



Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

The Collect.

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things which thou commandest; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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)

God began, before there was a single eye to see, His Creation in darkness. A night of eternity past was ended when God spoke the words, "*Let there be light!*" and He spoke it in the nothingness of space that had never before existed, as well. That past night of eternity was suddenly ended with the Presence of the Triune God in a Space-Time Continuum that likewise was a new thing issuing from the Mind of God. But God inculcated His mark of Eternity upon His new Creation by combining night and day in alternate sequence – the Night to reflect Eternity Past, and the Day to mirror Eternity Future – for God is a coming Light, too. We are reminded, by His Work and His Word, of the unfathomable beauty, love, and power of that Mind which is full of LIGHT. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 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. 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. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the **evening and the morning were the first day.***(Gen 1:1-5) Note how God concludes EVERY subsequent day of Creation with the words, "*.....and the evening and the morning was the day.*"

God has created all of the physical universe to be limited in time and endurance. The earth itself, according to the Scriptures as well as the second law of thermodynamics, wears thin as a garment. *And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment* (Heb 1:10-11) But God did not create the soul of man to perish. He has given life eternal to every soul; yet, the destination is widely at variance. Some will, by their own actions in rejecting God, be cast into the fires of Hell while others, who have sought and found the Light of Christ, shall enjoy an eternity of fellowship with God and His people.

The whole of Creation has proceeded from a primordial darkness, gradually emerging into that Light that God has reserved for those who come to Him. The customary twelve hours of daylight was created as a temporary shadow of a greater and more grand day of Eternal Light. Just as God began each day of Creation in darkness (at night) so do we all travel a darkened path, with only nocturnal lights to guide us, in this life. The symbolism of our struggle is described in the poem of *San Juan de la Cruz*, as **The Dark Night of the Soul**. All on earth are born with those natures of sin and darkness passed on to us from Adam. We grope about as drunken men as we seek to find joy and comfort in a cold, dark world devoid of joy and true happiness. All of our efforts to improve our condition are pitifully hopeless. We yearn for an unseen Hand of Comfort, but know not from whence it cometh. At some point, we realize the Light is somewhere beyond and above us. God, through His grace and mercy, opens our eyes to Light just as He opened Hagar's eyes to the Fountain in the Wilderness. *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* (Isaiah 9:2) The Old Testament prophets and faithful looked, as did Abraham, to that coming Light of God, and found it in the fullness of time in the Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Father knew full well that the genius of His Creation (MAN) must have a free mind and a free will if He would be able to love his fellows as well as God. He knew full well, too, that such a mind and will, constantly enticed and intrigued by the world and its Prince, would not be capable of living in full obedience to the Hand that made him. So in the Council of Heaven, convened in Eternity Past, God prepared for our salvation by grace, and not by law, through the agency of His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ! As the men from Adam to Mary and Joseph slumbered and stumbled in the meager lights of promise and hope – those lesser lights of the moon and stars – they came to know that their only hope must come from God and not their ability to be righteous under the terms of the Law of God. Now, would burst upon their souls that Light described in Malachi 4:2 - *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.* This is the same Light described in Isaiah 9:2 above and Matthew 4:16, 17 - *The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.***

Deserts are desolate places. In the desert, water is rare, and vegetation scarce.

There are few comforts to be had in the desert. But when travelling for hundreds of miles in the deserts of Iran (Persia), I discovered that the night stars were more brilliant and aided in my travel by illuminating my path than in more fertile lands. So the stars, especially the Morning Star of God, aid in our transport across our dark night of spiritual enlightenment. But what of the morning? What of that brilliant and unmatched Daystar when it arises – the Sun of Righteousness? It leaves no shadow of doubt or dismay. Christ is truly the Daystar from on high! While men once walked by mere hope and faith, we now have "*a more sure word of prophecy*". In fact, we have the witness of the accomplished promise in Christ. If that Daystar which is Christ has arisen in your hearts, then those hearts could not be more full of light. There will be no dark corners, and no doubts, as to the path we must walk. The time comes when He is no longer the Bright and Morning Star only, but the brilliant Daystar (Sun) that vanquishes every shadow and every doubt. He came to my heart in His brightness in the tender hours of the morning – long before the created sun could arise. He lighted my heart and my mind, and made me see His beauty this early dawn of morning. He does so for all who place their trust in Him. Have you done so, dear Reader?