

“The Manger and the Cross”

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“The old, old story is ever new, tell me more about Jesus.”

For hundreds of years’ men have been talking about Him, and the story of His life has been proclaimed in thousands of pulpits, and repeated in millions of homes; yet it is not worn out. It is as fresh and new as when first told, not only because man’s needs are the same now as then, and because

“Some have never heard
The message of salvation,
From God’s own Holy Word,”

but because however familiar it is to us, we are always finding in it greater depths and heights than we ever dreamed of. Our intellect and understanding enlarge with our growth; but the story of Jesus and His love, which we heard as little children, has unfolded and expanded faster than our minds, so that still it must be told to us simply, “as to a little child.”

The manger and the cross are the revelation of the eternal, infinite God, with whom we never cease to be children. Even to old age and grey hairs He carries us in His arms, and soothes us with His “still, small voice,” comforting us “as one whom his mother comforts.” The grey-haired sage is to God but the lisping infant; and he who would excel in science must come as an artless child, and listen with attentive ear to the voice of Him in whom are hid “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me’ (Jer. 9:23, 24). Yet “God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 6:14). **We are to glory only in the knowledge of God, and only in the cross.** So we see that the cross is that which by revealing His glory, teaches us to know God; and since the announcement of the birth of Christ was “Glory to God in the highest,” **it is evident that the manger was identical with the cross, which is the revelation of the glory of God to man.**

What is the evidence that even the professed Christian world has not yet learned the full meaning of the story of the birth of Christ? —This: That it is no uncommon thing for Christians to become discouraged because of their weakness and the difficulties they have to contend with. In the birth of Christ God has shown us that there is no ground for discouragement. If we rightly read the story, we shall know without referring to Rom. 8:35-47, that in tribulation, and distress, and persecution, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword, “we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

In Christ all extremes meet—the height and depth, the length and breadth. Infinite strength in absolute helplessness; eternal glory in shame and disgrace; perfect peace in raging conflicts; the day-star and the sun of righteousness and the midnight darkness of sin; life springing from the pit of corruption, —all these appear in Him, and inspire the believer with lively hope and courage.

No king riding in pomp at the head of victorious legions ever had such heralds as proclaimed the coming of the Prince of peace; yet when shepherds and wise men sought Him, they found only a tiny, helpless infant, unconscious of the adoration which they paid Him. That Babe resting in the manger, or in its mother's arms, careless and unconscious of the turmoil of earth, and of the plots to take its life, represents the peace which God gives his trusting children on this earth. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him." As safe as Jesus was from the murderous Herod, so safe from sin that crouches at the door, and from all assaults, are those who put their trust in him. "He is our peace," and therefore we may rest in peace, not knowing or caring to know what dangers may threaten us, or what troubles and difficulties lie in wait for us.

Jesus Christ in the manger with the cattle for his companions, was as surely "the power of God and the wisdom of God," as He will be when He comes in the glory of the Father, attended by all the holy angels. He had the same angel attendants then, and was the revelation of the same glory to all who had spiritual eyesight. "The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

What could be weaker than a helpless babe, made still more helpless by being bound in swaddling clothes? Yet that represented the measure of the power which he had in himself when he performed the mightiest miracles. Faint with fasting, He resisted the temptations of the devil; and by the same power He cast out devils. He said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing;" it was "the fullness of the Godhead bodily" dwelling in Him, and not His human flesh, that did the works. His name is "God with us," and He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever;" and therefore the weakness of our flesh is no bar to the manifestation of His strength in us. The power that does "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Eph. 3:20). The trouble is that we do not get our eyes open to know what is "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

"That was the true Light which lights every man that comes into the world." "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Why walk in darkness, when Christ is "God with us," and "in Him is no darkness at all"? "The night shines as the day; the darkness into light are both alike" to Him. **From the manger in Bethlehem shined the rays that shall fill the earth with the glory of the Lord; and**

that coming glory will be *hastened as the manger is multiplied by the repetition of the mystery of the birth of Christ in all who receive Him.*

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Ellen G. White: "The incarnation of Jesus Christ, the divine son of God, ***“Christ in you, the hope of glory,” is the great theme of the gospel.*** “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him.” Colossians 1:27; 2:9, 10. (CET 246)