

“O Send Thy Light Forth and Thy Truth”

“*Oh, send Thy light forth and Thy truth:*” this is the fulness of the desire and the prayer of the spiritual man. Darkness not only covers the earth, but broods on the pilgrim’s way. He is a son of light and walks by faith in that light, but his walk is in darkness, as saith the prophet:

“*Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God.*” (Isa. 1:10).

We trust in God who dwells in light and is the Light, but our trust is exercised in a time and in a place of darkness. The darkness is oppressive. God has spoken, but His hand is hidden: His voice is silent: His power is quiescent. Men do as they please without interference.

“*The righteous perish: the godly man ceaseth.*”

“*He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.*”

Men do evil a hundred times with no evil consequences:

“*Therefore the hearts of the sons of men are set in them to do evil.*”

The lovers of God and man are, in such circumstances, like the hart that David speaks of: the hart panting in a dry and thirsty land. They long for the refreshment that will come with the manifestation of the power and presence and authority of God. They exclaim with Isaiah—

“*Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down . . . There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee, for Thou hast hid Thy face from us.*”

This is only another way of saying—

“*Oh, send Thy light forth and Thy truth.*”

It is the consuming desire of those who love God and are waiting for Him. It may be said He has already done so. Yes, in the partial form that faith requires. His word is a light to the feet and a lamp to the path in the midst of the darkness. This is something exciting intense gratitude, but it is not enough to meet the desire of those who “*wait for God more than they that watch for the morning.*” They have heard of the glory of the Lord and this is gladness to their hearts; but there is no satisfaction to them till they see the glory of the Lord in the land of the living, —even filling the earth, as God has promised, even “*as the waters cover the sea.*” For this they pray continually: and their prayer is not vain. It pleases God to be asked for the things He has promised.

“*The prayer of the righteous is His delight.*”

Their very conversation is a sweet odour to Him. We learn this from Malachi, that—

“*The Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name: and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.*”

“The Lord will fulfil the desire of the righteous: He will hear their prayer.”

Their prayer is—

“Oh, send Thy light forth and Thy truth.”

“Blessed are they,” says Jesus, *“that hunger and thirst after righteousness: they shall be filled.”*

God’s manifested light and truth will burst upon the path of their darkness. The sun will rise and the darkness will flee. There will be healing in his pure beams.

“Let them be guides to me.”

“Let me be delivered from this body of sin and death wherein a law is at work bringing me into captivity through weakness. Let me share the glorious light and liberty of the spirit-body wherein I shall be controlled by the Spirit in every thought and motion of my being. Now, I see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I walk by faith with trembling steps: then I shall stand in the full vision of the glory of God unabashed. Now I serve in tribulation, in weakness, on probation—in the fainting and failing of the flesh which is but a wind that passeth away. Then I shall stand in His presence and see His face and serve with His servants in the full light of the Holy City *‘having the glory of God like a stone most precious, even a jasper stone, clear as crystal.’*”

The present application (*“let them be guides to me”*) is in preparation for this. It is of vast importance to us at present. If we are not guided by the light and the Truth now, to the extent to which they have already been *“sent forth,”* we shall have a poor affinity for them in the day of their greater intensity. It is the men who are *“guided”* by the Truth now that will be sharers of the glory then. What is this state of being guided by the Truth but a submitting to the direction of the Truth. The dictates of the Truth are repugnant to the mere children of nature. Paul says,

“The carnal mind is enmity against God.”

We see it in society around us. What is this carnal mind but the mind resulting from the operation of the brain flesh without enlightenment. We see this mind in every variety of development—mere natural mentality acting upon the objects of nature—upon what can be seen, felt, tasted, and physically enjoyed: mentality not open to the deep reason of things: insensible to God’s existence: shut off from all knowledge of what God has already done in the management of the earthy, and from all faith of the glorious purpose He has revealed. To a mind so moulded, the things of the Spirit are distasteful—worse, they are hateful, while the things of the flesh are congenial. The service of God is a hateful myth: the service of natural desire, a delightful reality. Christ’s description of the case is as pithy as it is simple and true:

“They savour not the things that be of God but those that be of men.”

Paul’s description is almost similar:

“They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”

The two classes necessarily find themselves mutually incompatible.

“The world will hate you,” said Jesus.

It is inevitable. The world loves its own set, those who live and work by the world's loves and principles. It has nothing but detestation for those whose separation is a reflection on its wisdom. Christ's words in prayer to the Father define the situation exactly:

"I have given them Thy Word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

There is a constant natural tendency to chafe and wince under this incompatibility—a constant tendency to get rid of the disagreeableness by conformity to the world in which we live. This is a tendency with which the man of God is at constant war. The warfare is arduous, but there is no surrender. *"Let them be guides to me"* is the spiritual man's motto. The words of David are the words of every son of God:

"I thought on my ways, I turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy commandments . . . I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts . . . Depart from me, ye evil doers: I will keep the commandments of my God . . . I am thy servant. Give me understanding that I may know Thy testimonies. It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law. I love Thy commandments above gold. I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for Thy commandments. I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord: and Thy Law is my delight."

How could men animated by such sentiments be in league with a world that knows not God and cares not for His Word, and has no faith in His purpose, and no regard for His proprietary rights in the universe? It is a moral impossibility. Any attempt to blend the two must end in failure. It is far better for our few days on the earth to be *"strangers with God"* (to use David's expression) and find everlasting inheritance therein with Him, when the hour of His promise arrives, than to be friends and citizens with the world for a short time, to be blown away with the chaff in His indignation when the day comes for the judgment appointed.

"And bring me to Thy holy hill, even where Thy dwellings be. Then will I to God's altar go, to God my chiefest joy."

We may take this as broadly as the subject admits of. The full breadth is of the Spirit's own indication. Christ is the altar in the final significance of that Mosaic institution. So we learn from Hebrews 13:10, and other places. On him we lay ourselves for offering and consumption by Spirit-fire—morally now; physically afterwards. The flesh changed by Spirit is the process at both stages; but the completeness of the process is not realised till we stand before him in the joy and glory of the final transformation—when, no longer flesh, but one spirit with the altar-Christ, we come to God in the full rapture of an actual reciprocal communion through Christ, *"the Way, the Truth, and the Life."* This will not be till His holy hill is manifested as the place of His dwelling, in fulfilment of Moses and the prophets from the beginning. The ecstasy of communion in that day must remain an impossible experience till then. We see it afar off, so far as sensation goes; but faith contemplates it as a reality that will be attained in due course. And this contemplation is a present source of strength. The sense of joy to come is a cordial amid our present drearinesses. That David should speak of the harp in this connection is natural:

"Yea, God, my God, Thy name to praise, my harp I will employ."

David in this attitude may be taken as a type of the great multitudes seen by John in vision *"harping with their harps"*—of whom David will be one. John heard their voices as if it had been the roar of many waters and the sound of thunder—*"the voice of harpers harping with their harps."* They sang *"a new song"* which none could sing but the members of the 144,000 standing on Zion's hill. The reason was that none but they were the subjects of the salvation which their song celebrated. The chief

ingredient of their joyful song was the very feature standing forth so prominently in the Psalm before. It was not mere gleefulness at escape from danger and pain. There was all the joy that could possibly animate human breasts on this head; but above and below and around it was the all suffusing prevalence of a pure and bright and ennobling sentiment unknown to mere human satisfaction—rapturous gratitude to the eternal God, springing from a clear and strong discernment of His relation to the deliverance accomplished.

“Salvation and glory, and honour and power (be ascribed) unto the Lord our God.”

A voice came out of the throne, saying,

“Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”

Thus to praise God is the climax of the high calling in Christ. It is not mere sound: a crowd of barbarians can make a great and jubilant noise when they are glad, though no such crowd ever made such a joyful tempest sound as the multitude *“redeemed unto God from the earth.”* It is sound as the appropriate and measured and perfect expression of the sentiment filling all hearts in that assembly: praise resulting from clear discernment and hearty love. This clear discernment and hearty love find in this praise the *“chiefest joy.”* This joy is the salt and flavour of it. Sinners find stimulus in brass bands, and the stir of public occasions. In that case, it is the mere excitement of powerful self-contemplation. In the case of the *“musical festival”* that John saw in vision—which was the revelation of a coming reality, the finest raptures will be blended with the highest flights of reverence and admiration directed to the only reverend and the admirable—the underived power and life, and wisdom, and goodness of the Creator, upholder and possessor of heaven and earth. But it will never be unconnected with the altar: the altar will always be the central idea. Christ the head and the medium of approach—Christ in whom alone forgiven sinners stand accepted with the Eternal who is too terribly great to surrender an atom of his prerogative: though too kind to forget that we are dust. It will always be a memory to the forefront that in him sin was condemned: that through him, we have access by favour through faith: that in his blood, we stand washed from our sins. Therefore it will always be in place to sing—

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, who hath redeemed us to God by his blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation.”

Thus on the (mystical) hill of God, *“even where His dwellings be,”* will we *“to God’s (mystical) altar go”*—to God, our great, and thrilling and everlasting *“joy.”* In Him is the fountain of light and life. In His light we shall see life. We shall drink of the rivers of His pleasure, and be satisfied for ever. Why, then, should we be troubled during these few days of trouble and probation? This is the application David makes of the facts.

“Why art thou then cast down, my soul; what should discourage thee: and why with vexing thoughts art thou disquieted in me? Still trust in God for Him to praise, good cause I yet shall have: He of my countenance is the health. My God that me doth save.”

This is making a reasonable and profitable use of the Truth. It is a necessary use. So long as we are in this frail and fainting nature, we need rallying. We need reminding of the Truth. We are liable to sink in the *“slough of despond.”* We are liable to forget that the weeping and present distress endures but a night: that songs come with the morning: that our light affliction is but for a moment, and is not worthy to be considered in view of the weighty glory which will have no end.

One consideration more, and the relief is complete: the affliction that presses on us so heavily in the days of probation will not only end and never return, but it is a necessity for the time being. Such is the fact whatever difficulty we may have in feeling it while the shoe pinches. It "*worketh out for us*" the glory that is coming. Such is Paul's expression, and such experience shows to be the truth. Men can only be fitted for divine use by trouble—not that trouble alone will do it, but trouble will do it when other conditions are right. Where God is known and believed, and loved, trouble acts the humbling and the chastening part. How long the action is needful, God is Judge. There is nothing for it but to submit ourselves to His hand, prepared heroically to do our part in all circumstances, at the same time ready to accept whatever affliction He may permit, or cause to spring in our paths, knowing that "*He doth not willingly afflict;*" and that the end of all His dealings with us will fill our mouths with laughter, gratitude and praise.

Taken from: - "Seasons of Comfort" Robert Roberts