

God Is Light

"God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

THERE ARE many figures in Scripture representing good and evil, but none more fittingly to the point than light and darkness. The primary reason for this is a foundation truth, namely, "*God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all*"; whereas of men it has been rightly declared that they—

"Love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."

But how fitting—how appropriate—that the Eternal One in the Heavens should be essentially glorious with brilliance! We remember an exhortation by our brother R. Roberts wherein he calls our attention to this wonderful reality of God being associated with light and brilliance and glory. How formidably wonderful the brilliant presence of God is can be seen by the fact that puny men cannot approach His presence, and survive.

And such brilliance is not intermittent or diminished at any time. And where that glorious brilliance is to penetrate and shine forth, *nothing can hinder or obscure or deflect it*. God's glorious brilliance is perpetual, without variableness or shadow of turning.

We fail miserably in attempting to *remember God's glory each moment of every day*; for the only way in which we can constantly remember it is by reflecting God's glorious character in all we think, or say, or do. But God does constantly radiate glory—He does so perpetually, undiminished, without changing or turning!

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GOD IS LIGHT. He is literally unapproachable brilliance. This brilliant light also represents His Divine Character. Light here represents not only knowledge and intelligence, as opposed to darkness representing ignorance and superstition. Light also represents the moral attributes of God: His love, patience, grace, mercy and forgiveness.

These qualities of God's character and person must be kept in mind, as well as His knowledge and wisdom and power, before we can rightly begin to understand that "*God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all*."

The essential brilliance of God is intimated in the result of the first day's creation work, recorded in Gen. 1:3-4—

"And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness."

As God is light, so also the first day's creation work is light, made to appear four days before the sun could be seen in the heavens. In the Deity's plan with man upon the earth we may see that the first, fourth and seventh days of the Seven-day Plan have a special feature associated with them in this respect. On the *first* day light was made: on the *fourth* day the sun appeared: and on the *seventh* day God rested from His labours.

The Spiritual Creation-Plan, covering seven days of one thousand years each, answers to this pattern: thus, the Light of God's Word was given to our first parents from the very beginning; yet Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, does not appear until the close of the fourth day; while the seventh day is yet to begin when the Sun of Righteousness rises in that morning without clouds.

The main teaching of the first day's creation work is that *light is not inherent in the earth, but darkness*. The main teaching is that *light must come from above*, from God, in whom is no darkness at all. If we would know this light, the light of God's Word, we must know it against the background of darkness.

Going back to the first chapter of Genesis we are told of this darkness. But we are first told in the opening verse—

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

This beginning is not the beginning of the six days creation work. It is a more remote beginning, during which the heavens and the earth were brought into existence by the Deity. How long in duration, or how long it occurred, we are not told. Then in Gen. 1:2 we are told the conditions prevalent on the earth when God was about to begin the six days creation work—

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Against this background of a dark, formless void (v. 3)—

"God said, LET THERE BE LIGHT; and there was light."

God's Word has the creative work of dispelling dense darkness with glorious light. As creatures of the dust of the earth, *we must realize this new creation in us due to the entrance of God's Word, being transformed from darkness to light by the renewing of our minds.*

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LIGHT comes from above, from God only: there is no light inherent in man, not even a spark. God's Word—His commandments, precepts, promises, law, and His thoughts and His ways—God's Word gives Light. Man's thoughts and ways, no matter how influenced by education, learning, knowledge and culture of the world, are nothing but foolishness and darkness in the infinite sight of God. Therefore it is written:

"The entrance of Thy Words giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple"

(Psa. 119:130).

Apart from the entrance of His Word man remains in darkness. God's Word gives light, *but only to those who, in simplicity, are aware of their need.* The simple are those who are not varied and complex in their desires, but rather in singleness of heart desire to know God. The simple are those who find no delight in being embellished and adorned with the dark, foolish ways of the flesh. They are humbly determined in their single desire of seeking to know God.

"The entrance of Thy Words giveth light." Or, "The *unfolding* of Thy Words gives light." A man may read God's Word daily and remain in darkness. It is not *merely reading* God's Word which will give light. There must be more. There must be an unfolding of The Word: that is, His Word must be opened to make its meaning clear, so that the one who reads may have his understanding enlightened.

Only when the Word of God is unfolded—its meaning opened up—will it give light. Otherwise God's thoughts and ways will remain secret and dark, and His plan of salvation will remain an unexplained parable.

Within man, the thoughts of his mind and the intents of his heart, there originates no light, but contrariwise there is the darkness of ignorance, superstition and lies. When Adam sinned, he left the light of God's Command to enter the darkness of the serpent's reasoning which, though a mixture of truth with a lie, is nevertheless branded a Lie.

In our day when so many revisions of the Bible are available, let us be reminded that the first revision was given six thousand years ago and served as the instigator of sin entering into the world and death by sin. The subtle serpent, reasoning from what he saw and heard, revised God's Word of Truth into a lie.

From that time forward God, in His grace and mercy, has sent forth His Word to penetrate darkness and give light for the salvation of those who would believe and endure faithfully under trial

and testing. Trial is necessary to determine whether Light will prevail in the believer's life, or if the power of darkness shall once again envelope him.

Darkness represents lies, evil, the wicked, corruption, death and oblivion. Light represents Truth, good, the righteous, incorruption, glory and honor. As believers, we must learn fully of this Light and Darkness, learning by our personal experiences that *the flesh tends to sin and is worthy only of the darkness of death*, which is God's righteous judgment.

Also, we must come to fully realize that the Word of God, understood and believed and *obeyed from the heart*, is the only Way to holiness and righteousness, honor and glory. The lesson of all past ages, the same lesson repeated so often, is that when half-truths are mixed in with the Truth, there is a gradual darkening of the understanding in the things of God. The antediluvians went astray, corrupting God's Way on earth—the world that then was perished and only eight souls were saved.

EVEN God's chosen people whom He called out of Egyptian darkness to be a peculiar people unto Himself, did not, on the whole, learn the basic, vital lesson that from within is only darkness, and only God's unfolding Word can give light: and that to mix man's thoughts and ways with God's Revelation results in the obscuring of the light until complete darkness (man's ways) prevails against the light (God's Ways).

This lesson was taught to God's people and nation by the fact that the golden lampstand in the holy place of the Tabernacle, burning only the finest oil, was the sole source of light therein. *No natural light was permitted*. Of the lampstand bro. Roberts, in "The Law of Moses," says —

"The light was caused by the combustion of oil supplied to the lamps morning and evening, without which the light would have gone out—whence we may gather the idea that the candlestick does not represent the Word of the Lord in the abstract, **but that Word as incorporate in living believers**.

"The candlestick, though all of gold (pure faith), did not stand for perennial light, like the glory shining between the cherubim: such light is only possible in the spirit state in which we shall know as we are known, and never faint or weary.

"The only light we can have at present is **the light of illuminated brains**, and this is not a fixed light, but a light that requires constant renewal by daily supplies of the oil of the Word.

"'Order the lamps upon the pure candlestick from the evening unto the morning before the Lord continually,' is the type. Nothing less than the DAILY READING OF THE WORD can answer to this type."

Though Israel repeatedly went astray from God's Holy Word, yet God repeatedly sent them His holy prophets, rising early and sending them. Theirs was not always a joyful message, not always a pleasant task, but more often an unpleasant work, as with Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah, to mention only a few. Yet no matter how unpleasant their assigned work, it was the work and Word of the Lord which must be accomplished. Isaiah had to warn the people (8:20)—

"To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."

In one form or another the same warning is given time and time again. One would think it would eventually be an easy matter for the people to distinguish between God's Word and man's word, between Light and Darkness. Not so. It is not so because both light and darkness have been misrepresented and misinterpreted, as declared in Isa. 5:20-21—

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"

Herein was, and continues to be, a grave danger—darkness represented as light, and that by God's Own people! For those who did so, setting forth darkness as light, were quite religious and looked forward with expectation to the Day of the Lord. But there was no light in them. Another rendering of Isa. 8:20 is—

"Surely they speak thus, for whom there is no daybreak."

No daybreak for them, or no morning without clouds ushering in the promised millennial rest for the people of God. For them there will be in that great and terrible time, as the prophet Amos declared—

"Woe unto you that desire the Day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The Day of the Lord is darkness, and not light . . .

"Should not the Day of the Lord be darkness, and not light?—even very dark and no brightness in it."

Yet they desired the day of the Lord! Why? Because they *expected* salvation in it. That Day certainly is coming, but for all such it will not be a glorious healing light, bringing salvation; but gloom and darkness, bringing a judgment to condemnation from which there will be no escape and no hope. Of that daybreak bringing salvation to the faithful, the prophet proclaimed—

"There shall be One that ruleth over men righteously."

And the One here prophesied summed up his message in the words—

"I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Herein God has manifested Himself unto men. We behold that God is Love as well as Light, and that He sent His Son to give us Life. No more intimately glorious association of ideas could be unfolded to us—Light and Love and Life.

And to behold them fully and completely we must behold the man, Christ Jesus. Though existing in the mind and plan of the Deity from the beginning, he did not come into personal existence until about four thousand years after the first Adam.

He was the Word made flesh—the *Light of the World*—diffusing all about him with warmth, health, gladness and life, if they would but believe and receive him and his message. Yet his own pronouncement concerning his generation was that of judgment when he said—

"Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil."

They were the wicked, which means they were the lawless: those who are without law, and who even refuse God's Law and the Law of Christ, *which is Love*. They love darkness because they wish to satisfy their fleshy desires, doing what they will, when and where they please. Such a wicked, lawless way of life produces nothing but chaos and anarchy, ending in the grave.

This is the opposite of the creative work of God. He is not producing chaos and disorder. But verily, He is creating order and harmony ruled by love. And where such love exists, there will be no necessity for stringent laws, since *perfect love is the only guiding principle sufficient for order and harmony on an eternal basis*.

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WE, brethren and sisters, are not invited to confusion, chaos and anarchy, which are the products of darkness; but we are to dwell in the light, even as He is in the light, being knit together in love, that we may finally receive the gift of life eternal in Christ Jesus.

Not so, however, if we love not the brethren. We will then be still in the darkness out of which we have been called. It has been so with all such who profess to believe Christ and the Gospel, whereas their light slowly and imperceptibly went out without their knowledge. Others really never came to the light, though their profession of doing so was great. Paul declares in 2 Cor. 4:3-4—

"But if our Gospel be hid (veiled), it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded (power of darkness) the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

When the Light of the world appeared, his glorious message was "veiled from them that are lost." Not, however, veiled from the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Those from whom his message was veiled did not know their true state, they did not consider themselves lost.

On the other hand, the lost sheep of the house of Israel were those who realized they were lost and consequently were eager and able to recognize and accept the Truth directing them into the Way of Life. Therefore when the Light of the world proclaimed that he was "The Way, the Truth and the Life," the lost sheep of the house of Israel were of such disposition in heart and mind that they were fit subjects to respond with a faith that works by love.

But those from whom the Gospel message was veiled, were those who did not consider themselves lost, who were the self-righteous, indifferent to warning, unconcerned about laxness in keeping God's Word, phlegmatic concerning spiritual things versus fleshy things, and unable to see a clear dividing line between the Light of God's Word and the "enlightening" reasoning of man in "science and knowledge."

So just as the Old Testament prophets had to repeat the Spirit's warning admonitions against all such, so also the New Testament prophets and apostles were faced with the same work, frequently an unhappy, unpleasant work, and often involving persecution and sometimes even death.

Yet to some, like Saul of Tarsus, God will show the light in all its brilliance, as a light above the brightness of the noon-day sun. *We, too, must strive to see this Light*, clear and brilliant, that we may find deliverance from the power of darkness. We must *learn to see spiritual values clearly*; if not, we have not yet fully come to the light, and the day star has not yet arisen in our hearts.

The clearer, sharper, brighter the light, the more perfect is our perception of Christ, God and the Truth, and the closer we will be in true fellowship one with the other.

If we would study to know God, we must study to know Christ in whom He has manifested Himself. The more we know and love Christ, the more we know and love God.

And it is only by increasing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ that the innate darkness of our hearts and minds can be illuminated and thus be transformed from darkness to light. Let us come to the Light freely —

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

—N.M. 8/61 Berean