

## MABEL CLEMENT

by

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### CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

It was another beautiful November night, just cool enough to prevent the languor produced by hot summer nights. The people came in a stream through the bracing air till every nook and corner were filled with eager hearers. On these occasions there was never much said till the discussion opened. Tonight, as usual, the people sat silent, waiting eagerly for the fray to begin. The discussion was again opened by Mr. Tibbs, who said:

"It is the teaching of the Baptist denomination, I believe, that prayer should be offered for sinners before they are baptized. Am I correct?" He addressed Mabel, who replied:

"Yes, this is their teaching."

"I deny that that is the proper course. Besides, we want authority from the Word of GOD," said the Doctor bravely.

"And do you assert," asked Mabel, "that the Bible furnishes no authority for this course?"

"I do most emphatically," answered the Doctor. "There is no authority in the Word of GOD for praying for unbaptized sinners. What is the use of it? Does GOD need such prayers to make him willing to save sinners? No! He is willing and waiting to save just so soon as the sinner fulfills the required conditions."

"I endorse heartily much you say," responded Mabel. "GOD is willing, and so we do not seek to change His will. But the sinner is unwilling and we pray GOD to change his will, work in him to will and to do of His own good pleasure, But there are two statements you make that I mean to controvert, that are utterly untenable, according to the Scriptures. One is that there is no Bible authority to pray for sinners. I join issue with you here."

"All right," replied the Doctor; "prove your theory by the Word of GOD, show where sinners were prayed for and I am ready to admit it."

"The task is an easy one," replied Mabel, "and I am astonished that anyone who has at all read the Scriptures can be so strangely unbelieving as you are. Let us turn to the thirty-second chapter of Exodus. Here we find Moses on the mount in a forty days' communion with the Lord. While there Aaron made the golden calf and the people worshipped it. The Lord told Moses about it and said: '**Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.**'" But Moses would not let GOD alone; he pleaded for the Israelites till GOD repented of His purpose to destroy them. Moses went back into the mount and cried: '**O, this people have**

**sinned a great sin... yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book."**

If this does not prove that Moses prayed for sinners, then nothing is capable of being proven. And GOD answered his prayer for these stiff-necked and idolatrous sinners, for Moses says: **"The LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, and the Lord would not destroy thee"** (Deuteronomy 10:10).

Again, in the thirteenth chapter of Numbers we are told that Moses, as GOD directed, sent twelve rulers of the Israelites to spy out the land of Canaan. They were gone forty days, found the land to be most excellent, but ten of the twelve reported the cities to be so walled, and the people so strong and great, it was impossible to take the country.

Caleb and Joshua rent their clothes and said:

**'Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.'** But the people wanted to stone them and said: **'Let us make a captain, and let us return to Egypt.'** GOD was angry and said: **'I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.'** But Moses prayed and reasoned and plead for them: **'Pardon, I beseech, thee, the iniquity of this people'... And the Lord said: 'I have pardoned according to thy word'** (Numbers 14:19,20). I am sure there is no possible way to overturn this argument."

"Not unless we are infidels," said Arthur.

"But," said Mabel, "let me give this additional proof."

In I Samuel, twelfth chapter, Samuel convinced the people of their sin so they cried out: **'Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.'** Samuel said: **'God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you.'** Thus he was praying for these sinners, and says it would have been a sin for him to cease praying for them."

"By failing to pray for sinners Dr. Stanly is guilty daily of the sin of omission."

This created considerable mirth at the Doctor's expense. But he took it good-humoredly, moved his chair and said: "All you have said was true in the Old Dispensation; but that is past and the New has come. The Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing in His wings and has flooded the world with light. Why linger amid the shadows of Judaism when the light of Christianity is breaking over the world. Abandon dead Judaism and come into the New Testament."

"We have proved beyond refutation," said Mabel, "that GOD saves men the same way in all ages; and what you say is simply a dodge, a miserable subterfuge to avoid being compelled to acknowledge the truth."

But let us pass into the New Testament. JESUS said: **'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you,**

**and persecute you"** (Matthew 5:44).

JESUS did this Himself. When He was nailed to the cross He prayed for His enemies in these words: **'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'** (Luke 23:34).

Campbellism says this is not the proper thing to do; but JESUS did it, and doubtless this prayer was largely the cause of many thousands being saved soon after. Stephen (Acts 7:60) followed the example of his Master, and, as he was stoned to death by wicked sinners, prayed: **'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'**

We are in good company while doing as JESUS and His inspired servants did. Then there is Paul, who prayed for his unsaved countrymen. In Romans 10:1 Paul says: **'Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.'** Paul was not a Campbellite, but a Baptist, and believed in praying for sinners. Now I think I have established the first point, namely, that there is Bible authority for praying for unbaptized sinners."

"Nothing could be plainer," said Mr. Tibbs. "How under the sun such a theory could be started and live with the Bible open I cannot understand."

"It can't live with the Bible open," added Arthur.

"No doctrine," added Mabel, "is more plainly taught in GOD's Word than this. The Bible is full of encouragement to pray for our unsaved friends. I never knew it and never did it until lately, because I was never taught it. That system of teaching that discourages the mother's prayer for the salvation of her child cannot be Scriptural."

"It seems to be both reasonable and Scriptural to pray for the salvation of our unsaved friends," said Mr. Clement. He had not said much, but no one had listened more closely than he, and his prejudices were rapidly fading away.

"I want to hear the question of depravity discussed. Come back, my friends, one and all, tomorrow night for this discussion."

After this invitation by Mr. Clement, the crowd dispersed.

~ end of chapter 18 ~

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