

ILLUSTRATIONS OF BIBLE TRUTH

by

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CHAPTER FIVE

~ L - M ~

LAW AND GRACE

“We are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:15)

Some years ago, I had a little school for young Indian men and women, who came to my home in Oakland, California, from the various tribes in northern Arizona. One of these was a Navajo young man of unusually keen intelligence.

One Sunday evening, he went with me to our young people's meeting. They were talking about the Epistle to the Galatians, and the special subject was law and grace. There were not very clear about it, and finally one turned to the Indian and said, “I wonder whether our Indian friend has anything to say about this.”

He rose to his feet and said, “Well, my friends, I have been listening very carefully, because I am here to learn all I can on order to take it back to my people. I do not understand all that you are talking about, and I do not think you do yourselves. But concerning this law and grace business, let me see if I can make it clear. I think is like this. When Mr. Ironside brought me from my home we took the longest railroad journey I ever took. We got out at Barstow, and there I saw the most beautiful railroad station and hotel I have ever seen. I walked all around and saw at one end a sign, ‘Do not spit here.’ I looked at that sign and then looked down at the ground and saw many had spitted there, and before I think what I am doing I have spitted myself. Isn’t that strange when the sign say, ‘Do not spit here’?

“I come to Oakland and go to the home of the lady who invited me to dinner today and I am in the nicest home I have ever been in. Such beautiful furniture and carpets, I hate to step on it. I sank into a comfortable chair, and the lady said, ‘Now, John, you sit there while I go out and see whether the maid has dinner ready.’ I look around at the beautiful pictures, at the grand piano, and I walk all around those rooms. I am looking for a sign; the sign I am looking for it, ‘Do not spit here,’ but I look around those two beautiful drawing rooms, and cannot find a sign like this. I think, ‘What a pity when this is such a beautiful home to have people spitting all over it – too bad they don’t put up a sign!’

“So I look all over that carpet, but cannot find that anybody have spitted there. What a queer thing! Where the sign says, ‘Do not spit,’ a lot of people spitted.

“Where there was no sign at all, in that beautiful home, nobody spitted. Now I understand! That sign is law, but inside the home it is grace. They love their beautiful home, and they want to keep it clean. They do not need a sign to tell them so. I think that explains the law and grace business.”

As he sat down, a murmur of approval went round the room and the leader exclaimed, “I think that is the best illustration of law and grace I have ever heard.”

”LIPPEN TO” JESUS

“**He that believeth on me hath everlasting life**” (John 6:47).

Being of Scotch extraction, I always greatly enjoy the broad Scotch translation of the New Testament. In that you will never find our English word, “believe,” but you will find the word “lippenn.” For instance, John 3:16 reads, “For God sae loved the warld as to gie His Son, the only begotten Ane, that ilka ane wha lippens till Him sudna dee, but hae life for aye.” What does that word mean, the word, “lippen”? It just means to trust your whole weight on a thing, trust it implicitly.

A Scotch minister was visiting a poor woman who was in great distress about her soul. She just could not seem to understand. By and by he left her, and on his way back to the manse he was troubled to think he had not been able to help her. He came to a bridge over a burn in front of the house, which he started to cross, going step by step very carefully with his buckthorn cane.

An old Scotch woman called out, “Why, Doctor Man, can ye no lippen the brig?”

He laughed and waved his hand, and said to himself, “I have the word for my auld lady.” So he went back to the cottage. She opened the door and said, “O Doctor, you’ve come back again?”

He said, “I have the word for you now.”

“What is it, Doctor?”

“Can you no lippen to Jesus?”

“Oh, is it just to lippen to Him? Why, surely I can lippen to Him. He will never let me doon, will He?”

They bowed together, and she settled it. That is all God asks you to do. Believe the record He has given concerning Jesus; put your heart’s trust in Him.

You may be assured that you have life eternal for “**He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know**” – not merely hope, not just have a reasonable assurance, but full assurance – “**that ye have eternal life.**”

LIVING THE CHRIST LIFE

“Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20).

I was holding a series of evangelistic meetings in a church in Virginia. One evening, a visiting minister was asked to open with prayer. He said, “Lord, grant Thy blessing as the Word is preached tonight. May it be the means of causing people to fall in love with the Christ life, that they may begin to live the Christ life.”

I felt like saying, “Brother, sit down; don’t insult God like that.” But I felt I had to be courteous and I knew that my turn would come when I could set forth the precious truth as to God’s way of salvation.

The Gospel is not asking men to try to live the Christ life. If our salvation depended upon our doing that, apart from a second birth, we would all be just as good as checked through to hell. It is impossible for an unregenerate man to live the Christ life, no matter how much he may admire it as seen in Jesus, as it would be for one who had no sense of tune or of rhythm to live the Paderewski life or the life of any great musician. One may enjoy music and admire musical ability who could never play or sing himself. It takes the soul of a musician to enable one to live a musician’s life, just as it takes the eye and hand of an artist to be a painter or a sculptor.

When born from above, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith and as He lives out His life in us we are enabled to walk as He walked. There is no other way whereby we may live the Christ life.

LOST IN THE CHURCH

“If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost” (II Corinthians 4:3).

In an English village a Sunday school entertainment was being held in a small church. The place was crowded and in darkness as a steropticon exhibition was being given. A knock at the door summoned an usher, who made his way to the front and announced,

“Little Mary Jones is lost. Her family and the town officers have been searching everywhere for her. If anyone has seen her or knows of her whereabouts, will he please go to the door and communicate with the friend who is inquiring.”

No one moved and the lecturer went on with his address and pictures. At the close, when the lights were turned on, a lady noticed Mary sitting on a front seat. Going over to her, she said,

“Why, Mary, didn’t you hear them inquiring for you? Why did you not let them know you were here?”

Surprised, the child asked, “Did they mean me? They said Mary Jones was lost. I am not lost. I knew where I was all the time; I thought it was some other Mary Jones.”

She was lost in the church and did not know it. How many others are like her. They have a name that they live, but are dead. Though members of some local church, they have never seen their need of Christ, nor have they believed the message of the Gospel.

MAGNIFYING CHRIST

**“Christ may be magnified in my body,
whether by life or by death” (Philippians 1:20).**

It is the business of a Christian to so manifest the spirit of Christ in his life that men and women will fall in love with our blessed Lord. People generally know little about Christ, but a devoted life magnifies and glorifies Him, thus leading them to trust Him for themselves.

A striking instance of this came to my notice some years ago when I was engaged in a special evangelistic campaign among the mission stations of northern Arizona where devoted workers were seeking to present Christ to the Navajo and Hop Indians.

In company with Fred G. Mitchell, veteran Missionary to these neglected people, I sent one day to the mission hospital at Ganado. There my attention was drawn to a Navajo woman who occupied a bed in one of the small wards. She could not speak any English and my Navajo education was limited to about half a dozen words, so we could not carry on any animated conversation. Standing near her, Mr. Mitchell told me her story.

In the desert some ten weeks before, the missionary doctor had found her in a dying condition. The real circumstances were so horrible I shall not commit them to paper. Her cries of anguish had drawn the doctor to the place where she had lain helpless for four days and nights without food or drink. By that time, her case seemed absolutely hopeless. She was paralyzed from the waist down, could not move about; gangrene had set in and she was in a most pitiable state. A cursory examination led the doctor to feel that her case was hopeless. But he wrapped a clean blanket about her filthy body, put her in his car and hurried her to the mission station. He learned afterwards that the Indian medicine man had pow-wowed over her for some forty-eight hours and then announced that she was possessed of an evil spirit that could not be driven out.

It was best to get her as far away from the hogan as possible, as otherwise the demons would haunt the place where she died, making it unsafe for others to dwell there.

In the hospital, further examination convinced the doctor that an operation might possibly save her life, but it would be a most dangerous and delicate one, and with perhaps one chance in a hundred that she might recover. The little group of missionaries were called in for prayer and the doctor undertook the operation. Mr. Mitchell told me that for nine days and nights afterwards he kept the patient under almost constant observation. Finally her fever disappeared and it was evident that she was on the road to recovery.

As consciousness returned and she found herself in the comfortable hospital bed, waited on by a kind, little Navajo Christian nurse and assiduously looked after by the doctor, she was filled with wonder and amazement. When able to speak, she inquired of the nurse,

"Why did he do this for me? My own people threw me out to die; nobody wanted me; and he came and brought me here and has brought me back to life. Why did he do it? He is no relative of mine. I am a Navajo, and he is a white man. I cannot understand why he should do all this for me."

The nurse replied, "It is because of the love of Christ."

"Love of Christ," she exclaimed. "I never heard of 'love of Christ.' What is the 'love of Christ'? What do you mean?" The nurse tried to explain, but felt she was not making it clear; so she called for one of the missionaries.

For some fifteen days after that, one missionary or another talked to the patient for a few hours each morning. In order to make her understand, it was necessary to go clear back to the creation and make plain why Christ came into the world. The young woman listened with deep interest, her large gazelle-like eyes searching the missionary's face constantly as if for confirmation of so wonderful a story.

Finally, when she seemed to be well on the road to life again and her mind was clear and bright, the missionaries thought the time had come to urge her to definite decision. So they held another little prayer meeting together and then once more Mr. Mitchell told the story of redeeming love and tenderly inquired, 'My dear younger sister, (which is the characteristic way of addressing a Navajo Indian younger than oneself) do you not take this blessed Saviour for yourself? Will you not put your trust in Him, turning away from the idols of your people, and worship the one true and living God? He has come to earth in the person of His Son and now He asks you to trust Him for yourself.'

In simple words he presented the claims of Christ for some time, but there was no answer. The woman lay there perfectly quiet, but it was evident she was thinking everything over. After some little time the door at the other end of the ward was opened and the doctor looked in just to make sure that everything was all right with his patient.

She looked up and her bright eyes expressed the gratitude she felt as she softly replied in the liquid tongue of the Navajos, "If Jesus is anything like the doctor, I can trust Him forever."

She had seen Christ magnified in a man and her heart was won.

MILK YOUR OWN COW

**"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word,
that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2)**

Patrick was an Irish Catholic, who for years had longed for the assurance of peace with God. A visiting tourist, who fell in conversation with him, left him a copy of the New Testament. Through reading this, Pat was brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and from that time on, read and studied his Testament with eagerness, ever seeking a deeper knowledge of the things of God.

The parish priest, who had missed him from the regular services, called on him and found him deep in the study of the Word.

"Pat," he asked, "what is that book you are reading?"

"Sure, your riverence," was the reply, "it's the New Testament."

In horrified accents the priest exclaimed, "The New Testament! Why, Pat, that's not a book for the likes of you. You'll be getting all kinds of wild notions from reading it and will be running off into heresy."

"But, your riverence," remonstrated Pat, "I have just been reading here – it's the blessed apostle Peter himself that wrote it – '**As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,**' and sure it's a newborn babe in Christ I am and it's the milk of the Word I'm after. So I can't see the harm of reading the Testament."

"Ah," said the priest, "It's perfect true, Patrick, that you need the milk of the Word, but the Almighty has appointed the clergy to be the milkmen. The clergy go to the college and the seminary and learn the meaning of the Word and then when the people come to the church we give it to them as they are able to bear it, and explain it in a way that they won't misunderstand."

"Well, sure, your riverence," said Pat, "you know I kape a cow of me own out there in the barn, and when I was sick, sometime ago, I had to hire a man to milk the cow and I soon found he was shteanin' half the milk and fillin' the bucket up with water, and sure it was awful weak milk I was gettin'. But now that I am well again I have let him go and I am milkin' me own cow, and so it's the rich cream I am gettin' once more. And your riverence, when I was dependin' on you for the milk of the Word, sure it was the blue, watery stuff you were given' me. But now I am milkin' me own cow and enjoyin' the cream of the Word all the time."

We may well emulate Patrick and each for himself milk his own cow and thus get God's Word firsthand as He opens it up by the Holy Spirit.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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