

# ILLUSTRATIONS OF BIBLE TRUTH

by

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

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### ON TOP OF THE BEER BARREL

**“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?  
for the end of those things is death” (Romans 6:21).**

Many years ago, when I was a young Salvation Army officer, it was my privilege to participate in a most unique service at a wide street intersection in the heart of the city of San Diego, California.

We had among our adherents a lovely Christian girl, who was saved out of a very ungodly family. Her father was a saloonkeeper and, while kind to his family and in many respects an admirable character, he had no use for “religion,” as he called it, or for the church. But, through the consistent life of his daughter, he was at last awakened to see his need of a Saviour. He realized that she had something of which he knew nothing, and one night we were all surprised to see him in our audience.

At the close of the service, he came forward, weeping, to confess his sins and seek Christ as his Saviour. We pointed him to the Lord and before the meeting closed, he was rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven.

At once he was faced with the fact that the business in which he was engaged was utterly inconsistent with the Christian life. Some suggested that he should sell out and put the proceeds into some other business. He indignantly spurned the suggestion. Realizing that the saloon was a detriment to humanity, he said he could not, since he had accepted Christ as his Saviour and his Lord, allow himself to profit in any way from the stock of what he afterwards called “liquid damnation.” Instead of this, he went to the city authorities and got a permit for what some might have thought was a rather fantastic service.

At the intersection of four streets, near his saloon, he rolled out all the beer barrels and made of them quite a pyramid. The Salvation Army surrounded this rather remarkable spectacle and with band playing and Salvationists singing, soon attracted an immense crowd.

The converted saloonkeeper had boxes full of liquor piled up by the pyramid, to the top of which he climbed. "Praise God," he exclaimed as he began his testimony, "I am on top of the beer barrel. For years I used to be under its power, but now I can preach on its head." Then he told the story of his own conversion and pleaded with sinners to come to his Saviour.

As the liquor bottles were passed up to him, he broke them and spilled the contents over the barrels. Then descending, he set fire to the whole pyramid which went up in a great blaze as the song of the Lord continued. What a remarkable testimony to the power of the Gospel of Christ to completely change a life! No longer a saloonkeeper, our friend went into a legitimate business, where his life was a bright testimony to the reality of God's salvation.

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### **ONLY THREE WEEKS TO LIVE**

**"He that believeth . . . is not condemned"** (John 3:18).

A number of years ago I was holding special meetings in the First Baptist Church of Los Gatos, California. On my first Sunday morning there, the text was:

**"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"** (John 4:13-14).

Sitting in the front pew was a young woman whose pale emaciated face and great, dark, hungry eyes attracted my attention. She listened so earnestly.

After the meeting I said to the pastor: "Who was the very sickly but intensely beautiful girl who sat in the front pew?"

"She is a very well bred girl," he replied, "but some years ago she threw Christianity to the winds. She was brought up in a Christian home. She went in for a worldly career, trying to find satisfaction and peace in the things of the world, but, within the last five months, she has been stricken with that dread disease of tuberculosis, and she has the kind that we call galloping consumption. She has not long to live; she is losing strength day after day, and the doctor says she will soon be gone; and now she is wretched and miserably unhappy."

I prayed for her, and each night I would find myself looking through that audience, hoping she would be there, listening to the Gospel, but I never saw her at another meeting.

About three weeks later a lady came to me and said: "Do you remember meeting Miss H-?"

I remembered that it was this young lady, and she added, "She is very ill, dying of tuberculosis. She heard you the first time you spoke, and was expecting to attend all the meetings, but she has been too ill. She has sent for you."

“I will be glad to go,” was my reply. So we went to the room in which she sat. She excused herself for not standing to greet us, for she was too weak. I said, “I am glad that you have sent for me.”

She looked up and said, “Mr. Ironside, the doctor told me yesterday that I have just three weeks to live, and I am not saved. I would like to know Christ. Do you think He will take a girl who rejected Him, deliberately turned her back on Him in health, now that I am bitterly disappointed, and everything I have counted on has gone by the board? Do you think there is any hope for a sinner like me?”

You know things look different when you realize you have only three weeks to live! Many a one, careless now, would be in dead earnest if he knew that within three weeks he would have to face God and eternity.

“Well,” I said, “I understand that you have had a very happy life in some respects; you have been very much sought after and admired by the world.”

“Oh, please do not talk of that now,” she said, “I am afraid I have been selling my soul for worldly popularity. I thought I was going to find happiness and enjoyment, but now it gives me no peace, no satisfaction, to look back over those years of popularity, those years of worldly pleasure. Only three weeks and I must give an account to God, and I am not saved.”

It was a real joy to my own soul to open the Word of God and show her how the blessed Lord Jesus in infinite grace had come all the way from heaven’s fullest glory down to Calvary’s deepest depths of woe for her redemption, and if she would put her heart trust in Him and confess her guilt, she would have all the past blotted out.

Directing her to John 3:18, I read: “**He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**”

And then I put the question to her, “Tell me, do you believe that Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God?”

“I do.”

Then I asked her, “Do you believe that God the Father sent Him into this world to die for sinners?”

“Yes, it is in the Bible: I do believe it,” she replied.

“Do you believe He meant you when He said: ‘**Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out?**’”

“It is for everybody, isn’t it,” she said.

“Yes,” I replied, “**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life**” (John 3:16).

Are you included in that whosoever?”

“Yes,” she said, “I believe I am.”

“Then tell me,” I said, “what does the Lord Jesus Christ say about you? Look at verse eighteen again; notice there are only two classes of people there: the first class, **‘He that believeth on him,’** and the second class, **‘He that believeth not.’** Notice that there is something predicated of the first class and something of the second class. Of the first it is said, **‘He that believeth is not condemned’**; and of the second, **‘He that believeth not is condemned already.’** Now before I ask you to tell me which class you are in, let us bow in prayer.”

She could not kneel, but her friend and I knelt in prayer. We asked God by the Spirit to open His Word and bring it home in power to her soul.

“Read it again,” I said.

“Do you see the two classes? Which one are you in?”

She was silent for a long time as we knelt there before God, and then she looked up, the tears glistening in her beautiful eyes, and she said, “I am in the first class.”

“How do you know?”

“Because I do believe in Him. It doesn’t say He won’t take me in because I come so late. I have come, and I do believe in Him.”

“And what is true of you?” I asked.

She looked at it again and whispered, “Not condemned!”

I said, “Is that enough to meet God on?”

She replied, “That will do; not condemned!”

Three weeks from eternity, but resting upon the Word of God! I saw her only twice again, and then my meetings ended. About five weeks later I met the Baptist preacher in the street, and he said, “You remember Miss H—? Do you know that just twenty-one days from the day you led her to Christ, I was called to her bedside, and I found her just slipping away?”

“Can you hear me?” I asked.

“Yes,” she said. ‘Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?’

“‘Yes,’ she said.

“‘And what does He say about you?’ I asked.

“‘Not condemned!’ and then she whispered, ‘If you see Mr. Ironside, tell him it is all right.’”

Oh, I tell you, dear friend, that was something real, because that young woman had the Word of the living God to rest upon; but there are many who rest upon their own imaginations instead of resting on God’s immutable Word.

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### **OPEN THE DOOR TO JESUS**

**“Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).**

An old woman was in great distress because of deep poverty. She was living in a little garret in London, England, and was dreadfully afraid the landlord and the bailiff would come to dispossess her, and perhaps, sell her bed from under her because of her debt. It happened that a certain Christian minister heard of her need and by interesting some friends raised sufficient money to go to her creditor and pay everything. Then, with the receipt in his hand, he went to see her. Her neighbors knew her only by the name, “Old Betty.” When the clergyman arrived at the house, he said, “Can you tell me where Old Betty lives?”

They told him to go up the stairs to a certain room; he went up, knocked at the door and waited but there was no answer. He knocked again and still there was no answer. He called, “Old Betty, are you there?” but no answer.

He started down the stairs and was going away when the neighbors said, “Did you find her?”

“No, she is evidently not in.”

“Oh, she’s in all right, she just wasn’t going to let you in,” they said. “She is afraid to open the door.”

And so he went up again and knocked and then one of the neighbors called, “Old Betty, let him in; it’s the clergyman come to see you.”

“Oh,” the voice came from within, “I thought it was the bailiff and I wasn’t going to open,” and she opened the door and received the minister.

He said, “I have come to tell you that some friends have heard of your need and have paid all your debt. They have asked me to bring you the receipt, and here is a little gift to help for the future.”

“Just to think,” she said, “and I locked and bolted the door against you. I was afraid to let you in.”

Is that not the way people are treating the Lord Jesus Christ?

I am wondering whether you, unsaved one, have been treating Him like that.

For years He has been knocking at your heart’s door, He wants to come in to bring you peace and joy with the knowledge of sins atoned for and guilt put away, but you have bolted and barred your heart’s door against Him, you have kept your best Friend out. But He is waiting still and continues to knock. Why not open your heart’s door at once and receive the salvation so freely proffered.

**~ end of chapter 7 ~**

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