says: 'Assistance to believe! How can a person be assisted to believe? What sort of help and how much is wanting? Assistance to believe must be to create in man a

power which he had not before, or to repair a broken power.'

This is madness. It shows, however, that Campbellite faith is without Divine assistance. But this is inconsistent with the prayer of the disciples, '**Increase our faith**' (Luke 17:5). Moreover, if this be true, Paul talked foolishly, saying, '**GOD hath dealt to every man the measure of faith**' (Romans 12:3). Still greater ignorance was manifested when he said that faith is the gift of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:8,9).

Again, Campbellite faith is without repentance. Hence it exists prior to, and independent of, repentance, according to their theory. It is a faith that has no sorrow for sins. But JESUS told the chief priests and elders that repentance is necessary to faith, that we must repent in order to believe (Matthew 21:32). Thus Campbellite faith is spurious. Hence the baptism of such persons as have this faith only is unscriptural and worthless.

"3. Their subject is not a Scriptural subject for baptism. Their subject is unpardoned, for they baptize him in order to pardon. According to their own showing he is an unpardoned, unjustified, unsaved sinner. They lead a man into the baptismal waters with all the sins of a life-time on him. Baptists say such a man is not fit to be baptized, for the Bible teaches that a Scriptural subject for baptism is pardoned, justified, saved, has eternal life, has a pure heart and is a child of GOD. Having the wrong subject.

"4. Their design is unscriptural. They baptize in order to procure remission of sins. Baptists baptize because of, or to celebrate, remission. Now, it has been shown in this discussion that a Scriptural subject has before baptism, what they baptize him in order that he may have after baptism. This was the first point made in this discussion - made so clearly, fully, forcibly, it was indisputable. It follows, then, as they wholly miss the design that their baptism is utterly unscriptural and indefensible."

"So the whole Campbellite fraternity," said the Doctor, "are simply a lot of heathen and not a Christian among us."

"No, no," replied Mabel; "I would not dare to say, for I do not believe, such a thing. I am sure there are many noble Christian men and women in your denomination. It is not the people, but the unscriptural doctrine they hold that I oppose. I am sure this error has proved fatal to many a soul. Through nearly all the ages since CHRIST souls have been lost through reliance on baptism for salvation. To believe that and stop there is to perish forever!"

"I believe it," said Arthur.

"I, too," added Mr. Tibbs.

"Are you through?" inquired the Doctor.

"No," said Mabel.

"Go on, then, to a finish," said the Doctor.

Mabel then continued as follows:

"5. We find fault with a Campbellite administrator of baptism. He rejects the internal operation of the HOLY SPIRIT (without which we think there is no salvation), and if he has nothing but Campbellite faith he is yet in his sins. Then he lacks ordination-

"Any Christian is authorized to baptize," interrupted the Doctor. "It cannot be shown from the Word of GOD that ordination is necessary to Scriptural baptism."

"Let us see," replied Mabel. "Who was first authorized to baptize?"

"The Kingdom was not set up till the day of Pentecost; the first Gospel sermon was preached on that day; and on that day Christian baptism was first administered." The Doctor said this with much emphasis.

"Nothing is easier," replied Mabel, "than to confute what you say. First, the Kingdom was set up before Pentecost. In Matthew 11:12 JESUS says: **'From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.'** How could it suffer violence when it did not exist?

In Matthew 23:13 JESUS says: **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."** How could they shut, or enter, or go into a thing that did not exist? In Luke 16:16 JESUS says: **"The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the Kingdom of GOD is preached and every man presseth into it."** How could men press into a thing that did not exist?"

"GOD could not make it any plainer than that," said Mr. Tibbs. "A little child can take those Scriptures and beat the world in an argument."

"Second," continued Mabel, "the Gospel was preached before Pentecost. In the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah it was foretold that JESUS would preach His own Gospel. In Luke 4:18 we find the prophecy fulfilled: **'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor,'** etc. In verse 21 He says: **'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.'** Mark (1:1) says John's preaching was the beginning of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST the Son of GOD: and declares that **'Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the Gospel.'** All this is before Pentecost and is proof irresistible."

"If I was a Methodist I would shout Amen," said Mr. Tibbs. "There is no way to touch that argument without denying or wantonly garbling the Word of GOD."

"Now third," said Mabel, "coming back to our original question, Christian baptism was administered before Pentecost. John the Baptist baptized penitent believers. JESUS Himself baptized through His disciples. To deny that these baptisms were Christian puts the apostles and the whole 120 disciples in the church on an unscriptural baptism. I take it I have refuted the Doctor's positions."

"No doubt you think so," replied the Doctor. "But you haven't proved ordination necessary to administer baptism."

"That's what I'm going to do now," said Mabel. "The first baptizer was John the Baptist. He was sent to baptize. (John 1:33). He was sent by CHRIST. (Malachi 3:1). Here is where John got his authority. He was the only one authorized at that time. He baptized multitudes, but none of them were authorized to baptize. The Jews and JESUS believed that John only was authorized to baptize; so they came to John to be baptized of him.

By reading John 3:22-26 and 4:1-3 it will be evident that JESUS authorized His chosen disciples to act as His agents in baptizing. Their act was regarded as His act. This shows they baptized by His authority and under His inspection. After this and just before His ascension JESUS authorized the eleven disciples to go into all the world and make and baptize disciples. Their first commission extended only to the Jews; but here is a world-wide commission.

It is backed up by all the authority in Heaven and earth. Without this they would have had no authority to go into all the world and make and baptize disciples. They acted under this commission. But they could not live always, and so through them CHRIST gave the authority to baptize to the churches."

"So you take it out of the hands of the ministers," interrupted the Doctor. "I deny it emphatically."

"Turn to I Corinthians 11:2. Here we read: '**Now I praise you brethren that ye remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.**' To whom did Paul say this? '**Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth.**' Ch. 1:2.

Now this flatly and emphatically contradicts the Doctor. It settles the question. No self-appointed preacher has any right to go over the country and administer the ordinances as if they belonged to him. They belong to the church, and only when the church authorizes him by ordination has he the right to baptize."

"You have proved your theory, Miss Clement," said Mr. Tibbs, "by the Word of GOD. Henceforth I believe it and contend for it."

The Doctor was silent, biting his lips.

"The fact is," continued Mabel, "with the open Bible in our hand we can see nothing, except the action, to be admired in a Campbellite baptism. For these reasons I was reimmersed when I united with a Baptist church. I am sure my conscience would pain me tonight and would always give me trouble if I had not acted as I did. It was the hardest duty I ever had to perform, but GOD gave me the grace to do what I believed was right.

Now, putting these five reasons together, it seems to me to be as plain as noonday that Baptists would be glaringly inconsistent in receiving Campbellite baptism. At least my mind is fully convinced, and I think all not blinded by prejudice must see it as I do."

While these clear, forcible, irresistible arguments were being arrayed so vividly the auditors all seemed to feel that the Doctor's statement was blown to the wind; that this young shepherdess with her crook had triumphantly overcome this giant of Gath. Meanwhile the Doctor winced beneath the unmerciful gaze of the company and the strange ogling of the spectacled man, who seemed almost overpowered with sensations of joy at the sight of the Doctor's squirming. He grasped with his bony hands the lapel of his flabby coat and wrought at it till his chest had a shield of Thibet cashmere fourfold, and then twisted himself until he was almost tied into a knot. His grimaces baffled description and made him a kind of side-show attachment to the discussion.

Brother Jones as usual, to the amusement of some and the discomfiture of others, heartily corroborated Mabel's position by striking his clinched fist on the table and uttering his trite saying:

"That's so, sure, and no doubt of it. Parson, I'll be dishonored and disofficed and disfranchised if it 'tain't so. I've never on earth heard of anything proved more clearer than this doctrine, sure."

The Doctor's face flushed at this speech, and there seemed to be a storm brewing; but the cloud disappeared without any outburst of thunder - only a few vivid flashes of lightning that looked for an instant threateningly upon the brother, who did not appear at all afraid of lightning.

"If there is such a wide difference," said Arthur, "in the views and teachings of the two denominations that Baptists cannot consistently receive our baptism, of course we cannot receive theirs and justify ourselves in so doing. We commit, if we do, a blunder that no logic can screen."

"That's so, sure, and no doubt of it," said Brother Jones. "Your conclusion is unavoidable," added Mr. Tibbs.

"It is the teaching of the scholars of the Campbellite denomination," said Mabel, "that if the baptized does not comprehend the design the baptism is of no value. They teach that one must understand that baptism is in order to remission, that the blood of CHRIST is applied to the soul in the act of baptism. Mr. Campbell, as quoted by Ray in *Text Book on Campbellism*, page 134 says: We flee to the sacred ordinance which brings the blood of JESUS in contact with our consciences. Without knowing and believing this, immersion is as empty as a blasted nut; the shell is there, but the kernel is wanting.'

The Baptism of Baptists, therefore, is as empty as a blasted nut-perfectly null and void, in the estimate of Campbellites. There are very few Campbellites. however, that will not receive our baptisms, though it contradicts their teaching. Indeed I have never heard of but one discarding Baptist baptism, counting it invalid. The baptism of Baptists is like the gold which goes well in any market - all are glad to get it."

"This matter," said Mr. Tibbs, "like all others, is made very plain. I am opposed to ever receiving another Baptist baptism.

I am convinced, however, fully, that our design in baptizing is wrong and should be abandoned. There is one other question I am anxious to hear discussed."

"What is it?" inquired Arthur.

"The communion question," he replied.

"I move we adjourn till Monday night for the investigation of this question," said Arthur.

This was agreed to, though the Doctor was silent. The fact is, the Doctor was tired of these discussions. He was so completely beaten that the spirit was gone out of the man, and he was more like a piece of statuary than a human being.

~ end of chapter 16 ~
