

The Birth of Jesus

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Look at one or two features with me in Luke 2; that exquisitely beautiful scripture has more in it, I well know. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (or good pleasure, or delight, in men). At the creation, God was providing for His own glory — for the blessing of the earth — for His peculiar joy and satisfaction in man. Now each of these great purposes is again answered in the new creation, which was laid in the Child of Bethlehem — answered too more abundantly and blessedly than in the old creation. God's "eternal power and Godhead" were to be seen in His works of old, He was glorified in them, as He sought to be, as Gen. 1 shows us. But all His glory is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. Nothing that can glorify Him in the full display of Himself is left unrevealed there. The display of God in creation was necessarily partial, but in the mystery of Jesus, the Child of Bethlehem, it is perfect and complete.*

*The above is printed as written, but the reader will remember that the glory of God was not *displayed* in the face of Jesus Christ until His ascension, nor did He take the place of, though He was, the second Man until His resurrection. — ED.

So blessing was the earth's portion at the creation. The creatures of God's hand enjoyed themselves in the good things He had provided for them. (Gen. 2.) But it was a blessing that might be forfeited, a peace that might be broken; but now the blessing and the peace, and the life which Jesus imparts, are infallible and for ever. The wolf and the lamb of the garden of Eden fall out, but the wolf and the lamb of the kingdom of Christ shall feed together. So the divine good pleasure in man at the creation was very blessed; the Lord God pondered with peculiar delight over His last, and chiefest, and crowning work, that image and likeness of Himself. But all this delight was changed; God repented that He had made man on the earth. (Gen. 6: 6.) But man recovered and set up in the Child of Bethlehem is man delighted in without possibility of such repentance, and delighted in so as no other object in all His creation (by its very nature) could awaken the same.

But still further on in this scripture, the shepherds are filled with fear in the presence of the glory, but the angel says to them, "Fear not." A multitude of the heavenly host then appear in the sight of the shepherds, but they do not fear, but rather go into the city with joy, repeat the tidings, and return with praise. So in the book of Revelation, John fears, but the voice of Christ restores him, and then through a series of most awful and terrific visions he never fears again. (See Rev. 1: 17, 18.) This is very happy — very happy for us — very happy to know that the presence of the glory need not alarm us. Nature fears, but the soul is emboldened by the voice that speaks from heaven; and thus are we taught that joy and praise, and not fear, become the presence of the glory, and the company of the heavenly multitudes, even if that glory and those hosts were to enshrine and surround us, as in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, with as full a surprise as they did that very night the Bethlehem shepherds.

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