

When God Shines His Light

A famous preacher born 300 years ago beckons humanity out of darkness to bask in the life and light of Christ.

It is true that every good gift comes from God as much as light comes from the sun. Even our common and daily mercies come down from God as though they were immediately rained down in an indescribable manner out of heaven.

The apostle James, who writes to the believing Jews scattered amongst the Gentiles, takes notice of one thing, particularly wherein this spiritual Fountain of Light differs from the sun, the corporeal fountain of light.

Our sun rises and sets and is subject to variable revolutions. But God is a sun fixed in the hemisphere, shining without interruption. In God is no variableness or shadow of turning.

He is a sun without turning. He is light without shadows, nothing but light: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

It was common in the Hebrew language, when setting forth the excellence of a thing, to speak of it in the plural number. So when James said "the Father of lights" and not "the Father of light," it may signify that God is the fountain of all sorts of lights.

Of these various kinds of lights, God is the fountain of them all.

The Light of the World

God is the Father of Jesus Christ, the brightness of His glory and the Light of the World.

The creation of the world and the communication of God's goodness to the creatures are not the first communications of God. The eternal communication of God's essence is Jesus Christ.

Christ is the light that lights every man that comes into the world. It is He who makes manifest the Father, who reveals to us the divine nature, and makes known the mind and will of God and discovers the heavenly world. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. 5:13).

The Light of Nature

God is the Father of Material Light, the light which we behold with our eyes.

Light is one of the most wonderful things, if not indeed the most excellent and marvelous thing we behold in the material world. It is indeed a wonderful work enough to convince any atheist of the being, power and wisdom of God.

He said in the first creation, "Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). Before that, the world was overwhelmed in perfect darkness, but God spoke and the light shined forth.

It was God who created the luminaries of heaven. It is He who gives the sun its light and details its orb in golden beams. It is He who makes the stars glisten and adorns the spheres. He made Orion and the chambers of the south.

If God should withhold His influence, the sun would go out. Like a candle, its light would immediately die away, and the stars would cease their shining, and the world would be left in its primitive darkness and obscurity.

The Light of Comfort

God is the Father of the Light of True Comfort and Joy. In Scripture, sorrow, grief and distress are often called darkness, while comfort is compared to light. God is the only

author of this light. Therefore, He is called "the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3).

There is no true comfort to be found anywhere else but in God. There are a great many other things that men hope to find comfort in.

They seek it in luxury and in sensual pleasures, but it is not to be found in any of these things.

God is that spring from whence issues the pure stream of comfort where the thirsty may satisfy their longing souls and the weary may find rest. This fountain is an ocean without shores or bottom, enough to satisfy the most capacious and enlarged desires.

When God shines into the heart, He makes a difference. It is a difference like that in an atmosphere darkened with clouds and disturbed with tempests, compared to an atmosphere where the sun brightly shines on a calm and clear day.

The Light of Glory

God is the Author of the Light of Glory that shines in the world of light where there is no night, nor darkness, nor shadow.

Heaven is filled with a glorious light in comparison of which the light of this world is as darkness: "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Rev. 21:11).

God is the sun that shines in heaven; they have no other sun: "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light" (Rev. 22:5).

The light that will be given to the souls of the glorified saints will be a most clear manifestation of God's majesty and beauty. They shall see God as He is.

I remember reading of a Protestant in Spain who was three years kept in a dungeon and never saw the sun. When he was brought out to be put to death and saw the sun, the light greatly affected him.

He wondered how humanity could worship any other but the Maker of that glorious creation. And indeed this one work of God—the sun—is a greater testimony of the being and glory of God than a thousand miracles.

Solomon takes notice that the sun is a sweet and pleasant thing to behold.

But if it be pleasant to behold the glory of the sun, is not the glory of Him who made the sun much more pleasant and admirable?

Therefore, when we behold the sun, let us consider that there we behold the shadow of God's glory. In the morning, when you awake and behold the light, consider that you behold a fresh manifestation of the lovely glory of God.

When you see the sun lifting up its head over the mountains, consider the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness.

God's Beacon of Light

Let those who are in darkness come to God for light. Those who are in the darkness of affliction, you have heard that God is the Author of All True Comfort.

Now you know where to go when sorrows and afflictions surround you. You may at any time go to a healing spring that affords such sweet water as is an effectual remedy against all grief and sorrow. You need not live in darkness while there is such a sun that shines.

Whatever your grief and sorrow is, God has sufficient consolation for you. He is able to make persons rejoice in fiery flames and to keep them so that their hair will not be

singed in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace (see Dan. 3:27).

What a doleful world it would be for us if the sun should finally set and rise no more upon us.

We should not only be deprived of the light of the sun, but of the moon and stars, also of the light of candles and all other light, and be cast in absolute darkness. So that we could not see one another, could not see the ground or our houses or anything at all.

But he who is spiritually blind is blind in things that are of infinitely greater concern. It is exceedingly dangerous to dwell in such darkness. He who walks without a guide in natural darkness is in danger of stumbling or falling and wounding himself.

But he who walks in spiritual darkness is in continual danger of stumbling upon the dark mountains of death and of being led astray by the devil and of falling into the pit of hell.

Natural, corporeal light is the most beautiful thing that we behold in the visible world. How much more excellent is spiritual light. This divine light is capable to fill your soul with the most substantial, satisfying joys.

If you have it in your soul, it is of that nature that it will change you into the same image, make you partake of that light in yourself and cause you also to shine.

Consider the benefit of this type of spiritual life.

It is of use not only to instruct us in the most important and excellent truth and to lead and conduct us in the way of wisdom and prudence, and to our own happiness, but it also gives life to the soul as the rays of the sun don't only give light, but also quicken and enliven things, causing the trees to grow and bringing forth the grass, and causing things to blossom and bear fruit, so their spiritual light enlivens the

soul and therefore is called the “light of life” (see John 8:12).

Wherefore, remain no longer in darkness, but come to God, the Author and Fountain of Marvelous Light.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) is known for his sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” which came to define hellfire-and-brimstone preaching. But he was also a lover of nature, a missionary to the Housatonic American Indians in Massachusetts and a brilliant thinker of the Enlightenment.

Excerpt from *The Blessings of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*, copyright © 2003. Used by permission of Broadman & Holman Publishers. For more information about this book, please visit www.broadman.com, or contact by phone (1-800-251-3225) or mail (One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234).