

MABEL CLEMENT

by

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CHAPTER TEN

Believer has the love of GOD in his heart - Is a child of GOD - Has a pure heart - Summing up - Sterling spectator comments on the discussion, lauding Mabel - Critics and admirers - Jeems and George

After a busy day and a hurried preparation for the coming Lord's day, our congregation was again assembled to hear the discussion. The interest was increasing with every meeting, and the crowd was growing larger in spite of a lack of invitations. Some noticeable additions were several young men and young ladies that ventured in together. They were Mabel's friends and associates who were drawn by what they heard and could not longer remain away. Mabel gave them a glad welcome and furnished them seats where they could hear and take part if they wished.

"I hope Miss Clement will proceed to finish up what she has to say about her penitent believer," said Dr. Stanly; "it will not have any weight with me, but there may be others who would like to hear it."

"The Doctor," said Mabel, good-humoredly, "reminds me of the old woman who said, 'Go on, now, and say what you wish, but, now, mind you, I don't mean to be convinced.'"

"It would be very foolish," added Mr. Tibbs, "to refuse to yield any position that is shown by the Word of GOD to be untenable. I am slow to believe these things; but am open to conviction by the Word of GOD.

Let Miss Clement proceed."

"I shall now proceed to show," said Mabel, "that the penitent believer in JESUS:

6. Has the love of GOD in his heart. Paul in Romans 5:1-5, says, "**Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God . . . Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**"

Notice, the believer is justified, has access to grace and the love of GOD is in his heart.

JESUS says, "**If ye love me keep my commandments . . . He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me . . . If a man love me he will keep my words.**" (John

14:15-23). Again He says, '**Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.**' (John 15:14). Thus the Saviour clearly teaches that we are to keep His commandments (of which baptism is one), not to get to be His friends, but because we are His friends; that we are to keep His commandments, not to get the love of GOD into our hearts, but because the love of GOD has been shed abroad in our hearts already by the HOLY GHOST. Paul says, '**The love of Christ constraineth us.**' (II Corinthians 5:14).

Now, Doctor, I leave it to you to say which you think would be the more acceptable to GOD: an obedience prompted by a heart filled with love to GOD, or one coming from a heart that does not love Him, but hates Him."

"Why, of course, the one prompted by love," replied the Doctor.

"One other question," said Mabel; "which of these two persons would be most likely to obey GOD, the one that loves Him or the one that hates Him?"

"Why - why" - hesitatingly replied the Doctor, "of course, the one who loves Him; but the sinner must obey the Gospel in order to be saved."

"Doctor, will you please tell us what is meant by "**obeying the Gospel?**" interrupted Arthur. "I wish to know the Scriptural meaning of the phrase."

"Why," said the Doctor, with elevating brows, "everybody knows it means to be baptized."

"Will you give us just one passage where it is said baptism is obeying the Gospel, or obeying the Gospel means baptism?" inquired Mabel.

"Well, I can't think of one just now," replied the Doctor, lowering his brows; "but baptism is a command and is the embodiment of the Gospel, and as we are commanded to be baptized, therefore, when we obey that command we obey the Gospel."

"But, Doctor," said Arthur, "that is getting at the matter in a very roundabout way. We are commanded to visit the sick, feed the poor, weep with the sorrowing, etc. Now, if being baptized is obeying the Gospel, doing any of these things is equally so."

"The fact is, Doctor," replied Mabel, "baptism is neither obeying the Gospel nor the embodiment of the Gospel, nor any part of it,"

Her auditors were greatly surprised at this statement and uttered exclamations were heard, such as, "Did you ever? Baptism no part of the Gospel! I wonder what she'll say next?"

But Mabel, who came with additional strength and confidence to each meeting, calmly moved her hand and with a smile said, "Be patient, friends; this question is to be settled by the Bible, and I propose to give a "**thus saith the Lord**" for every statement I make, whether Dr. Stanly does or not.

First, then, is obeying the Gospel baptism, or is baptism obeying the Gospel? Hear Paul on this

point. **'They have not all obeyed the Gospel: For Esaias saith, 'Lord, who hath believed our report? So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'** (Romans 10:16,17). Here **'obeying the Gospel'** and **'believing our report'** are synonymous terms and mean the same thing.

This upsets the Doctor's theory completely. But, again, **'In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His Power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.'** II Thessalonians 1:8-10. Those who **'obey not the Gospel'** will be **'punished,'** and those who **'believe'** will be **'glorified':** hence to **'obey the Gospel'** and to **'believe'** mean the same thing.

Again, put I Peter 4:17 and Romans 1:16 together and you see judgment comes on them that **'obey not the Gospel'** and those who believe are saved. So believing and **'obeying the Gospel'** mean the same thing; and baptism is nowhere called obeying the Gospel.

This is a purely human assumption, nowhere taught in the Word of GOD. It is in harmony with Mr. Campbell's theory, and so his followers teach it."

"You've made a center shot. I do not like to believe it, but I do not see how to dodge it," said Mr. Tibbs.

"Now as to the second point, whether baptism is any part of the Gospel. In Romans 1:16 Paul declares **'the Gospel... is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.'** Now if the Gospel is this power, what is the Gospel? Do the Scriptures tell us? Yes. In I Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul says: **'I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved... For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures.'**

Here Paul tells us the Gospel by which these Corinthians were saved is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ! Not one word about baptism! So baptism is no part of the Gospel. But we have a new Gospel these late days which reads thus: The death, burial and resurrection of CHRIST and baptism. But that was not Paul's Gospel; that was Mr. Campbell's.

In the early part of this same Epistle (I Corinthians 1:17) Paul declares **'Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel'** Mark the disjunctive 'but', showing that baptism is no part of the Gospel."

"Did not Paul thank GOD that he had only baptized a few of these Corinthians?" inquired Arthur.

"Yes," replied the Doctor, "but others with him did baptize, for in Acts 18:8 we read: **'Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.'** It only means Paul did not baptize in person." The Doctor looked around triumphantly, as though he had scored a good point.

"But," said Mabel, "that does not help your case a particle, for you believe, like Mr. Campbell, that the HOLY SPIRIT 'calls nothing personal regeneration except the act of immersion' (*Text Book on Campbellism*, p. 201), i. e., that persons are made children of GOD in baptism; but Paul says to these same Corinthians, **"Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel"** He had not baptized them, but he had begotten them through the Gospel, had been instrumental, as far as human beings can be, in making them children of GOD. So down goes your theory again, that baptism is a part of the Gospel."

"I give it up," said Mr. Tibbs; "it is clear that baptism is no part of the Gospel."

"Returning now to our proposition," said Mabel, "we have one who loves GOD before baptism."

"It is strange," said Arthur, "that such a question should ever find anyone to discuss it. The idea of baptizing one who has no love for GOD is as repulsive as anything can well be."

"That's so, sure," chimed Brother Jones.

"I shall now go on to show," said Mabel,

"7. The penitent believer is a child of GOD. But before I proceed I wish to ask, How many families are there in the world? I mean this: GOD has a family and Satan has a family. Now, is there any other spiritual family? I would like to have the Doctor's opinion."

"There are only the two families," replied the Doctor. "All men belong to one or the other of these families; there is no middle ground to occupy. A man is either a child of GOD or a child of the Devil."

"Surely none can dispute that," said Mabel. "Now it follows that we must baptize either a child of GOD or a child of the Devil. Which shall it be?"

All eyes turned toward the Doctor. He hesitated a quarter of a minute, which seemed an age, and then reluctantly answered:

"Of course we cannot baptize a child of the Devil, therefore we baptize a child of GOD."

"Doctor, I believe you have given a correct answer; but your answer is irreconcilable with your preaching and that of your denomination. Mr. Campbell, as quoted in '*Campbellism Exposed*,' p. 243-250, says: 'Regeneration is therefore the act of being born . . . The HOLY SPIRIT, who calls nothing personal regeneration, except the act of immersion.' Now, Doctor, you believe this; you believe that **'born of water'** means baptism, do you not?"

"I do, of course," replied the Doctor.

"You also believe that all persons must be born again to be GOD's children, and hence that all not born again are children of the Devil."

"I have ever believed and taught that," replied the Doctor.

"Then you are compelled to baptize the sons and daughters of the Devil. You say that a man is the child of the Devil till he is born again; that he cannot be born again without baptism, and that he is therefore a child of the Devil till after baptism. You say that baptism is a part of the new birth, that it is the first part, that one is made a child of GOD by the new birth; therefore you believe that a man is a child of the Devil when he is baptized. Now, if there is any fallacy in this reasoning, or any way to justly avoid this reasoning, I cannot perceive it."

"Doctor," said Arthur, laughing, "you have made admissions that will rush you to that conclusion in spite of your skill and management. He that believes '**born of water**' means baptism must also believe in baptizing the Devil's offspring in order to regenerate them and bring them into the family of GOD. His premises drive him inevitably against that rock of absurdity."

"I never thought about this matter before," said Mr. Tibbs, "in fact, I have thought all my life about other things. But I find a little thought sweeps away like cobwebs the doctrines I have cherished without troubling myself to investigate. To believe the Word of GOD teaches that baptizing a child of the Devil converts him into a child of GOD is preposterous nonsense and the argument to support it is the merest jargon."

The Doctor was again hopelessly swamped; so he bit his lip till the blood was ready to gush out and twisted his mustache in silence.

The spectacled man cast a wry look at him and then laughed deep down in his chest as if he had the New England jerks. Nothing, except Mabel's arguments, was more annoying to the Doctor than the provoking conduct of this stranger; and no one could divine why the dismantlement and demolition of Campbellism afforded him such an unmeasured amount of real delight; but it was so.

"Go on with the proof," said Brother Jones; "we want to see if penitent believers are children of GOD by the Bible, - mind you now, by the Bible."

"Very well," said Mabel; "that is what we want, what the Bible says. My first proof-text is John 1:12,13: **"But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."**

It is here shown that all those who believe on His name are born of GOD.

To be born of GOD is to be a child of GOD. Therefore all believers are children of GOD. This text proves my position unmistakably. But here is another: '**Ye are all the children of GOD by faith in Christ Jesus**' (Galatians 3:26).

It would be folly to ask for this truth to be expressed more plainly. With all reverence be it spoken, I doubt if GOD could improve on its unambiguous simplicity. But here is another that has an equally clear ring: "**Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God**' (I

John 5:1). Here it is declared by the authority of Heaven that every true believer is born of GOD. If the Doctor denies it, I cannot help it, - he and Heaven for it. Again, he who believes, loves.

Mr. Campbell argues that love cannot exist prior to immersion. (*Text Book on Campbellism*, p. 171.) So, Mr. Campbell baptized persons who had no love, as already shown.

But Mr. Campbell was wrong here as in most other things. His views of Scripture were indeed a wretched jargon. In Galatians 5:6 we read that faith works by love, hence he who has faith loves. Well, the Word of GOD says, "**Everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God**" (I John 4:7). Now to be born of GOD is to be His child, and to know GOD, JESUS says, is to have eternal life. (John 17:3). Now I might bring up other proof; but I have produced a sufficiency. I have proven incontrovertibly that the believer is a child of GOD."

"That's so," said Brother Jones, "that's so, sure; - it's plainer and plainer; and it's likelier and likelier that the Baptists are right and we are wrong in this matter also. I'm a thinkin' if we have been makin' a GOD out of baptism, some of us will not be in a hurry to worship it any more."

"Who has ever defied baptism?" inquired Dr. Stanly in an irritated tone. "As a representative of the Christian church I denounce the aspersions cast upon her pure doctrines and unsullied garments. The brightness of her luster has never been tarnished by any such stupid notions of the workings of the all-wise GOD. She is today the purest and soundest Christian society on the green-clad earth."

"A few days ago," said Arthur, "I believed all you said; but I confess my faith has been shaken. It will take something more than bold assertion to make me accept what you say and teach. I have been believing it, because I was satisfied you knew; but like the noble Bereans I purpose to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so. But it forces itself upon me that we have not put much difference between GOD, the HOLY SPIRIT, and baptism."

"We have as a denomination taught that it is just as necessary to be baptized as to be born of the Spirit. Out of our system of instruction comes inevitably the conclusion that GOD cannot save sinners without the help of water and men. If this does not put the crown of deity on both baptism and men, it is something very much akin to it."

"Before we dismiss this matter for another," said Mabel, "I wish to propound a question: Can one be a child of GOD and still be in an unpardoned state?"

All eyes voluntarily sought the Doctor. These movements worried him greatly for they were a demand for a reply. He paused, cleared his throat, looked confused, moved his chair and finally said: "Of course not; nothing would be more preposterous than to say one is a child of GOD and was notwithstanding an unpardoned sinner. But I do not believe that the believer is a child of GOD till he is baptized."

"No one will doubt, I think, the correctness of your answer," said Mabel. "To say one is a child of GOD, born of GOD, and yet not freed from his past sins is a monstrous supposition. 'To be born of GOD' and born in sin is inconceivable. But you still persist in saying the believer is not a child of GOD. Now the Bible declares:

'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God' (I John 5:1). But you dispute it; you say the believer never can be born of GOD, if he is not baptized. This is Dr. Stanly versus the Bible! - yea, versus the Almighty! Such is the monstrous and inextricable dilemma into which Campbellism thrusts its blind devotees."

If ever a poor mortal was in need of something to say, it was Dr. Stanly at this time.

Campbellism was being cut up completely by the roots. He felt that the castle was giving way and he was going down into ruin with it. The foundation was knocked out with the sledge hammer of Divine truth. To add to all this mortification an almost unearthly, but stifled noise proceeded from the corner where the spectacled man sat, who succeeded in putting himself into a dozen of the most comical shapes as the hoarse laugh rippled up from the soul.

The Doctor felt greatly relieved when Arthur turned to Mabel with the query: "What else have you to tell of the penitent believer?"

"I shall only mention one more blessing that is peculiarly his, I might mention more, - that one is:

"8. He has a pure heart. I prove this by Acts 15:9. In this chapter the apostles consider the merits of circumcision. After much discussion Peter tells how GOD chose him to go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. He says GOD gave them the HOLY GHOST as he did unto the Jews '**and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.**'

This establishes my proposition.

As faith is the channel through which mercy, pardon, salvation, eternal life, etc., flow to the penitent believer in CHRIST, so faith is the channel through which the cleansing efficacy of the blood of CHRIST flows into his heart and washes out all pollution and every stain sin has made.

This agrees with the fact that the believer enjoys the remission of sins, as already shown. In the same instant in which a man's sins are taken away, his heart is purified. If one has a pure heart, his sins are washed away; if his sins are washed away, he has a pure heart. Now I flatter myself that I have established this proposition also by the Bible, beyond the shadow of a reasonable doubt."

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

"Yes, you have established that and every other proposition you have presented for discussion," added Mr. Tibbs.

"In closing up this matter," continued Mabel, "I want it distinctly understood that I have appealed to the Bible and the Bible alone to prove every proposition I have set forth. I have given a '**thus saith the Lord**', chapter and verse, for all I have affirmed. The witnesses I have brought to testify before the tribunal of your judgment have not been erring creatures like ourselves; they were all perfectly infallible. Who were they? They were JESUS, Matthew, Mark,

Luke, John the Evangelist, John the Baptist, James, Paul, Peter and all the prophets. All therefore that I have affirmed of the believer is true, for it is lodged firmly upon the rocks of eternal verity.

"Now let me sum up what I have proven by the Bible and the Bible alone, proven so plainly that it seems to me no rational man dare dispute it, - at least none can successfully gainsay it.

Here it is: I have proven that the penitent believer in JESUS, who stands on the bank of the river, ready to be led into the water and be buried with CHRIST in baptism, - I have proven that this penitent believer,

**I. HAS THE REMISSION OF SINS,
II. IS SAVED,
III. HAS ETERNAL LIFE,
IV. IS NOT CONDEMNED,
V. IS JUSTIFIED,
VI. HAS THE LOVE OF GOD IN HIS HEART,
VII. IS A CHILD OF GOD,
VIII. HAS A PURE HEART.**

"Now, Doctor, lead this penitent believer into the water and baptize him. Remember he is possessed of all these blessings, and then baptize him IN ORDER TO! if your conscience can dare.

There is not a soul in this house who does not see it will not do to baptize in order to. Nothing but criminal blindness can keep people from seeing this truth which is as plain as a mathematical demonstration. It seems that this great central truth is just as plain as GOD could make it to finite minds. Thank GOD, we do not want it any plainer. It is plain enough. GOD has written His law plainly, very plainly. The way is so plain that "**the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.**"

There was a breathless pause of almost a minute here. This was a new way of showing that baptism is not in order to remission of sins.

Dr. Stanly had all along been unable to manage the thing presented in this way; and now the facts were summed up, each fact being a gleaming bayonet thrust at the very life of Campbellism, he saw no possible escape from defeat, felt he had no hope of showing his doctrinal views were at all Scriptural. His mortification and confusion were so great it was impossible to conceal them. Some pitied him, while others censured him for not being better qualified to take care of his own doctrines. The spectacled man seemed to be plunged into a sea of rapturous delight. Language can hardly depict the many shapes into which he twisted his long, lean, crooked form, or the wry looks that played in rapid succession over his bony face.

"I should like very much," said Arthur, breaking the painful silence, "to thoroughly sift this whole matter while we are at it, if it meets the approval of Miss Clement and Dr. Stanly. It is late now, but we might continue the discussion tomorrow night. We have seen by adverting the plain passages of GOD's Word that baptism cannot be in order to remission. Now we ought to examine those passages that are relied on to prove baptismal remission. Let us see if the Bible is

contradictory."

"If it meets the approbation of the Doctor and others," said Mabel, "we will continue the discussion till the subject is exhausted. Tomorrow night we can examine a few of the passages you allude to."

"It is true," said the Doctor, "we have not discussed the design of baptism; but I do not see the propriety of discussing the matter further. No good is likely to grow out of a debate longer stretched out. So I think it had better stop."

"I do see the propriety," replied Arthur; "I do think this discussion ought to go on till we get through with it."

"That's so," said Brother Jones; "I'm glad in my soul I'm here, it ought to go on, sure."

After some more parleying the Doctor said: "All right, then, as it seems to be the wish of the body, I agree to go on; but I want it distinctly understood we are going to discuss baptism as to its Scriptural design. I hold you to that; there shall be no switching off to some side-track. I promise you there will be developments that will astonish this audience."

The crowd then dispersed. Some walked home in meditative silence. Others chatted in a lively manner. By the next day all Sterling was stirred by the seemingly disastrous results of the discussion. It was the topic of conversation on the street, in banks and business houses of all sorts, and around the fireside at home. In spite of the Campbellite effort to the contrary, the facts of the discussion began to leak out through the columns of the Sterling Spectator, a weekly publication.

In an editorial, headed, "The Debate," occurred these words: "Miss Clement is covering herself all over with laurels. She is not only beautiful, but brainy. Her language is chaste, her familiarity with the Scriptures is wonderful, her logic is irresistible, her positions impregnable. She has marvelous tact and energy in using the Word of GOD, wielding it like a skilled swordsman. In her hand GOD's Word is a rapier that pierces the heart of every unscriptural theory. Her arguments are revolutionary."

On the day after the above discussion a bevy of ladies met at the home of Mrs. Brown. They were the gossips and professional talkers of the town, who had dropped in for a confabulation.

"Were you at Mr. Clement's last evening?" inquired Mrs. Green.

"O yes," replied Mrs. Brown. "I declare they are having a lively time of it. But it was really unendurable to hear Mabel Clement talk as she did to Dr. Stanly."

"It is true," said Mrs. Black, "every word of it. My very heart ached to see how the good Doctor was cramped and how little he felt like talking."

"I have heard a great many people remark that Mabel wasn't any smarter than she ought to be," added Mrs. Brown.

"So have I," echoed the shrill voice of Mrs. Green. "Did you know, Florinda Brown, that I have an idea she will never come to what her parents have dreamed of? More pains and money have been lavished on her than on any other girl in Sterling; yet I can't see she's any better for it, and I'm a close observer, too."

"I don't believe she'll turn out any better than the other girls; and I shouldn't wonder, if her self-conceit leads her to some bad end."

"She's too brazen-faced," added Mrs. Brown. "To think she'd set herself up to argue with Dr. Stanly! Of course, she doesn't know anything about the Bible."

"Ladies," said Mrs. Hendricks, who had been listening quietly, "for my part I was very much pleased with Miss Clement and considered her modest in her addresses to Dr. Stanly. She certainly showed much familiarity with the Bible and established beyond refutation every proposition set forth."

At this point there was a significant lull in the conversation and some of the ladies had urgent business at home.

Our friends, Jeems and George, could scarcely wait till their feet began to press the pavement before they began their usual Comments.

"Mr. Morgan," said George, "things are gettin' lively like. I'm thinkin' - that is to say - they are takin' a cur'ous turn."

"Hang me, if they hain't George," replied Morgan. "Now I'm not a person as talks much, I can't argue; but I tell you that girl's talk won't do - it's all wrong, positively wrong, George."

"Positively, Jeems," echoed Mrs. Morgan.

"I think I'm not a fool, George," continued Morgan; "haven't been to lots of cities? and traveled and seen the wurreld? And isn't this one way to be edyercated?" Morgan quickened his pace and made forcible gestures with his long arms.

"She says," remarked George, alluding to Mabel, "that persons are pardoned and saved - that is to say - without baptism."

"Yes, she says so," replied Morgan.

"Certainly she does, Jeems," chimed in the little wife.

"And that they have eternal life," added George. "That's eternal nonsense," replied Morgan.

"And I think," added George, "she said everything else promised the people in this and t' other world, comes on believers that is to say - without baptism."

"Yes, George; but you see the girl's beside herself," replied Morgan; "gone ravin' mad. She's what they call a monomaniac; and she's insane about faith. I tell you, George, that girl hasn't got

but one idea in her head and that's faith; and I'm thinkin' she'll be in the asylum in a month."

"Them's my sentiments, Mr. Morgan," said George; "you've spoke out my mind edzactly. I was a-thinkin' all thru the diskwussion that thar was sumthin' wrong with the young lady's upper story - that is to say."

"You see, George," said Morgan, and he spoke confidently, his face knit with determination and his eyes shining in the darkness, "thar are some things I know positively, as sure as thar's a wurreld, and no girl in her 'teens can convince me I'm wrong.

Why I've studied over these things when that ere girl wuz asleep. This doctern is clare to my mind and I could make it clare to the whole wurreld, if-if-if I had the time."

Here they came to the parting of the ways and separated for the night.

Sunday was a bright day in Sterling, and the discussion filled the church to hear Dr. Stanly preach. He preached the old Campbellite theory of salvation and by fuss and fume sought to prop up the falling pillars of Campbellism. But it was poorly done.

The preacher felt crippled and shorn of power. Mabel heard him and marked his weakness. The day was mainly spent by her in prayer and meditation on such portions of Scripture as she hoped to use during the nights to come.

~ end of chapter 10 ~
