

GLAD TIDINGS, or

Believe And Live

by

Robert Boyd, D. D.,
Pastor of Wabash Avenue Baptist Church, Chicago

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CHAPTER TEN

THE NEW CREATURE

THE Apostle Paul says, "**If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature.**"

I have been at some pains in former articles, to show that out of CHRIST the sinner can-not really perform any good work, for "**whatsoever is not of faith is sin.**" Hence all at-tempts of men to make themselves holy first, before they come to JESUS, must prove a failure, and if persevered in will end in eternal disaster.

But it is equally true, that if a sinner truly believes in the Lord JESUS, he will begin at once to abound in good works.

The Lord JESUS has done a work in true Christians as well as a work for them, and he never saves from the guilt of sin, without at the same time saving from its power.

Accordingly:

- If believers are said to be elected, it is "**through sanctification of the Spirit.**"
- If they are said to be predestinated, it is "**to be conformed to the image of his Son.**"
- If they are said to be chosen, it is "**that they may be holy before him in love.**"

In short the only evidence a man can give that he has a living and not a mere dead faith, is a holy life; for faith - "**worketh by love and purifieth the heart.**"

An old writer remarks:

"Say not that thou hast royal blood in thy veins, and art born of GOD, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by daring to be holy."

- If a man had rather gossip at home or in his neighbor's house, than go to a prayer meeting;
- If he had rather run to hear fifty sermons; than practice one;
- If he had rather talk about ministers and criticize their performances than pray for their success, or pay for their support;
- If he had rather talk about a thousand sins in his brethren, than mortify one in himself;
- If he had rather read the newspaper or the novel, than GOD's Holy Word; in fine.

If he acts as if CHRIST was very holy to save him the trouble of being so, he may rest assured that though he may pray with the seeming earnestness of an Elijah, and talk of his feelings like a Daniel, and weep like a Jeremiah, all his religion is only the cant of the hypocrite, or the ravings of the self-deceiver.

Among the first evidences of the new creature in CHRIST JESUS, is a love for the Bible.

One of the most common remarks which ministers hear from the lips of young converts, is, "Oh, sir, it seems to me like a new book!" They may have been taught to read and reverence it from their earliest youth; they may have committed large portions of it to memory in the Sabbath School, and have acquired a general knowledge of its contents; yet no sooner do they believe on JESUS, than untold beauty, which they never discovered before, gleams out on every page of it, and they exclaim with David, "**how I love thy law.**"

Nor is this greatly to be wondered at, when we remember that the same Holy Spirit which inspired the Bible has now taken possession of their hearts, leading them not only to love it, but opening their eyes to "**discern the things of the Spirit.**"

And I have no doubt that the reason why so much of the professed piety of the present day is of such a stunted, dwarfish kind, is that it is more public than private, and more fed by harangues about religion, than by the pure unadulterated word of truth itself.

If we read the memoirs of the martyrs and other holy men of GOD, whose undying example has shone down to us through the darkness of intervening years, we will find that their sturdy piety, vigorous faith, and unbending principle gathered daily strength from reading and meditating upon GOD's Word.

If we read the lives of the men most pre-eminent for usefulness in the Church of GOD in modern times, we will find that they were all emphatically Bible Christians; and from this holy source they drew that strength which enabled them, in the language of one, "to strike the kingdom of darkness with blows that resounded through eternity."

That piety which is fed merely upon public meetings, narratives of personal experience, emotional hymns, sermons, and, all that is exciting in religious gatherings, will be found to be a poor, fitful, sickly piety indeed; while that piety which draws all its nourishment from the Bible, will not only derive most good from public privileges, but like the source from which it draws its life, will "**endure for ever.**"

Permit an illustration not drawn from imagination.

In yonder small cottage lives a poor widow, whose only son, a child of many prayers, left her many years ago to enter upon the perils, physical and moral, of a sailor's life. Since that time she has heard nothing from the loved one, and has long given him up for dead.

One day her pastor is with her, directing her to the precious promises of the Bible, when a knock is heard at the door, and a letter is handed in. The widow perceives at a glance that it is the well-known handwriting of her long lost son.

What excitement thrilled through her whole frame! What joy lighted up her countenance, as she exclaimed, "My son is yet alive!"

And with what eagerness was every word of that letter read and fondly lingered upon!

Reader, suppose that when she discovered the handwriting of her son, she had laid the letter carelessly upon a shelf till the dust of weeks accumulated upon it before she read it; would she have given any evidence of love to her son?

Or suppose after a long time she had taken it down just from a cold sense of duty, or to satisfy conscience, yawning and dozing at the end of each paragraph; would this be any evidence of love to her son? No; whatever might be her professions, you would know that there was not one spark of true motherly love in her heart, were she to act thus.

The Bible is a Letter from the Father of love, from whom we have been so long estranged.

It speaks out the feelings of His heart towards us, and kindly invites us to return to the enjoyment of His favor.

If we take no pleasure in reading it; if we are unwilling to make any sacrifices to understand it more fully; if we are delighted with the light and the trifling literature of the day, and regard the Bible as dry and uninteresting, we may rest assured that is because "**the love of the Father is not in us.**"

My dear reader, cultivate an intimate and intelligent acquaintance with your Heavenly Father's revealed will. Study the whole of it, for it is all profitable.

As a good old Christian once remarked,

"The Old Testament is
the New Testament revealed."

It will be to us a guide through a world of darkness and perplexity; wiping the eye of sorrow; cheering the heart of sadness, and flashing the light of its glorious promises across the valley of the shadow of death.

Another evidence of the new creature, is love to the Lord JESUS.

An officer on the field of battle was engaged in personal conflict with one of the enemy, when he slipped and fell to the ground; in an instant his opponent's sword was lifted for his destruction, when one of his men who loved him, threw himself between him and the uplifted weapon, and received it in his own heart. Now as that officer rose from the ground covered with the blood of the man who had laid down his life for him, must not the emotion of love have filled his heart to overflowing?

And it is not possible for anyone to believe that JESUS interposed between the point of the sword of Divine Justice and his guilty heart, and received in his own innocent heart the terrible blow which the sinner deserved, without feeling the kindlings of a love that will be as permanent as GOD's throne.

Hence all over the world, and under all variety of circumstances Christians are able to say, **"Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."**

It is said that after the battle of Waterloo, a surgeon going over the field to aid the suffering came to a French soldier badly wounded.

As he began to probe his wound to find the fatal bullet, the dying man started up with a convulsive effort and exclaimed, "A little deeper and you will find the emperor," meaning in his heart.

So wherever you find a Christian, without respect to color or clime, from the frigid to the torrid zone, you will find that deeper than the love of home, deeper than the love of kindred, deeper than the love of life itself, is the love of the Lord JESUS.

One of the primitive Christians when brought to the bar of Trajan, and asked, "Art thou a Christian?" replied, "I am; I have CHRIST in me."

Trajan then asked him to deny CHRIST. When he exclaimed, "What! Shall I deny my Lord and Master? I have CHRIST in me!" He was immediately led to martyrdom.

Among the first feelings produced by the belief of the gospel, is joy, and the next is love.

If a person were to rush into a burning building and save your life when in great danger, your first emotion would be joy because of your own deliverance, but your second emotion, as soon as you had time for reflection, would be that of gratitude to your deliverer.

Thus it is that the reception of the gospel truth makes the sinner happy and holy at the same time. **"Faith worketh by love and purifieth the heart."**

Hence it is, that the young convert abandons the scenes of former gayety and worldly pleasure, in which he bore a conspicuous part, because he has ceased to have any enjoyment in them; his new found joy in GOD and love to JESUS having given him new enjoyments, as much superior to those of the world, as the sun is to the glimmering light of a taper.

His worldly friends think that the reason why he has left their dancing parties and the exciting scenes of the theater, is the dread of hell or the fear of the censure of the church, or a desire to stand well with his new associates; but this is a great mistake.

He has ceased to find any pleasure where he formerly sought it so eagerly, and he has begun to drink of those rivers of pleasure that are to gladden his soul forever.

It is said that there was a deep trench around the walls of the ancient city of Babylon, which when opened could absorb the waters of the great river Euphrates and leave its channel dry; so the love of CHRIST has produced such a full and satisfying joy in the soul, that all former worldly channels of pleasure are left dry and worthless.

Whenever I hear professing Christians beginning to enquire what harm there can be in the social dance, or what harm there can be in the theater, or in games of chance, I always know that it is a sign that the love of CHRIST is declining in their hearts, if indeed it ever existed at all. It is an attempt to get something to satisfy conscience, and is virtually declaring that the bread of life with which CHRIST feeds the soul does not satisfy, and that therefore they are anxious to find some excuse for getting back to the service of Satan.

And instead of arguing the rightness or the wrongness of those things of which no truly spiritual mind has any doubt, I would say, Take heed, my brother, to your own heart.

Your Lord has warned you, not only against going back, but against even looking back; and YOU are instructed not to seem to come short. You are to shun the very appearance of evil, and the very fact that you are beginning to glance with approval at the abounding iniquity of the world, shows that your love to the Redeemer is **“waxing cold.”**

Take that cold heart again to JESUS; and rest not satisfied till it is brimming over with His love, **“who was holy, harmless, and separated from sinners.”**

An anxious desire for the salvation of the perishing is an evidence of the new creature in CHRIST JESUS.

Suppose this day that a stranger were to enter your house.

His apparel is plain and almost mean. His cast of countenance is kind and benevolent, and yet a solemn sadness sits upon it as if the shadow of some big sorrow were passing over it. This stranger begins to speak to you, and his words burn into your very heart. His conversation lifts your mind from the vain and the perishing, makes you feel as if you heard the echo of those transporting strains that fill the courts of heaven.

You are wondering who this stranger can be, when all at once your eyes are opened, and you see that you are in the presence of your Saviour. He shows you the scars of those wounds he bore for you, and with that mild eye fixed upon you, which broke Peter's heart, He asks you if you love him.

With a trembling earnestness you answer, "Blessed Saviour, I do love thee!"

He then tells you that all around you are dying sinners. That he has shed his precious blood for them, and longs for their salvation with a depth of solicitude of which you can form no conception.

And then he asks you as an evidence of your love to him, that you will go to them and tell them the story of his love, and urge them to flee from the wrath to come. Christians, JESUS is thus speaking to you.

The perishing are thus around you. They live in your houses, they eat at your boards, you mingle with them every day in the business of life.

O, as you love the Lord JESUS, as you value an eternity of bliss, and. as you would not in the day of judgment be found red all over with the blood of souls, try to pluck them as "**brands from the burning.**"

~ end of chapter 10 ~

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