

GLAD TIDINGS, or

Believe And Live

by

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CHAPTER TWO

IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US

"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"

THESE words came from the lips of the Lord JESUS, and there are no words like his words. They burn into the soul, for they are words of heavenly fire. Words of wisdom have been spoken by CHRIST's people, for the brightest intellects and the most powerful eloquence have been devoted to his service; but **"never man spake like this man."**

Something of GOD, it is true, we can learn from his works; and as we gaze upon the lofty over-hanging cliff, the sky-piercing mountain, or the vast ocean, we are penetrated with feelings of profoundest awe; we exclaim "Great and Infinite GOD!" and the cry is taken up in the heavens, and is re-echoed from world to world throughout infinite space.

But nature, in all her vastness, says not one word on what, as sinners, we most want to hear – PARDON!

Not a whisper of forgiveness comes to us from the blue heavens above us, nor from any of the works of GOD around us. The thought of the great GOD, girt with omnipotence, makes us afraid. The great, infinite, all-pervading Spirit we cannot comprehend. The thought of going into his presence, repels, rather than attracts. **"I remembered God and was troubled."**

But when GOD comes near to us in human flesh, when GOD approaches me in the person of a man like myself, when I hear GOD speaking to me through human lips, looking kindly upon me through human eyes, dropping over my wretchedness human tears, and heaving over me human groans, as he speaks to me of love; of pardon, and of adoption into his family of love; the guilty dread of GOD flees away, and perfect love that casteth out all fear, takes its place.

Now this is what we see in the God-man. **“God manifest in the flesh.”**

Suppose that you were to enter a friend's house, and see his little children amusing themselves with that perfect enjoyment of the present, peculiar to childhood. Not a cloud upon their fair brows, not a shade of sorrow upon their faces. You are standing and admiring the lovely scene, when all at once the father of these children is heard at the door, and in a moment the whole scene is changed.

The children look around in terror; the faces so lately flushed with joy are now pale with fear, and they each make haste to hide themselves from the father as from an object of aversion and dread.

Now, in witnessing such a sight as this, you would know that one of two things must be the case; either that father is a tyrant, and is in the habit of abusing his children, or else these children are conscious of having done wrong in his absence, and therefore are afraid to face him.

Why has the sinner that dread of GOD which makes him shun the very thought of his Creator, as the essence of ail that is gloomy and forbidding? "Why does he dread the idea of going into GOD's presence, and coming so near the universal Father as death brings men? It cannot be because GOD has ever done him any wrong, for the hand that he dreads has been engaged in scattering mercies upon his pathway, and every gesture of that hand has been inviting him near.

The voice he dreads to hear has been tuned to accents of love, and has sounded after him down the broad road to death - **“Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?”**

"Why then this slavish dread" at the thought of GOD? "Why this enmity and aversion? Ah! it is because the soul is conscious of guilt, and of having wickedly lifted the standard of rebellion against its best friend. It is because this consciousness of guilt makes him think of GOD as a GOD of wrath, the red thunderbolt of whose indignation is about to leap from his right hand for the sinner's destruction.

Now, man can neither love GOD nor enjoy happiness till this feeling is destroyed, and till entire confidence in The Lord's love is restored.

We see these remarks illustrated in our first parents. As long as they believed in GOD's love, they remained holy and happy; the moment they believed Satan's lie, who taught them that GOD was selfish that he was keeping something back from them that was really good for them and the reason why this good was kept back was lest they should come to know as much as himself; the very moment they believed this falsehood they fell, and guilty dread of GOD took the place of confidence and love.

The very beings who but a few moments before were sending up their songs of love and joy, and forming no unhappy harmony with the loftier songs of heaven, are now in terror.

They are fleeing from the sound of the Lord's voice, and trying to hide themselves among the trees of the garden.

Why is Adam now so unhappy? As yet there is no change in his outward surroundings. The fruits are as pleasant to the taste, the flowers as fragrant to the smell, the air as balmy, and the music of the birds as sweet as ever. His body is yet in paradise, but in his soul have begun the very elements of hell a plain proof that no outward possessions can make man happy, while his soul is estranged from the fountain of all good.

In "**Immanuel, God with us,**" we see Satan's lie fully refuted.

We see the GOD we supposed was full of vindictive wrath, coming near to us in human flesh, with the tear of pity in his eye, and words of inviting love upon his lips. We see that GOD so loved us, that he stepped from his throne at the very summit of glory, and sought for us on the mountains of sin.

We see that we do not need to do anything to make GOD love us, for that love has existed all along; that we do not need to do something to reconcile GOD to us, for whoever was in the wrong must come and be reconciled to the right; hence GOD is in CHRIST reconciling, not Himself to the world, hut the world to Himself.

In short, we see that, as man departed from GOD by believing Satan's lie, and disbelieving GOD's truth, so he must .return by disbelieving Satan's lie, and believing GOD's truth.

And as he lost his happiness when he lost his confidence in GOD's disinterested love, so he can never regain his happiness till he believes in that love as displayed in CHRIST JESUS.

Hence it is written, "**Acquaint thyself with God and be at peace with him.**" And again, "**They that know Thee shall put their trust in Thee.**"

That is the moment they really know GOD, as he is revealed in the Gospel; that moment they are at peace with Him. But a man may know about GOD, and yet not know GOD. He may be a profound theologian, and be able to discourse eloquently upon the attributes of GOD, and yet in the true spiritual sense know no more of him than a Hottentot.

To know GOD is to know him as my forgiving Father, and this I can only know through JESUS CHRIST His Son.

In the light of these remarks, how important does the doctrine of CHRIST's divinity appear! Take away that truth out of the Bible, and you shatter to pieces humanity's life boat, and leave man a miserable wreck upon the shores of eternity.

This is the keystone of that bridge that crosses the gulf of human despair, and let it be taken away and the whole fabric falls to pieces.

This is the most dangerous error that has ever cursed our world, for it strikes at the root of the atonement, the only hope of man. Hence when Infidels would destroy Christianity under the most plausible form, they have begun by denying the divinity of CHRIST. If some being, vested with great power, wished to destroy our solar system, it would not be necessary to go from orb to orb, destroying one after another : it would only be necessary to dash out the sun, and the whole would rush wildly into one mass of ruin.

So men wishing to be called Christians, have taken away our Lord's divinity, and thus removed the life and power of the whole Christian system. But they cannot impose upon the pious soul, the dead body for the living form. When they talk of CHRIST, it is not the CHRIST of the Bible they speak of, but a CHRIST formed in their own vain imaginations; and however much they may extol him as a good and a virtuous man, the believer says, "Ye have taken away my Lord, and I know not where ye have laid him."

Sinner! In the tears and sufferings of the God-man, see how great must be your danger. The tears of JESUS over your perishing state, and the deep anxieties of his soul for your salvation, show how fearful is your peril.

If you were out in a steamboat upon the lake, enjoying a pleasure excursion, on a lovely summer day. There is not a cloud in the sky, nor a ripple upon the waters. The calm bosom of the lake reflects all that is bright and beautiful in the firmament above. The thought of danger never crosses your mind, and you are sinking down into sweet enjoyment of the whole scene, when suddenly you see the captain rush across the deck with tears rolling down his cheeks, and much excited; you also see the crew deeply affected, and you would at once begin to think there must be danger, though you could not see it.

Now when we see GOD in human form weeping and bleeding for sinners, there must be some fearful peril there must be some deep damnation, on the brink of which your soul is toppling, at once go to the captain of our salvation, and cry "**Lord save me or I perish;**" and that hand that bears the print of the nail, and yet is the hand that guides the stars in their courses, will pluck you from destruction, and give you a place among his loved ones on earth, and at last among his redeemed ones in heaven.

But remember that the same hand that is strong to save is also strong to smite. The feet of those who have carried others to their burial, may be at the door to entomb you. The shuttle may have passed the loom and have woven the last garment in which your cold corpse is to be enshrouded, and this night your soul may stand before GOD.

Dear reader, would you dare to stand there in a Christ-less state? As a consuming fire would that holy presence be to your guilty soul.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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