



AND that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. ¹³ Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. ¹⁴ But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. (Romans 13:11-14)

There are differences between toadstools and mushrooms, but similarities as well. Toadstools love dark, moist places – so do mushrooms. Both are fungi. Toadstools are deadly poison, but most mushrooms are edible. Neither relishes the light of day so very much, and both feed on the refuse of the world. Some Christians could be described either as Toadstool Christians, or as Mushroom Christians. The difference in these two types of Christians is that of function and visibility. The Toadstool Christian is that member who is never satisfied with anything in the Church. He would divide the assembly over the color of carpet, drapes, or stain-glass windows. He is contentious and poisonous to the church body politic. He is just as dead spiritually as ever he was before joining the church. He may never quote Scripture except in a vitriolic attack on others.

The mushroom Christian is a bit different. This Church member still loves the darkness more than light. His tastes are more common to those of the world than of the Kingdom in music, in worship and in lifestyles. He is not dead, but he is not very much alive either. Our Lord would probably classify the Mushroom Christian as “luke-warm.” He is not poison, but neither does he provide much in the way of life to the Church. He

will mostly consume whatever doctrine is preached from the pulpit without ever confirming its veracity by Holy Scripture as did the Bereans. He may be found in the margins of light but abhors the bright Sun of Truth too plainly shared. A merciful God may admit such a one into Heaven, but in my opinion, his prospects are almost nil. He never argues the Word of God because he is not very much familiar with it.

There are many examples in nature of creatures that love darkness more than light. Certainly, Lucifer and his entourage of fallen angels could not tolerate the gleaming lights of Heaven and were cast out. His followers here on earth will not even enjoy the benefit of being cast out – for they will never gain admittance to Heaven in the first place.

Though the wicked of this world may proudly proclaim their false victories over decency and morality, those very ‘victories’ are nothing more than milestones of their own defeat. They stand powerless before a just and indignant God – indignant at the very odor of sin, and just in executing retribution for those who choose darkness over Light.

Consider one creature which illustrates most plainly the nature of the wicked – the snail. In making such reference, I do denigrate or stereotype the entire snail population; but I only use their ‘lifestyle’ as an illustration. Some snails are doubtlessly upstanding of character. What is the nature of the snail compared to the wicked. ‘Slothfulness’ is a major characteristic that applies to both snail and sinner. The snail, like the wicked, prefer not to labor for their living. Instead, they devour the labors of others in the garden. The snail, like the wicked, much prefer darkness to light. This is brought out in Holy Scripture: ⁸ *As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.* ⁹ *Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.* ¹⁰ *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.* ¹¹ *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.* (Psalm 58:8-11)

Now, the snail, like the wicked, melts before the bright light of the Sun. Early, before sunrise, you can detect their silver tracks away from the source of their stolen booty heading for the shelter and darkness of a stone. The light of the sun will melt the snail just as the Light of God’s Word will terrify and melt away the wicked in society. The people of God are called to be “salt & light.” Both of these will destroy both the snail and the sinner. The reprobate sinner cannot abide his wicked deeds to be exposed to the light of day, and the living salt of God’s Word, as exemplified in the life and example of His people, will melt the sinner’s presence from society at large.

The one element that unifies the profligate sinner, the snail, and the toadstool is the element of darkness. In the main sense, darkness is a condition, not an element. It is the absence of light, not the presence of darkness. Darkness is without force or presence whatsoever. Just as heat is measured in degrees down to absolute cold (absence of heat altogether), so is light measured in the degree or absence of its presence. The heart that is cold does not have a measure of coldness in it – it simply has an absence of loving warmth. Sin is a Light-stealer, and a heat stealer. It lures the heart away from the hearth of Love and the Light of Truth so that both are lost to the sinner.

Darkness is often the judgment of God against a dull and deaf people to His Word. In referring to the unbelieving Jews in comparison to those gentiles who would believe, our Lord issued this judgment: *But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* (Matthew 8:12) God is Light, and the absence of God is utter darkness!

Read the enormity of God’s judgment against the unredeemed: ⁶ *And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, **he hath reserved in everlasting***

chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. ⁷ Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. ⁸ Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. ⁹ Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. ¹⁰ But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. ¹¹ Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. ¹² These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; ¹³ Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; ***wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*** (Jude 1:6-13)

Not only does every moon and planet have its own orbit, but even every star has a course laid out in its respective galaxy for its orbital path of travel. But wandering stars (which are meteors) have no such orbit. They aimlessly speed through the heavens until they encounter the atmosphere of some great body and are burned up in that atmosphere. They are stone hearted bodies with no light at all except the light created by their destruction. They truly do represent the fallen creature in God's Creation and are rightly called 'Falling Stars.' The only light the profligate sinner will see in Hell will be the light created by his own burning.

Remember the pervasive and smothering darkness that fell upon the land of Egypt when they refused to obey the Word of the Lord. How horrible is such darkness in which man cannot see his own hand six inches before his face!

There are two kinds of darkness – the first is an absence of light which may be beyond the ability of the observer to remedy; and the second is willful blindness to the Light in which men shield their eyes from it to continue their dark deeds. This latter was the form of darkness that doomed the Jewish rulers and priest when they intentionally denied the Son of God and His Messiahship. To be intentionally blind to Light is far worse than not being exposed at all to it.

Of what kind of Church are you a member? Does your church harbor Toadstools and Mushrooms, or does it facilitate the growing of wheat by the Light of the Son?