

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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AN EXAMPLE

BY: C. D. COLE

"Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always," John 12:1-8. "And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me," Mark 14:6. "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her," Mark 14:9.

This is one of the most beautiful stories told in the gospels. It is the story of a woman and her alabaster box. In commending this remarkable expression of love, our Lord said that wherever the gospel shall be preached in the whole world, what this woman did should be spoken of

for a memorial of her. Three of the Evangelists record this incident: Matthew, Mark and John.

We are sometimes accused of being against the women. But our Lord knows this is false, and all others will some day know that the charge is false, and we can afford to wait. We are glad to acknowledge that some of the holiest characters of all history were women, while on the other hand, some of the most wicked have also been women. For examples: Jezebel, the slayer of God's prophets, bloody Queen Mary who put to death many of God's servants in the time of the Reformation, and in earlier times, Cleopatra, murderer and suicide. There is no special virtue in being a woman, nor is there any dishonor in being a woman. The question is not one of equal rights, but of identical rights.

This holy woman had displeased the disciples, but received the sweetest words of approbation from her Lord. Chiefly she called down upon her head the censure of Judas. This man Judas was the strangest character known to history. The only man ever called a devil; the only person ever called the son of perdition. As far as he was known to the disciples of Christ, he was reckoned among the best of them. They once had indignation at James and John for wanting chief places in the kingdom but the canny Judas had their respect. I should think Judas was the most business-like of the whole company which is not saying much for business, is it? But Judas had great influence. His opinion was respected. His judgment was not what you and I would esteem it to be,

for we know him as the betrayer of our Lord. However, the disciples could not foresee this, and in their judgment, whatever Judas would condemn must be very censurable. Judas appeared to be the very model of economy. He was the sort of man to whom many a father would point his boy as an example of frugality and common sense. My sisters, you can well afford to bear the censure of a Judas, if you can have the approbation of Christ. You can afford to be bold in doing whatever he commends or commands in His holy word.

I am going to talk about this blessed woman with the hopeful desire that you and I may imitate her ever-memorable example. We shall look at the words of Jesus, when He said, "She hath wrought a good work on me." There are several things about this deed of hers that prove it to be a good work.

1. It was done altogether for the glorifying of Jesus. This was done for Him, without respect to anybody else. I am sure that Mary was charitable towards the poor, but she wanted to give something to Jesus direct, and not in a roundabout way. It was an expression of her admiration and

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THE CLIMAX OF CONFIDENCE

BY: C. D. COLE

*"Who is he that condemneth?
It is Christ that died, yea rather,
that is risen again, who is even at
the right hand of God, who also
maketh intercession for us,"
Romans 8:34.*

The eighth chapter of Romans touches the heights of Christian truth and this 34th verse gives us the climax of confidence. *"It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."*

We have here before us, in the text, the four marvelous pillars upon which the Christian rests his hope. This text speaks of four things done by Christ to make his people gloriously safe and eternally happy. These four give us basis for the challenge. *"Who is he that condemneth?"*

1. The death of Christ. The believer cannot be condemned because Christ died. How does His death keep me from being condemned? Because His death redeemed me from the curse of the law. His death was vicarious, on behalf of others; it was substitutionary, in the stead of others. I cannot be condemned to die for my sins because Christ died for them. I have no sin debt to pay, for Christ paid it all.

*"If Christ has my discharge procured
And freely in my place endured
The whole of wrath divine,
Payment God will not twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."*

Yes, I know the wages of sin is death, but Christ died. I know it is true that the soul that sinneth it shall die--but Christ died. I know sin is dangerous and damning, but Christ died. Here is a pillar of hope--Christ died for our sins. I know there is a day of judgment coming, but Christ died, and there is no judgment unto death for His people.

Christ died! That's the answer to every charge you may bring against me. Nobody can fully fathom the meaning of Christ's death but we can rest our souls upon it and sing, "In the cross of Christ I glory, Towering o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of sacred story, Gathers round its head sublime." Christ died--here is the basis of my hope. Does anyone know of any better ground of hope?

2. "Yea rather, that is risen again." "Yea rather." How significant! Christ died, yes, but he is not dead. Spurgeon puts it thus: "It is a powerful argument for our salvation that Christ died, but it is still more cogent proof that every believer shall be saved, that Christ rose again from the dead...Now Jesus by His death paid all the debt...But the resurrection was the acknowledgment that the debt was paid." *"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,"* Romans 4:25. Quote that text with the spirit and understanding and you may be sure you are saved. In it the sinner takes the place of a sinner--he was delivered for our offences. To quote that, is not to boast of good works. It is the acknowledgement of our offences. He was delivered for our offences--not for our righteousness. His death was not in payment for our good deeds, but to pay for our sins. He was raised again for our justification. The death of Christ was enough in itself for our redemption, but it was publicly shown to be enough by His resurrection. If Christ were still dead, I would not know that he had done enough to save me; he would still be in the prison house of death for my sins. He died unto sin once but is alive unto God. He died my death and now lives my life, and when Christ who is my life shall appear, I shall appear with him in glory. *"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."*

If you say someone has to die for my sins, I reply, "It is Christ that died." If you say there must be proof that His death is sufficient for my salvation, I reply, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."

3. The third pillar of the Christian's hope is the exaltation of Christ. "Who is ever at the right hand of God." The One who died for my sins is in good standing with God--he is even at the right hand of God. *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,"* I Timothy 3:16.

"Christ at the right hand of God signifies that all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth," (Spurgeon). Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God." How can I, a trusting child of God, be lost when He who died for me is on the throne making all things work together for my good? *"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us,"* Hebrews 9:24.

4. But there is a fourth pillar in our text for the believer to rest his hope upon. "Who also maketh intercession for us." The verb here translated "make intercession" means "to go to meet for consultation." Christ is in heaven to counsel in our behalf. He is

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adoration and reverence for His person. She was not thinking so much of what He had done for her family, but of what and who He was. My brethren and sisters, we ought to love Jesus for what He has done for us, but we also ought to love Jesus for who He is. Just as we love our wives, not only for their service and work to us, but also because of their personal excellencies. Others might smell the spikenard--that she did not wish to prevent. But still the perfume was not meant for them, but for Him exclusively.

2. It was a service done at considerable sacrifice. This was a costly act. I am glad Judas figured it up for us. Three hundred pence at the present rate of exchange would represent several hundred dollars of our money. It was a large sum of money for a woman in those days. It must have been well nigh all that she had. This ointment was a costly perfume, somewhat like our imported perfumes. The Mount of Olives was nearby. But this would be common oil. She gave the best to Christ. She could have purchased spikenard in the stores of Jerusalem at reasonable prices. But she thought Christ deserved the best. Oh, that we might imitate her example. Of old, God had to complain that His people were guilty of bringing the maimed and the halt and the torn animals to Him. Mary was both a cheerful and liberal giver. Usual donation have little beauty in them--money dragged out of people by begging--that offering to the church because it is expected, or that which is given as a kind of hand-out or tip. How unlike all these was the gift of Mary.

3. This loving service was done with preparation. John tells us that Christ said, *"Against the day of my burying hath she kept this."* It was not done on the impulse of the moment. I am not meaning to teach that there should never be impulsive giving. But this should not be the rule of our giving. We should not

wait to give until a spasm of liberality strikes us. Passion seldom gives so acceptably as principle. Each one of us should face our financial obligation to Christ and His cause, and deliberately prepare for this service. We should continually honor Him with a portion of our income, even though we might not be as enthusiastic at some time as at others. Our giving should be done from principle.

I believe Mary knew more about Christ's purpose in this world than all His disciples. She had sat at His feet and learned as He, doubtless, talked about His death and resurrection. And as she meditated upon His gracious words, she thought to herself, "If that is so, if my Lord is going to be put to death, I will get the spikenard ready to anoint Him for His burial."

4. Mary did this deed without a word. Dear sisters, you must pardon me for commending this holy woman for her wise and fitting silence all through her gracious act. She did not talk about it before hand; she said not a word while she did it, and she said nothing afterwards. She did not say anything about getting credit for it in the Associational Minutes. She did not come to the disciples and tell them she hoped they would mention her fine service in their next speech before the church. No, she was not thinking of any honor she would get from her act. What a clamor for credit and honor is being made today among the people of God. There is such a thing as spoiling the good you do by making a great fuss before you do it, and by a desire for honor after you do it. *"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth,"* Matthew 6:3.

Here is a striking thing. The evangelists who record the promise of perpetual remembrance of the act do not tell us who did it, and the evangelist who tells us who did it does not record the promise of perpetual remembrance. Never mind, my brothers and sisters, whether your deed of service to Christ is labeled with address or not. God knows to whom it belongs and that is enough.

*"I've found a Friend, O such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever;
For I am His, and He is mine,
Forever and forever."*

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there as our advocate with God the Father. He is able to save unto the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. I thing we have an example of what He is doing for us at the right hand of God in what He was doing for us just before He left the world to go to the Father. He said then and He must still be saying, "Father, I will that they, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

If anyone of you should get into serious trouble with the law--if you were really guilty of some crime that called for severe punishment, the first thing you would do would be to get the best lawyer you could find and afford. You would want a man who could answer all the charges witnesses might bring against you, and you would want a man who could appeal to the jurors in your behalf. Now in heaven, weak and trembling and trusting sinners have an advocate with God the Father, and it is Jesus Christ the Righteous.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."