



6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. 7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD. (Psalms 112:6-7)

### The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

#### *The Collect.*

**L**ORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The opening of the Collect (using Gelasius translation) formerly used the honorific: "O Lord of Host" as its introductory opening; however, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer referenced the Lord as described in James 1:17 - "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

This Collect asks four things of God which we are incapable of doing ourselves: 1) "*Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name*"; 2) "*increase in us true religion*"; 3) "*nourish us with all goodness*"; and, 4) "*keep us*". We can neither receive, nor retain, the love of God's name without the efficacious working of the Holy Spirit therein. We are helpless to supply a thing of which we can claim no ownership. The love that permeates our hearts is from the overflowing Fountain and Source of Love which is in God through Jesus Christ. Like our bodies, we cannot add a single inch to the stature of our spirits and souls. All of the increase we enjoy in knowledge, wisdom, and understanding comes from that same Source from which the Love of God overflows. Our nourishment is forever from God if it is wholesome and good. We daily partake of the Bread of Heaven given by that Giver of all good things found in the Word of God which is preserved for us as a gift to all who believe. Who is our Keeper? Why, it is the Lord Himself. He is our Good Shepherd to keep us in the good way. He is the Rock of our Salvation to keep us from drifting. He is the Ark into which we flee for salvation in the day of ruin. And He is much more...so much more that we cannot mention all in the scope of a short devotion. Since He is the Word in total, He is also the Author and Giver of Life itself, and the Preserver of Life in Love.

6 *Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.* The righteous of the Lord are steady as a well-steered ocean vessel on the seas of life. The Captain knows well the course, and His Compass is true to the North Throne of God. Those who are everlastingly 'remembered' by God cannot be moved from that faith and grace which has saved them, and preserved them.

7 *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.* The immovable North Star has long been used by seafaring vessels as a constant reference and guide across the vast oceans. The navigation of the vessel is based on clear vision and physical sight; but there is a means by which the soul of the Christian may be guided in both light and darkness by means of an indwelling compass of the heart. That compass is the Holy Ghost. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.* (Isaiah 26:3)

I hope you will remember the immortal lines of a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins, titled **GOD KNOWS:**

*And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:*

*"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."*

*And he replied:*

*"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.*

*That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."*

*So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.*

*And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.*

As an illustration of the unseen change in the character of the heart of a Christian when they have received Christ as Lord, I took a metal rod of 36 inch length and oriented it to magnetic north. I also deviated the point to align with the magnetic axis of the earth at the 30 degree parallel. I struck the rod sharply with a hammer. The rod became sufficiently magnetized to attract the needle of the compass to a far greater extent than previous to being so stricken. The object was to demonstrate that there is a fundamental change in the nature of the heart when God comes in through faith and the grace of Christ. Though it is composed of the same cell tissue, it has a different nature following such an experience. I also took metals of various elements and scattered on a table. Those made of iron were attracted immediately to a strong magnet I swung over the table. Those metals of copper and lead remained unmoved. God recognizes His own nature in the natures of the hearts that have been 'magnetized' by His Love.

A sailing vessel may be many hundreds of tons. It may carry a large cargo and take on a great draught of water. Its sails are extremely important for they provide the vessel with the means of movement based on prevailing winds. When errors in navigation are discovered, the sails, like our motivations, can be adjusted to correct to a right course. The ship's structure is also vitally important. It must be made of sturdy materials and its design commensurate to cutting through the blasts and billows of the storm.

But there is one device on the ship that is of far greater importance than the quality of canvas comprising the sails, or the species of timber defining its hull. That device is the magnetic compass. Though the captain of the vessel may use a sextant under clear skies for navigation, it is worthless under a cloudy sky. But the magnetic compass performs under every condition of weather or light. It may temporarily deviate when attracted by a large mass of metal on a passing ship, or by the electrifying impulses of the lightning from a storm, but it will always move back to magnetic north. That magnetic compass is so very similar to our Conscience, guided by the Holy Spirit, with which God has equipped us. It may be attracted temporarily to the passing things of this world; or it may deviate from true course briefly in the storms of life; but it will always return to its true reading and point the way to safe harbor of the soul.

When our hearts are fixed and trusting in the Lord, we may waver at moments of temptation. But that will only be a rare and temporary deviation. Our hearts, as did David's and Peter's, return to the true course of our love and safety in Christ. A heart whose foundation is that Rock of Christ is stayed and immovable. It may shake with the blast of ill winds against its walls, but it is fixed in place and cannot be moved. Do you have such a heart, reader?