



*⁶⁷ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, ⁶⁸ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, ⁶⁹ And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; ⁷⁰ As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: ⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; ⁷² To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; ⁷³ The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, ⁷⁴ That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. ⁷⁶ And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; ⁷⁷ To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, ⁷⁸ Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the **dayspring¹ from on high** hath visited us, ⁷⁹ To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. ⁸⁰ And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel. (Luke 1:67-80)*

ADVENT and CHRISTMAS are the most wonderful seasons of the year. The whole world seems to fall under the spell of friendly greetings and warm affection during these seasons – even those who have no earthly idea of the meaning of the two seasons, or the cause for the outpouring of near-filial love. It seems that the clouds are parted to reveal a glorious Sunrise, and that is most particularly what the season is all about – the Coming of the Light and Life of Man, our Lord Jesus Christ! He is the Dayspring from on High to which the prophet, Zacharias, refers in the leading text above. Even in lands where the Gospel has received little acceptance, the Christmas décor is obvious everywhere. Unfortunately, they have learned the materialistic side of Christmas and not of the One behind the Season. The Jesus Christ of Christmas has not been learned well in the outer frontiers of Christianity, and, tragically, has been forgotten in heartlands once so bold in preaching the Gospel that men willingly surrendered their lives for the privilege of Christ.

The first great Advent morning was the beginning of days at Creation. *¹ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ² 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. (Gen 1:1-2)* There had existed a night of eternity on this earthen sphere until that first

¹ Dayspring – Dawn or Daybreak

night in which The Spirit of God *moved upon the face of the waters*. This, insofar as mortal man can comprehend, was the BEGINNING – at least the beginning of all that we can see, hear, and feel. Genesis 1 & 2 describe the first night upon the earth. But then what did God do? ³*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.* ⁴*And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.* ⁵*And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.* (Gen 1:3-5)

We can see from this text that God began His Creation in darkness – it began with the first night. Then God, by the power of His Word, spoke Light into being upon the earth. First, there was darkness, then light! What was the source of this Light? It was not the sun, moon, or stars, for they were not created until the fourth day. God Himself was the Light. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the Master Artist who set the world to life and Light. ¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* ²*The same was in the beginning with God.* ³*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* ⁴*In him was life; and the life was the light of men.* (John 1:1-4)

We do not often relate the Advent and Christmas story to the Gospel of St. John, Chapter 1, but it is the heart and soul of John's entire Gospel. ⁹*That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* ¹⁰*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* ¹¹*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* ¹²*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* ¹³*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* ¹⁴*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* (John 1:9-14)

Observe the 'evening' and the 'morning' were the first day. In biblical times, and still in the computations of the Jewish religion, day begins in darkness and ends in light. So is every work of God. Can you imagine the ambient Light emanating from our Lord on that first day? There could have been NOTHING hidden from that Light. Every day of Creation began in darkness, and ended with Light. Our lives are the same.

So our Lord is the Source and Generator of Light – the Dayspring from on High. The source of energy of the Sun is tremendous and beyond our understanding, but it all descends from the Maker of Light and Life Itself. ¹⁹*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.* (2 Peter 1:19)

It is true the foreordained Will of God has been working from before the first dawn of light on a darkened world; but so has His promise of a Redeemer been steadily moving to fulfillment beyond the veil of time since eternity for He is the Lamb of God without spot or blemish sacrificed from before the Creation of the World. That Light that first shed its beams on a world without form and immersed in steep darkness is now available to be shed upon the souls of men on new mornings of personal salvation in Christ.

Just as the day breaks to the singing of birds and droplets of dew on the roses, so the Holy Singing of the Heavenly Choir resounded from the remote reaches of the Universe at the words of Zacharias as his lips echoed the prophecies of the ages: *whereby the DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.*

Light itself has peculiar qualities about which we have studied before. For one thing, Light is constant and absolute. If Einstein is correct, Light is the only absolute known to man traveling precisely at 186,000 miles per second regardless the vantage point of the observer. Light does not bend, but travels always in a straight line – a

quality characteristic of its Maker, the Lord. Light reveals both beauty and danger. It reveals to us the dangers in the way, and the pleasant lanes of life that are good and wholesome to our souls. Natural light contains the seven colors in the rainbow; but joined together, white is the product. Light, like the Spirit of God, cannot be seen with the naked eye – only the objects it reveals to our eyes.

A tiny light is more powerful than a whole house of darkness. A tiny candle can disperse the darkness in the room from every corner. Sin is the tool of Satan but, like the snail, sin cannot tolerate light. The snail hurries to the shelter of a rock at the first hint of sunrise. During the cover of darkness, the snail devours the garden labors of others, but disappears with coming light. Neither can sin, or its Devil, tolerate the slightest hint of light. This is why dictators are so adamant to destroy any vestiges of free speech. But *He who is in you is stronger than he who is in the world.* (1 John 1:5)

The world was NOTHING until the Light of God appeared upon it. He is not only Light, but Life as well. But the Light is what gives force to our faith! *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* (1 John 1:5)

Before the coming of Emmanuel, men had hope and promise for Light upon which to hang their faith; but now, we have the Light itself to lighten our path. As the great old minister, Alexander MacLaren describes it: *Now darkness, all the world over, is the emblem of three things -- ignorance, impurity, sorrow. And all men who are rent away from Jesus Christ, or on whom His beams have not yet fallen, this text tells us, have that triple curse lying upon them.* May I be so bold as to claim that ignorance of things Holy and righteous has never been so prevalent in the land that I love as today. Men will believe anything that a pretentious man says and nothing that God has said. To admit the veracity and applicability of the Word of God requires a certain change in outlook on life. This, the detractors do not desire to see. They prefer to believe that they themselves are the captains of their souls and masters of their fate instead of an Almighty God.

I may claim the same is true of impurity of life, manners, and common decency in America. Sex, drugs, infidelity in marriage, lying for advantage, dishonesty – all of these hold a tighter rein today on the American society than Christian morality has forever held up until the last four generations.

The latter point, SORROW, speaks for itself. The joy of life and accomplishment that once marked the vibrant youth of America has turned to drugs, alcohol, depression, misery, and shiftlessness.

The answer to our modern dilemma is as close as the Bible in the lower drawer of most men's bedroom dressers. Reach for it! Read it! Digest it! And let its health-giving Words become the nourishment for every cell in your spiritual body!