

Sun of Righteousness - Devotional

THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS A DEVOTIONAL

The last prophet of the Old Testament wrote "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My Name the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS will rise with healing in His wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall." (Mal 4:1-2) And so the Old Testament closes with the prophecy of the day of the Lord and the coming of the Sun of Righteousness. The New Testament ends with the testimony "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the BRIGHT MORNING STAR." (Rev 22:16) Who promises that to those who "hold fast until I come... who overcome (not a special group but all believers - see 1Jn 5:4-5)... who do my will to the end... I will give the MORNING STAR" (Rev 2:25-28) Christ Himself as our eternal possession! Hallelujah! The prophet Daniel adds "those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." (Da 12:3) Dear tried and true saint remember that though we live in a time of great spiritual darkness, the MORNING STAR heralds the SUN RISING with healing in His wings. In the meantime, we must hold fast to (and be held fast by) "the prophetic word made more sure, to which we do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the MORNING STAR arises in our hearts." (2Pe 1:19) The darker the night becomes the brighter the MORNING STAR shines and the nearer must be the hour of the fulfillment of the pledge of the Sun of Righteousness to come again. This blessed event, the Second Coming, is the hope of the church, the hope of Israel and the hope of the world. Just as the sun drives away darkness and clouds, bringing light and joy, so the Sun of Righteousness will appear to forever dispel gloom, oppression, and injustice. "As the sun is full of light, the ocean full of water, Heaven full of glory, so may our hearts be full of Thee, O Sun of Righteousness." (A Puritan Prayer)

The One described as the **Sun of Righteousness** can be no other than Jesus Christ Himself to Whom the ends of the earth will sing "Glory to the Righteous One," (Isa 24:16), the "Righteous Branch of David shall spring forth" (Jer 33:15), the One Who "loves righteousness and justice" (Ps 33:5), the One Who brings healing in His wings causing the unrighteous to "become the righteousness of God in Him" (2Cor 5:21), for "by His doing (we) are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us... righteousness and sanctification and redemption." (1Cor 1:30) And at the end of this age the Sun of Righteousness will rise "to judge the world in righteousness" (Ps 96:13), and "all the arrogant and every evil doer will

be chaff." (Malachi 4:1) "In His days the righteous will flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon is no more," (Ps 72:7) and in that day "the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab 2:14) May our song ever be "Christ, Whose glory fills the skies, Christ, the true, the only Light, Sun of Righteousness, arise, Triumph o'er the shades of night, Dayspring from on high, be near, Daystar, in my heart appear." (C Wesley)

Spurgeon writes that while the Son of Righteousness rising with healing in His wings was "fulfilled once in the first advent of our glorious Lord, and will yet have a fuller accomplishment in his second advent, this gracious word is also for daily use. Is it dark time with you reader? Does the night deepen into a denser blackness? Still let us not despair: the Sun will yet rise. When the night is darkest, dawn is nearest. The Sun which will arise is of no common sort. It is the Sun—the Sun of Righteousness, Whose every ray is holiness. He Who comes to cheer us, comes in the way of justice as well as of mercy, comes to violate no law even to save us. Jesus displays the holiness of God as much as His love. Our deliverance, when it comes, will be safe because it is righteous. Our one point of inquiry should be—"Do we fear the Name of the Lord? Do we reverence the living God, and walk in His ways?" (Mal 4:2) Then for us the night must be short; and when the morning comes, all the sickness and sorrow of our soul will be over forever. Light, warmth, joy, and clearness of vision will come, and healing of every disease and distress will follow. Has Jesus risen upon us? Let us sit in the light of the Sun. Has He hidden His face? Let us wait for His rising. He will shine forth as surely as the sun." And while we wait we sing "Hail the heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings." (C. Wesley)

Ralph Erskine rightly said that "The sun in the sky is only a shadow of the Sun of Righteousness and of His glory." The sun is the great star of our galaxy but the Son's brilliance infinitely outshines the sun. Balaam prophesied of a Star, the Sun of Righteousness, declaring "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A **STAR** shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter (King) shall rise from Israel." (Nu 24:17) Habakkuk saw an incredible vision of the Sun of Righteousness rising declaring "His radiance is like the **SUNLIGHT**. He has rays flashing from His hand, and there is the hiding of His power." (Hab 3:4) The wise men asked "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His **STAR** in the east, and have come to worship Him." (Mt 2:2) Zacharias filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied of the coming of the Sun of Righteousness, saying "Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the **SUNRISE** (DAYSPRING - KJV) from on high shall visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace ("with healing in His wings")." (Luke 1:78-79) Peter, James and John saw Him on the mount "And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the **SUN**, and His garments became as white as light." (Mt 17:2) Paul was healed in a moment by the Sun of Righteousness when "at midday (he) saw on the way (to Damascus) a light from heaven, brighter than the **SUN**, shining all around." (Acts 26:13) John "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" and beheld the Sun of Righteousness testifying that "in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the **SUN** shining in its strength." (Rev 1:16) And because Jesus is the Sun

of Righteousness, John writes "the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining" (1Jn 2:8) and in that glorious day to come "the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb." (Rev 21:23) Hold on, dear storm-tossed child of God. The Sun of Righteousness will soon rise with healing in His wings! **"One day He's coming. O glorious day! O glorious day!"** (Song by Casting Crowns)

Spurgeon again applies the truths of **Sun of Righteousness** - "Believer, in the midst of plenty there is a famine if your Lord is absent. The sun may shine, but if Christ is hidden all your world is dark and it is night. Is the Bright and Morning Star gone and there is no other star to yield a ray of light in its place? What a howling wilderness this world is without our Lord! If we do not see Him our flowers wither, our enjoyable fruits decay, the birds stop singing, and storms overturn our hopes. All the lights of earth cannot produce daylight if the Sun of Righteousness is eclipsed. He is the Soul of our soul, the Light of our light (Jn 8:12), the Life of our life (Col 3:4). Dear believer, what would you do with the temptations and cares of this world if you did not have Him? What would you do when you awaken and prepare for the day's battle if you did not have Him? What would you do at night when you arrive home exhausted and weary if there were no door of fellowship between you and Christ? Blessed be His name, the Sun of Righteousness. He will not leave you. His promise is sure, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb 13:5 - Greek has 5 negatives!) When you think what life would be like without Him, it magnifies His preciousness." May our prayer daily be "Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear, It is not night if Thou be near; O may no earth-born cloud arise, To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes." (John Keble)

The Sun of Righteousness has come. He has risen from the grave! He is here. He has risen in the hearts of those who fear Him with a sense of reverence and awe! And He will come again "on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory" (Mt 24:30) and we will come with Him "clothed in fine linen, white and clean, on white horses" (Rev 19:14)! O glorious day! Indeed, the Sun of Righteousness has come and He has risen, shattering the power of sin and death that we might be justified by grace through faith in His glorious Gospel of peace (Eph 6:15). Then the Sun of Righteousness rose from the earth (Acts 1:9-11), sending us His Spirit, the Helper, the Spirit of Truth (Jn 15:26), that we might be sanctified and transformed from glory to glory, as with unveiled faces we behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (2Cor 3:18). And yet the best is yet to come for when the Sun of Righteousness rises with healing in His wings "we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." (1Jn 3:2) and "we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" for "this perishable will put on the imperishable and this mortal will put on immortality" (1Cor 15:51-54) Dear child of God, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Ro 8:18) Therefore "let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary," (Gal 6:9). Instead may God's Spirit grant us faith to wait for the LORD that we might gain new strength (exchange His strength for our weakness) and mount up with wings like eagles, able to run and not get tired, able to walk and not become weary (Isa 40:31), ever mindful that the Sun of Righteousness says "Yes, I am coming quickly." And so we cry "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus." (Rev 22:20)

NOTES BELOW ARE MISCELLANEOUS NOTES RELATED TO SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

These notes are not organized but were collected in order to prepare the discussion on the Sun of Righteousness.

Ironside - Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming as the Sun of Righteousness to dispel all the sin clouds of earth and to bring in the reign of everlasting righteousness. "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness" (Isa. 32:1). "In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Ps. 72:7). "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). That is the way the people of Israel were taught to look for Him. That is the aspect of His coming that is presented in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; they are practically all occupied with His coming again as the Sun of Righteousness to bring in the kingdom; that is, the coming of the Son of Man. That term always refers to His coming to the earth.

The Sun of Righteousness came first after 400 years of spiritual darkness with no word from God and He will come a second time when the world is mired in the deepest spiritual darkness. In that day the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings. In that day will be the full day of which Solomon speaks declaring "the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day." (Pr 4:18)

The Three Tenses of the Sun of Righteousness - He has come. He is here. He is coming again in glory! The SoR came first as the Lamb to die on Calvary and rise victoriously from the grave. The SoR is in this dark world, shining forth from His saints, who are like a city set on hill a light set on a hill. As they behold as in a mirror the glory of the Sun of Righteousness, they are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit (2Cor 3:18) The SoR shall come again, fulfilling Malachi's prophecy - for some it will be a day of burning (Mal 4:1), but for those who believe the gospel, who fear God and give Him the glory (Rev 14:7-8) it will be a day of perfect healing for when we see Him, we shall be like Him (1Jn 3:2). In that day when "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire" (2Thes 1:7), men "will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory." (Mt 24:30)

Jer 23:5 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.

Ralph Erskine - All good things in the world are only shadows of what is in Christ. Outward riches are but a shadow of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Outward life is only a shadow of him who is the way, the truth, and the life. Outward liberty is only a shadow of that freedom which is to be had in Christ, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36), meaning that no freedom is freedom indeed and in truth but this. Outward

rest is only a shadow of the rest that is to be had in him: "Come to me, ... and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). **The sun in the sky is only a shadow of the Sun of righteousness and of his glory.** Rivers and fountains are only shadows of his fullness who is the fountain of living waters. Plants and trees are only a shadow of the foliage of him who is the tree of life. All things that have any excellence in them are only shadows of him in whom all worthwhile qualities come to a common center. All the stars are only shadows of him who is the **bright and morning Star.**

Jonathan Edwards - The souls of true saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ. They are brought into perfect conformity to and union with him. Their spiritual conformity is begun while they are in the body, but when they see him as he is in heaven, then they become like him in another manner. That perfect sight will abolish all remains of deformity, disagreement, and sinful unlikeness, as all darkness is abolished before the blaze of the sun. It is impossible that the least degree of obscurity should remain before such light; so it is impossible the least degree of sin and spiritual deformity should remain before the beauty and glory of Christ. When saints see that Sun of righteousness, they themselves shine forth as little suns, without spot.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the **Dayspring** (NAS - **Sunrise**) from on high has visited us, 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Ps 84:10 For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God, Than dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

The SoR is the Light of the world. At the Creation God said "Let there be light," and there was light, as the Father willed, the Son spoke and the Spirit moved. In Heaven John declares that the redeemed have no "need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light." Yet how hard it is to realize that in the Manger was He that lighteth the many mansions on high, and was "The True Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Of no mere man could it be said that "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Life grows dark and dim, but the brightness of that Babe of Bethlehem never fades. The powers of darkness were hurled against Him, in His Life and in His Death, at the Manger, in the Garden, at the Cross, but they comprehended Him not, they conquered Him not; for Jesus the Light still shineth in the darkness,¹ piercing the clouds of doubt and despair, and illuminating the sorrows and sufferings of life.

As colours absorb the light of the sun, so should we drink in the light of the Sun of Righteousness, which will warm, purify, and illumine, to bring forth in us the fervour of love, the grace of holiness, as we reflect His radiance in our daily life. When the darkness of worldliness and wickedness dims our faith, and sorrow and suffering, loneliness and loss, bow us down; when the darkness of despondency and disappointment dulls our powers;

when the valley of the shadow of death opens before us, and life is about to pass into “the great beyond”;—what joy and comfort and strength to feel that we can turn to Jesus (the Sun of Righteousness), “In Whom is no darkness at all,” “The Light of the world.” If we make Him our Light amid all the chances and changes of this mortal life, as a lantern unto our feet, then by His Merits and Mediation we may hope hereafter to see Him in Glory, and behold His Beautiful Face.

Wiersbe - The sun is a picture of Jesus Christ (Isa. 9:1-2; Matt. 4:16). He heals his own people but judges those who reject him. “You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger; the LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath” (Ps. 21:9). God is not only love but is also light (1 John 1:5; 4:8); he loves the sinner but must judge the sins. If we trust Jesus, in his holy love he will forgive us and heal us of our sins. Jesus is “the Dayspring from on high” who has visited us and died for us on the cross (Luke 1:78). What will it be for you: burning or healing?

For behold, darkness will cover the earth, And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you, And His glory will appear upon you.

Mal 4:1 “For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,” says the LORD of hosts, “so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.”

NIV 2 Samuel 23:4 he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.'

Like calves - The simile is designed to convey the ideas of freedom from outward restraint, and the enjoyment of self-conscious hilarity.

Light, which in Hebrew poetry is used of the sun, as the source of light. See Is. 9:1; 49:6; John 1:9; 8:12. What the sun is to the natural world; that the Messiah is to the moral.

Da 12:3 "And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Php 3:21

1Jn 3:2

The One described as the Sun of righteousness can be no other than Jesus Christ Himself Who is called “**the LORD our righteousness**” (Jer 23:6, 33:16).

His Coming is **pictured as a sunrise** in several passages. “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you” (Isaiah 60:1). “Is as the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds, When the tender grass springs out of the earth, Through sunshine after rain.” (2Sa 23:4)

Hab 3:3:1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.

2 LORD, I have heard the report about Thee and I fear. O LORD, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.

3 God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise.

4 **His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand,** And there is the hiding of His power.

Balaam declared "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter (a King) shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth. Numbers 24:17

Are you experiencing a time of darkness? Look up, child of God for in the darkest part of the night the Morning Star appears, bright harbinger of the coming day, when the Sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings. Keep looking for Him with glad expectation for His promise cannot fail. Maranatha. Our Lord, Come!

Malachi 4:2 says "But for you who fear My Name the Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

The fact that the sun of righteousness rises with "healing in its wings" invokes the picture of the wings of a bird stretched across the sky, offering healing to those below. A healing effect will infuse the earth during this time, removing the negative impact of past sins (Isaiah 30:26; 53:5). When Christ returns, God's righteousness and peace will flood the earth (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14).

John Gill notes that Sun of Righteousness is interpreted as the Messiah "by the ancient Jews, in one of their **Midrashes** or expositions they say, "Moses says not they shall be for ever pledged, that is, the clothes of a neighbour, but until the sun comes, until the Messiah comes, as it is said, "unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise", &c.;

It's a new day dawning; God's people will revel in their freedom like gamboling calves leaping from their stalls (Isaiah 65:17-25; Hosea 14:4-7; Amos 9:13-15; Zephaniah 3:19-20).

Arise with healing, etc - This blessing is promised to those who fear the Lord and are ready for His return.

As a sunflower turns towards the sun, may the Spirit guide our heart at the dawn of each day to be turned towards the Sun of Righteousness, that we might continually "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2Pe 3:18) "*Eternal Sun of righteousness, Display Thy beams divine, And cause the glory of Thy face, Upon my heart to shine.*" (C Wesley)

During growth, sunflowers tilt during the day to face the sun, but stop once they begin blooming. This tracking of the sun in young sunflower heads is called heliotropism. By the

time they are mature, sunflowers generally face east.

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Whereas the pagans worship the sun, we worship the Sun of righteousness.

Let us rise up and meet the Well-Beloved, and in concert with him let us sow in hope and look for a speedy upspringing. The Sun of Righteousness is coming forth "as a bridegroom out of his chamber," (Ps 19:5) and the weary night is melting into welcome day; let us hear the Beloved's voice as He cries to us, 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.' (Song 2:10)

Oh! Sun of Righteousness, scatter the fog of this godless world which seeks to hide You from every eye.

O how I need Thee to abide in me, for I have no natural eyes to see Thee, but I live by faith in One Whose face to me is brighter than a thousand suns! (VoV)

the warm rays from the Sun of Righteousness bring forth the fragrant flowers and fruits of holy living.

Don Fortner - What the sun is to our solar system, Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, is to heaven and eternity. He is the center of heaven, the light of heaven, the life of heaven, the strength of heaven and the joy of heaven. Withdraw the sun from our solar system, and everything would be darkness, destruction and death. Withdraw Christ from heaven, and heaven itself would be hell! In heaven Christ is, and for ever shall be pre-eminent, because for all eternity Christ is all! Christ is for ever all our reward, all our joy, all our peace and all our love. In heaven's eternal bliss, Christ alone will fill our vision and Christ alone will have our praise (Rev. 4:9-11; 5:9-13). This is the ultimate end for which God said in the beginning, 'Let there be light.' This world was created by God, so that 'in all things he [the Lord Jesus Christ] might have the pre-eminence'.

The sun is sometimes eclipsed, but it regains its splendor. The trees lose all their fruit and leaves in the winter, but they have fresh buds in the spring. Israel may flee before her enemies at times, but she enters the land of promise triumphantly when her journey is over. So too, the true believer falls many times, but the Lord raises him up and he will finally enter into heaven triumphantly, through the blood, the righteousness and the grace of Christ.

The sun is essential for physical life on earth. The 'Sun of righteousness' is essential for spiritual life.

Why is Jesus called the Sun of Righteousness? James Smith says "The sun is a brilliant

symbol of Christ in its mystery, majesty, and glorious might; a fit emblem of the inexhaustible resources of the Son of God, Who is the Sun of Righteousness." As the sun is the most glorious, most excellent aspect of creation, of such transcendent beauty, splendour and glory that we cannot look long at its glory lest we are blinded, of so much greater glory is Christ the Sun of Righteousness. As Paul testified, he was struck to the ground when he "saw on the way (to Damascus) a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around." (Acts 26:13) As Oswald Chambers said "When once you have seen Jesus, you can never be the same" At the transfiguration, "His face shone like the SUN." (Mt 17:2) The writer of Hebrews describes Him as "the radiance of His (Father's) glory and the exact representation of His nature" where radiance describes a "shining forth" of glory "not as of One irradiated by His (Father's) glory, but as Himself the sheen of His (own, intrinsic) glory" (Pulpit Commentary) (Heb 1:3) When John had a glimpse of Him on Patmos, he saw "His face was like the SUN shining in its strength" and "fell at His feet as a dead man." (Rev 1:16-17) "*His glories shine with beams so bright, No mortal eye can bear the sight.*" (Isaac Watts) Indeed, as Thomas Watson said "A sight of God's glory humbles. The stars vanish when the sun appears." And yet Christ so far excels the sun in that very property with which the sun excels other things, that He alone is deserving of the title the Sun of Righteousness. Indeed, should we not give God the same place in our heart that He holds in the universe! "*Perish each thought of human pride, Let God alone be magnified; His glory let the heavens resound, Shouted from earth's remotest bound.*" (Philip Doddridge)

Christ is worthy to be called the Sun of righteousness by virtue of what He accomplishes for us spiritually even as the sun in like manner does for us physically. The sun is the fountain of all light without which we could see nothing. In this respect the Sun of Righteousness is "the light of the world and whoever follows Him shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn 8:12), "the True Light Who coming into the world enlightens every man" (Jn 1:9), a "marvelous light" (1Pe 2:9), "a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Lk 2:32), " (1Pe 2:9),

James Smith - As the Sun of Righteousness, Christ is—

1. The Centre of the New Creation. The law of attraction here is the law of love.
 2. The Glory of the Spiritual World. His presence fills it.
 3. The Source of all Spirit Blessings. Light, life, warmth, beauty, fruitfulness.
 4. His Movements are Infallably Trustworthy. Never fails in His course of action.
 5. His Progress is Irresistible. He cannot be hindered nor hurried.
 6. His Shining is for the Good of All. No sunset for those who follow Him. Eternal gloom without Him.
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ESV Study Bible - Just as the sun drives away darkness and clouds, bringing light and joy,

so the Sun of righteousness will appear to dispel gloom, oppression, and injustice. For the image of the rising sun applied to a great visitation from God, cf. Isa. 60:1-2; for the recognition that the birth of John the Baptist had ushered in this expected era, see Luke 1:78. The "righteousness" brought by this "sun" includes both judgment on evildoers and reward for those who are righteous in their deeds. Its wings are a poetic image for the rays of this sun, bringing healing to all who come under its influence. Some suggest that ancient Near Eastern depictions of a winged sun disk are reflected in the image. Malachi's readers probably would have thought this image predicted the sudden appearance of God himself, who is elsewhere compared to the sun (Ps. 84:11; Isa. 60:19-20; cf. Ps. 27:1; Isa. 60:1; Rev. 21:23). But Christian interpreters throughout the history of the church have understood this prophecy to be fulfilled in Christ, who is "the light of the world" (John 8:12; cf. John 1:4-6).

Robert Haldane - To Balaam, who beheld the Savior at a distance, He appeared as a star; "There shall come a Star out of Jacob," Numbers 24:17; while to Malachi, the last of the Prophets, on His nearer approach, He appeared as the sun. "But unto you that fear My name shall the **Sun of righteousness** arise with healing in His wings," Malachi 4:2.

J Vernon McGee - The Sun of Righteousness in the Old Testament is the same person who is the Bright and Morning Star in the New Testament. However, Christ is never called the Sun of Righteousness in the New Testament, and He's never called the Bright and Morning Star in the Old Testament.

Nu 24:17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A **star** shall come forth from Jacob, And a scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth. (Morris - his remarkable prophecy of Balaam anticipates, by over 1400 years, the fact that the One who would one day hold the scepter (symbolic of kingly rule) over all men (the children of Seth, the faithful son of Adam) would arise out of Israel and be announced to the world by a new star displayed in the heavens for those who had eyes to see.) (Disciple Study Bible - The first part of v 17 foretells joyful good news for Jacob and Israel. Jesus is the ultimate Good News for all the world. This messianic promise was first a historical prediction of the downfall of a wicked nation (Moab) and their allies effected by David (2 Sa 8:2). The final ruler rising out of Israel was Jesus.) (Criswell - The "Star" (kokav, Heb.; astron, Gk., also used of constellations, meteors, and comets) and "Scepter" **both refer to the coming Messiah and His reign**. It was common among the star-gazing people of Mesopotamia to use "star" as a reference to a king (Lit. Day Star, cf. Isa. 14:12; Matt. 2:2 = "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For **we saw His star** in the east, and have come to worship Him.").

We live in a broken world. Unfairness and discord, fear and pain are a very real part of our daily lives. But one day God will change everything, and "the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4:2). Then Jesus will rule the world in righteousness. (ODB)

Second Coming - **Appearing** (2015) (**epiphaneia** from epiphaino in turn from epi = upon + phaino = shine) means literally to "**shine upon**" a fitting description of the glory which will become visible when "the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings" (Mal 3:2, Mt 24:30, Re 1;7-note) Dwight Edwards illustrates this idea with "The wife whose beloved husband is on his way home after a prolonged absence longs for and eagerly anticipates the day that the man of her heart returns. As she watches in keen expectation, the passengers slowly file out of the plane until at last her eyes gaze upon the face of her beloved. She truly "loves his appearing." In the same way, the faithful disciple longs for and keenly anticipates the day when Christ will return to leave no more. Because the strings of his heart are tightly bound around the King of kings, he counts Christ's return a supreme treasure and has "fallen in love" with His appearing. But the heart which is not "wholly His," which maintains its deep cravings for the pleasures and comforts of this world, cannot long for or "love His appearing."

Clarke commenting on Titus 2:11- grace of God has appeared - There is a beauty and energy in the word epiphaino, hath shined out, that is rarely noted; it seems to be a metaphor taken from the sun. As by his rising in the east and shining out, he enlightens, successively, the whole world; so the Lord Jesus, who is called the Sun of righteousness, Malachi 4:2, arises on the whole human race with healing in his wings.

Jesus said that He is the light of the world—and many of His names attest to this. From the days of the early church, the name "Sun of Righteousness" referred to Jesus, a name that had been prophesied four hundred years before Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.

When John the Baptist was born, his father, Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, praised "the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness" (Luke 1:78-79). He was speaking of Jesus, whose ministry would be preceded by that of John the Baptist.

Since Jesus came to earth, the **Sun of Righteousness has risen** and has been shining continuously. Like the rays emanating from the sun, Jesus' healing powers have touched countless souls, making them whole. **The light that He radiates is greater than any darkness: when we are in His presence, He shows the way to go.** That way is the way to freedom from the oppressive realm of sin.

At times, the forces of evil surrounding us are almost palpable. When those feelings arise, call upon the name of Jesus. Say His name until His peace surrounds you. Say His name until you feel the Sun of Righteousness shine down on you.

Sun of Righteousness - But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture. MALACHI 4:2, NLT AS THE SUN IS THE center of the solar system, so am I the center of the Bible for I AM the Sun of Righteousness. The Bible is not merely about the righteousness of God and the wickedness of men; it is more about the righteous God saving wicked men through Me, the Sun of Righteousness. I saved you by

shining upon each one of you the healing light of God's grace. God did not send Me into the world to condemn the world but to save the world (John 3:17).

Truly, I have come to save, but who will be saved? It is those who fear that the Sun will someday shine with God's fire of justice (Revelation 1:16). It is the divine fear that drives you to repent and to embrace the light of My grace. **My light can penetrate any clouds in your heart and give you living hope. My light can heal all your sickness and restore your health. My light will guide you to walk on the path of truth. My light will make you shine for God's glory. Step out of the shadows and live in My light. I will set you free!** (Cretacci, Nancy)

(7) Fear of the LORD is associated with healing Mal 4:2 But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; & you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. Pr 3:7, 8 Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear Jehovah & turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body & refreshment to your bones.

Malachi - Revelation

The Bethlehem Star had to give way before the rising Sun which was to become the noonday Sun of Righteousness and then forever Jesus "the root and the offspring of David, the **Bright Morning Star.**" (Rev 22:16, cp Rev 2:28).

(Rev 22:16) "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, **the bright morning star.**"

(Rev 2:28) and I will give him **the morning star.**

(2Pet 1:19) And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and **the morning star** arises in your hearts.

Spurgeon - The Sun of Righteousness has risen upon thee. Answer to his beams, as the buds to the natural sun. Open thine heart, expand and grow up into him in all things.

VoV (modified) - As the sun is full of light, the ocean full of water, Heaven full of glory, so may our hearts be full of Thee, O Sun of Righteousness.

When I feel the warmth of the sun may we praise Him Who is the Sun of righteousness who rises with healing power.

Christ, whose glory fills the skies

Christ, the true, the only Light

Sun of Righteousness, arise

Triumph o'er the shades of night

Dayspring from on high, be near

Daystar, in my heart appear

Charles Wesley

Hail the heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.

Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die.

Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

Charles Wesley

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Eternal Sun of righteousness, Display Thy beams divine,
And cause the glory of Thy face, Upon my heart to shine.

Light, in Thy light, oh, may I see,

Thy grace and mercy prove,

Revived, and cheered, and blest by Thee,

The God of pardoning love.

Lift up Thy countenance serene,

And let Thy happy child

Behold, without a cloud between,

The Father reconciled.

On me Thy promised grace bestow,

The peace by Jesus giv'n;

The joys of holiness below,

And then the joys of Heav'n.

Charles Wesley

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Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near;
O may no earth-born cloud arise

To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes.
-John Keble

The are lines that struck so powerfully...

"I am a flower quickly fading

Here today and gone tomorrow.

A WAVE TOSSED IN THE OCEAN!

(I looked out and realized the sun was reflecting on literally millions of waves at once! Even though they would last but a second or so! How great is our God)

A vapor in the wind

Still You hear me when I'm calling

Lord, You catch me when I'm falling

Who am I that the bright and morning star

Would choose to light the way for my ever wandering heart?

Who Am I - Casting Crowns

More lonely grows the journey as it nears the end,

Yet with me walks the one Unchanging Friend.

Though all should leave, yet He will still abide

Till death, and up through death will safely guide;

And well I know, He ne'er will loose His hold

Till He has led me safe within His fold,

Where loved ones long in glory, watch and wait,

And lengthening shadows lift at Heaven's Gate.

—M. E. Logie-Pirie

The dark stream of evil is flowing apace,

And man is still walking a stranger to grace,

While daring rebellion is on the increase,

Which mar not my joy, which disturb not my peace,

For my heart is engaged with its own happy song;

The Lord who has loved me will come before long;

It may be tomorrow, or even tonight,

That I shall behold Him in unclouded light!

Our sovereign God never lets so much as a shadow fall across our lives without intending it to be for his glory and our good. John Blanchard

Lk 1:78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the **Sunrise** from on high shall visit us, 79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace." (KJV = Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the **dayspring** from on high hath visited us) (**Criswell** - "The Dayspring from on high" indicates that the Messiah's coming would be like the coming of dawn, light driving away darkness.) (**Morris** = The "**dayspring**" is the sunrise, the figure corresponding to Ps 19:4,5 and speaking of Jesus, "the light of the world" (John 8:12), coming from heaven to dispel the darkness of this world.)

Comment - When Zacharias heard that his son was the forerunner to Messiah and that Mary was pregnant with the Messiah, and knew the Messiah was coming, he says the **Sunrise from on high shall visit us**. He knew exactly what this was. This was the fulfillment of Malachi 4:2 and he knew it.

Henry Morris - Day to Remember - The **Dayspring From On High**

"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day spring from on high hath visited us" (Luke 1:78).

This is an unusual but beautiful name for the coming Savior given Him by Zacharias when he was "filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied" (Luke 1:67). In that same prophecy, Zacharias also called that coming one "the Highest" and "the Lord" who would "give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins" (verses 76-77). Just six months later, Jesus was born.

The Greek word here translated "dayspring" is so translated only this one time. It refers to the metaphorical spring from which the sun springs forth each day, and so is usually translated simply as "the east." It is interesting that it is used three times in connection with the story of the wise men "from the east" who saw "his star in the east" and then, when they reached Bethlehem once again, "the star, which they saw in the east," led them to the one who was himself "the dayspring" (Matt. 2:1, 2, 9).

There is one other sunrise appropriately presaged here. Many years later, the women who had tearfully watched the Lord being crucified and buried came to His sepulcher to anoint Him with sweet spices "at the rising of the sun" (Mark 16:2) immediately after He had risen from the dead. Here a closely related word is the word translated "rising."

There is another great sunrise coming, as promised in the last chapter of the Old Testament. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise

with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2). He who is himself "the light of the world" (John 8:12) will someday even replace the sun in the new Jerusalem. There will never be another sunrise after that, for "there shall be no night there... neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light" (Rev. 22:5).

Ps 84:11 - **Sun and shield** - Spurgeon - A sun for happy days and a shield for dangerous ones. A sun above, a shield around. A light to show the way and a shield to ward off its perils. Blessed are they who journey with such a convoy; the sunny and shady side of life are alike happy to them.

Jn 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Jn 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Isa 59:19 So they will fear the name of the LORD from the west And His glory from the rising of the sun, For He will come like a rushing stream, Which the wind of the LORD drives. 20 "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the LORD.

Isa 60:1 "Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you (**Jerusalem**). 2 "For behold, darkness will cover the earth, And deep darkness the peoples; But **the LORD will rise upon you, And His glory will appear upon you** 3 "And nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

(Matt 4:16) "THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A **GREAT LIGHT**, AND TO THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A **LIGHT DAWNED.**"

Nu 23:17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A **star** shall come forth from Jacob, And a scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.

2Sa 23:4 He is **like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning**, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.'

Pr 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

Isa 9:2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

Mt 4:16

Ge 32:31 Now the sun rose upon him (Jacob) just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh. (Context - " 28 And he said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." 29 Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my

name?" And he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.") - It was break of day when the angel desired to be let go, and by that time the parley held between them ceased, and they parted, the sun was rising; and as Jacob went on it shone upon him, as a token of the good will and favour of God to him, and as an emblem of the sun of righteousness arising on him with healing in his wings

HEALING - (Isa 53:5) But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

Isa 60:1 "Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 "For behold, darkness will cover the earth, And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you, And His glory will appear upon you.

Transfiguration - Mt 17:2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

Unless Christ is the center of interest, your life will be out of focus.

Rev 1:16 And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and **His face was like the sun shining in its strength.**

Acts 26:13 at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, **brighter than the sun**, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me.

Let my candle go out, if in that the Sun of Righteousness may rise, with healing in His beams.

2Peter 1:19 And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the **morning star** arises in your hearts.

2Cor 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "**Light shall shine out of darkness**," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Ps 19:4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. (See Spurgeon on this passage)

Heb 1:3 And He is the **radiance** of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins,

He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Radiance (541) (apaugasma from apaugázo = emit light or splendor in turn derived from apó = from + augázo = shine) literally means "off-flashing" and then the brightness beamed forth which describes the effulgence (from Latin effulgere = to shine forth and thus radiant splendor or brilliance emanating from an original light body), splendor or light emitted or issuing from a luminous body.) Spurgeon - Shade your eyes, for you cannot look upon this wondrous sight without being dazzled by it. Some commentators say—and it is not an inappropriate analogy, though we must not push any analogy too far—that, as light is to the sun, so is Jesus to the glory of God. He is the brightness of that glory. That is to say, there is not any glory in God but what is also in Christ: and when that glory reaches its climax, when God the Ever-Glorious is most glorious, that greatest glory is in Christ. Oh, this wondrous Word of God—the very climax of the Godhead—the gathering up of every blessed attribute in all its infinity of glory! You shall find all this in the person of the God-man, Christ Jesus.

(Ps 119:130) The unfolding of Thy words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.

Ps 113:3 From the rising of the sun to its setting The name of the LORD is to be praised.

James Smith - The sun is a brilliant symbol of Christ in its mystery, majesty, and glorious might; a fit emblem of the inexhaustible resources of the Son of God, who is the "Sun of Righteousness." 1. CHRIST WILL BE THE CENTRE OF A GREAT SYSTEM. The sun is the centre of the solar system, bound together by the law of gravitation. When Christ, as the "Sun of Righteousness," shall arise upon the earth, "with the brightness of His Coming" (2 Thess. 2:8), He shall be the centre of the greatest and most glorious system this world has ever known, bound together by the law of love. He who is the Centre of all creation will subdue all things to Himself (1 Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:28). Like the sun—

2. CHRIST WILL BE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. Jesus said: "I am the Light of the World," but now men "love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil;" but then, when He rules in righteousness, as King, all nations shall come to His light (Isa. 9:2; 60:19). All the blessings the sun brings us are emblems of the gifts which Christ will bring to the world in His Day: light and life, health and healing, warmth and fruitfulness, beauty and gladness. What a world, perpetually basking in the sunshine of Divine favour. The world for Christ.

James Smith - Arctic explorers speak of the soul-subduing silences of the Arctic region. A strange peace reigns supreme. No life, nothing but a dreary chilling desolation. Everything is wrapped in the cold embrace of winter. Before the beautiful and refreshing peace of Spring time can visit that region there must be a great disturbance. The sun shines with its gladdening rays of warmth, the great ice field melts, and the result—an awful tearing and grinding, shrieking and rending, with explosions as of dynamite. So when the Sun of Righteousness shines upon souls wrapped up in the cold embrace of spiritual death, there is a disturbance, a breaking up of the stillness of spiritual death. To change the metaphor, the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God begins its cutting and thrusting. But after conviction comes conversion, after repentance comes peace through the Blood of His Cross.

The light is for the eye. Christ is for the heart. It is a pleasant thing for the eye to behold the Sun of righteousness. There are diseased eyes that cannot bear the light of revealed truth. They love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil. Lift up thine eyes and behold. "Behold the Lamb of God."

James Smith - It is spring-time in the soul, when the **Sun of Righteousness** casts His warm reviving beams upon it. All the blessings of this new life have their source in Him. In these words of cheer, spoken to the Bride by the Bridegroom, we have "The Gospel of Christ," which assures us that—

(1). "The winter (of Death) is past" (v. 11). You hath He quickened who were dead. All in Christ are a new creation... All things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17). Passed from death into life, from winter into summer.

(2). "The rain (of Judgment) is over and gone." As Noah, after the flood, stepped out into a new world, so Christ, by His death on the Cross, brings us out of condemnation into the glorious liberty of "newness of life." (Rom. 8:1).

(3). "The flowers (of promise) appear on the earth." After the death and resurrection of Christ, the promises of God, spring up in fresh beauty and power, as plentiful as the flowers of the field." The promise is unto you," pluck these precious gifts, and make your life beautiful and fragrant.

(4). "The time of Singing (Praise) is come." It well becometh the mornings of spring to be vocal with song. The dawn of the new morning of spiritual life is a time when every bird within the cage of our being is set a singing. "Praise ye the Lord," sing and make melody in your heart, for the Lord hath done great things for you.

(5). "The voice of the turtle (Holy Spirit) is heard in our land." While the flowers of promise appear in the earth—offered to all, the assuring voice of the Spirit only is heard in our land; To receive the promised Spirit, as the Comforter and Guide, we must know the Power of His Cross, (Gal. 3:13-14).

(6). The season of Fruitfulness is at hand. "The fig tree ripeneth her green figs, and the vines are in blossom" (v. 13). There is now the prospect of a priceless ingathering. This is the stage referred to in John 15:16. Blessing for others must be one of the results of our Union with Him (Hosea 14:8).

(7). The Call is repeated. "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Arise, don't keep sitting in the place of darkness and doubt. Thou art "my love, the joy of my heart," come away into the full enjoyment of all this Heaven-sent Spring brings within your reach. In His Presence is fulness of joy. Wilt thou go with this Man?

Vance Havner - It was morning after a night of failure. They had fished in vain. It was a fruitless expedition, as is any venture of life when He is not along. But in our failure we are not out of His sight. In another passage we read of His walking to them on the water when "He saw them toiling in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them." Maclaren observes

that "the cause of their dismay was the means of His approach." So here a night of failure finds Him waiting on the shore. He is concerned about us when we fail. He is not like those friends who are on hand when we succeed but vanish in the hour of trouble. He sought a special interview with Peter exactly because Peter had failed miserably. If you have had a bad night morning will reveal Him on the shore! "Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning!" Many there be these days who are passing through one kind of darkness or another. If your faith is in Him, morning will not merely bring Him, He will bring the morning, for He is the Sun of Righteousness and He shall arise with healing in His wings.

The morning after death will find Him on the shore.

"I shall know Him, I shall know Him,

And redeemed by His side I shall stand;

I shall know Him, I shall know Him,

By the prints of the nails in His hands."

The New Testament writers did not speak of going to heaven so much as of going to be with the Lord. It is not the other shore that charms us so much as Jesus on the shore. "Today shalt thou be with me" is what cheered the dying thief more than merely going to be "in Paradise."

J C Philpot - It is in grace as it is in nature; the clouds do not blot out the sun; it is still in the sky, though they often cut off his bright rays. And so with the blessed Sun of righteousness; our unbelief, our ignorance, our darkness of mind, our guilt of conscience, our many temptations--these do not blot out the Sun of righteousness from the sky of grace. Though thick clouds come between him and us and make us feel as though he was blotted out, or at least as if we were blotted from his remembrance, yet, through mercy, where grace has begun the work, grace carries it on--"Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

J C Philpot - "They shall mount up with wings as eagles." Isaiah 40:31

It is said of the eagle, that he mounts up towards the sun; and that of all birds, he is the only one which can gaze upon the sun with unshrinking eye. So with faith in the soul. The Lord's people alone can look by faith upon the "Sun of righteousness," gaze upon a glorious Immanuel at the right hand of the Father, and see a precious Jesus ever interceding for them, and drawing them near to his bosom. And when this blessed Jesus communicates a measure of his love and blood to their consciences, and raises up and draws forth faith in his name, then the soul begins to mount up with these wings like eagles, soaring higher and higher, until it comes into the presence of God; mounting up in higher and higher circles of spiritual flight, until it penetrates into the very sanctuary of Jehovah.

Now, has not your soul thus soared sometimes as upon eagle's wings? Have there not been those communications of divine life and light, those mountains of faith, those anchorings of hope, those goings forth of love, whereby your soul was enabled to mount up and find delight in Jesus, and felt his name, love, and blood precious? Have you not mounted up too, not only in the exercise of living faith and hope, but also of heavenly affection?

Sometimes we are so fastened down to this earth, this valley of tears, this waste-howling wilderness; so chained down to it, that we are like a bird with a broken wing, and cannot mount. We are swallowed up in the world, forgetting God and godliness. But are there not times and seasons when the soul is delivered from these chains and fetters, when earthly cares drop off from the mind, when our wings are strong, and fresh pinions as it were given, when the world and its temptations, sin and its snares are left behind, and there is a sweet mounting up in the feelings of heavenly affection? This is to "mount up with wings as eagles," and the soaring soul never ceases to mount until it comes into the very presence of the Three-One God of Israel.

From "Bestiary" - When an eagle is old, its eyesight dims and its feathers and wings become heavy. To rejuvenate itself, the eagle flies up to the region of the sun, which burns away the mist over its eyes and burns off its old feathers. The eagle then plunges three times into water, and its youth is restored. Also as a result of age, the eagle's beak grows until it can no longer eat; by striking it against a rock, the eagle breaks its beak which then grows back. **The eagle's eyes are very sharp and can see fish when the bird flies over water. The eagle can look directly into the sun. As a test of the worthiness of its young, the eagle holds them up facing the sun. The birds that cannot stare into the sun and turn their eyes away are cast out of the nest.** (A bald eagle can close its nictitating membrane and even look at the sun if need be to spot their prey.)

J C Philpot - May we not apply this illustration to our views of spiritual things, both as regards light and darkness? For the most part we groan and sigh under a sense of the thick darkness of our mind, for though the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun, yet the days of darkness are many. (Eccles. 11:7, 8.) This is the dense mist and fog. But there are times and seasons when the Sun of righteousness suddenly arises upon the soul, with healing in his wings. (Mal. 4:2.) Then the mist and fog are immediately dispersed. Light beams into the heart; and at once the whole plan and scheme of salvation from grace to glory, from before the foundation of the world to the ages to come, from the original purposes of God to their full and final accomplishment in a blissful eternity, shine forth.

J C Philpot - September 25

"Through the tender mercies of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high has visited us." Luke 1:78

By "day-spring" is meant the day-dawn, the herald of the rising sun, the change from darkness to light, the first approach of morn, in a word, the spring of the day. But what is

this "day-spring" spiritually? It is the intimation of the rising of the Sun of righteousness. It is not the same thing as the Sun of righteousness; but it is the herald of his approach; the beams which the rising sun casts upon the benighted world, announcing the coming of Jesus, "the King in his beauty."

This expression was singularly applicable in the mouth of Zacharias. The Lord of life and glory had not then appeared; he was still in the womb of the Virgin Mary. But his forerunner, John, had appeared as the precursor, the herald of his approach, and was sent to announce that the Sun of righteousness was about to arise. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (John 1:6-8). All nations at that time lay in darkness. "Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." But when the Lord of life and glory was about to appear upon earth, when he had already taken the body which was prepared for him, the very flesh and blood of the children, which he was to offer as a propitiation for sin, "the dayspring from on high" had begun to dawn. God's mercy, in the face of his dear Son, was just visiting the benighted world.

But there is another, an experimental meaning, connected with these words. "The day-spring from on high" is not to be confined to the approach of the Son of God in the flesh; but it may be extended to signify the appearance of the Son of God in the heart. I cannot be benefited by the appearing of Jesus in the flesh eighteen hundred years ago, unless he comes and dwells in my soul. "The day-spring from on high" which visited the benighted Jewish church will not profit us except that same day-spring visits our benighted heart. "The day-spring from on high" is the manifestation of God's mercy in the face of the Savior. And when this "day-spring from on high" visits the soul, it is the first intimation, the dawning rays of the Sun of righteousness in the heart.

J C Philpot - But what makes the grand tidal wave itself move? There is a cause for that also. It is drawn up by, and obeys the attraction of the sun. And is not this true spiritually of the grand tidal wave of faith in the soul? Is it not drawn up by the Sun of righteousness, as the natural sun draws up the wave of the ocean, and makes it ebb and flow? And when that glorious Sun ceases to draw up faith, does it not ebb and sensibly sink in the soul, as the natural sea sinks when the sun recedes from it?

J C Philpot - As without the sun, the earth could not exist; so the Church could not exist without Jesus. And as in the absence of the sun, no candles could take the place of heaven's own glorious light; so no sparks, however bright, of fires kindled by human hands, could make up to the Church for the absence of the Sun of righteousness. He must be, as he is, our all; having him, we have everything; not having him, we have nothing. The Lord the Spirit write that truth deeply upon your heart that you may take it wherever you go, and make it ever your bosom companion. If you have Jesus, you have everything; if you have not him, you have nothing. This continual feeling of happiness in and with him, and of misery out of and without him, as maintained in your breast by the power of the blessed Spirit, will be leading you to seek him perpetually. This made David say, "Early will I seek you."

J C Philpot - Clouds and mists sometimes obscure the sun, but they do not blot him out of the sky. So the mists and fogs of unbelief may obscure the Sun of righteousness, yet they do not blot him out of the spiritual hemisphere. He still loved you and gave himself for you who believe in his name, though you may not be able to rise up to the faith of Paul, or speak with the same fullness of assurance. The bud has the same union with the vine as the branch, but not the same strength of union; the babe is as much a member of the family as the grown-up son, but has not the same knowledge of its relationship; the foot is as much a part of the body as the eye or the hand, though it has not the same nearness to the head, or the same honors and employments.

J C Philpot - Thus is the goodness of God, as it were, reflected on and by our baseness and vileness, as we see the sun sometimes shining on and reflected by a black cloud. The black cloud of our vileness but serves to heighten the glory of the rays of free grace and the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness.

J C Philpot - "Unto you who fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Malachi 4:2

Oh, what a mercy for the Church of Christ that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus has not left her as he might justly have left her, to perish in her sins, but has provided for her a Savior, and a great one, and does from time to time encourage every poor, self-condemned sinner to hope in his mercy!

The very things, poor, exercised soul, that most try your mind are the very things that make such a Savior suitable to you. You are dark; this makes the Sun of righteousness exactly suitable to enlighten you. You are cold; this makes you need the Sun to warm you. You are cheerless and cast down; this makes you need the Sun to gladden you. You are barren and unfruitful, and lament that you cannot bring forth fruit to God's glory; you need the Sun to fertilize you. You are, at times, very dead in your feelings, and can scarcely find any inclination to pray, meditate, or read the Scriptures; you need the Sun to enliven and revive you.

Are not, then, these very trials and temptations necessary to make you feel that the Lord Jesus is the Sun you need, the very Sun that David (Psalm 84:11) felt him to be? What value do those put upon the Lord Jesus who make a fire for themselves, and walk in the sparks of their own kindling? What is Jesus to those who know no trouble of soul? What real and earnest prayer or fervent desire have they after him? what ardent longing for his appearing? what breathings to see and feel his blood and righteousness? Oh! it is sharp exercises, manifold trials, and powerful temptations that make the soul really value the Lord Jesus.

J C Philpot - Just as the sun rises in the east and gradually mounts up into the meridian sky, dispersing with every ray light, warmth, and gladness; so this blessed Lord Jesus, as the Sun of righteousness, is ever dispersing the beams of His grace and the rays of His favour; and whenever those beams come, and those rays fall, there is light and life, and everything to make the soul holy and happy.

J C Philpot - "For the Lord God is a sun and shield." Psalm 84:11

Is not the sun made to shine? It is his nature to do so. So it is with the SUN of righteousness; he is made to shine. And does the natural sun lose any of his light by shining? Why, the more he shines, the more light he seems to have. For ages he has shone as brightly as now. His beams were as glorious before we had birth or being, and will be as glorious when the eyes which now see him are mouldering in the dust. Thousands of harvests has he ripened, millions and thousands of millions has he fed; but he shows no sign of exhaustion or decay.

And does Jesus lose anything by communicating his light, life, love, and grace? He is all the more glorified thereby; and the more you look to him as the Sun, that as such he might shine into and upon your soul, the more you glorify him as the Sun of righteousness. When in the morning we throw the shutters back, or draw up the blinds, it is to receive the sun into the dark room. So the more we are enabled by divine grace to throw back the shutters of doubt and fear, and draw up the blinds of unbelief which hang down over the mind, the more we glorify the Lord Jesus by receiving out of his fullness, and grace for grace.

Oh! it is good to be sometimes enabled to look beyond and above doubts, fears, misgivings, and the many things that try the mind. You may pore over your sins and miseries until you fall well-near into despair; you may look back upon your wanderings, inconsistencies, and lack of fruitfulness, until you are almost ready to sink down without hope and die. To do this is to resemble a person wandering in a dark room, tumbling over the furniture, and at last sitting down and saying, "There is no light." If he can but throw back the shutters, the sun will shine into the room.

So we sometimes may sit pondering over our many inconsistencies until we say, "There is no light in my soul; there never was, and there never will be." O to be enabled (when I speak thus, I know well, from soul experience, that it is only God who can do it in us and for us) to throw back the shutters, and look away from those things that so weigh down the mind! Look up, O sinking soul, and see the blessed Sun still shining in the skies of heaven! Why, the very power to do this, the very act of doing so, brings with it a felt blessedness.

How good, also, to be enabled to make use of Christ as a SHIELD! Oh, how often we go to battle without this shield upon our arm! But depend upon it, the Lord would not have provided such a shield for you unless he knew that your enemies were too many for you. Doubt, fear, darkness, despair, the law, the accusations of a guilty conscience, the fiery darts of the devil--how can you fight against these enemies without a shield? Why, you would be like a soldier going out against the foe without either sword or musket, and laying his bosom bare to every weapon, without sword or bayonet in his hand to defend himself.

So, to go into combat against the law; the accusations of a guilty conscience, and a desponding heart, and have no blessed Jesus to hold up as a shield against these deadly foes, would be enough to sink a man into despair. But if he is enabled to make use of the

shield that God has provided, and to hold Christ up against a condemning law, a guilty conscience, an accusing devil, and a desponding mind, and say to them all, "Christ has died, and died for me," then he receives into the shield those darts which would otherwise sink into his soul, and then they all fall harmless, because they all fell on the Lord Jesus.

January 20

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

On all subjects connected with our most holy faith, it is most desirable to have clear views. Every point of divine truth is laid down with the greatest clearness and precision in the word of God. The darkness, the ignorance, the confusion which prevent us from seeing it are all in us. But as we search the Scriptures, as we meditate upon them, as we by prayer and supplication draw light, life, and wisdom out of Him "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" and, above all, as we mix faith with what we read, there is often, if not usually, a gradual breaking-in of light; and as we follow up its heavenly rays, it shines more clearly and broadly, and the truth stands out more fully and prominently before our eyes. This is the only way in which we can be "filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," and thus be established in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

To understand the scripture, to see in it the mind of the Holy Spirit, to be deeply penetrated with, and inwardly possessed of the heavenly wisdom, holy instruction, and gracious revelation of the counsels and will of God unfolded therein, demands much and continual patient and prayerful study. As in business, diligence and industry lead on to prosperity and success, and sloth and idleness are the sure road to ruin; so in the greatest, most serious, and important of all business, the concerns of the soul, there is a holy diligence, a heavenly industry, whereby it thrives and grows, and there is a slothful indolence whereby it becomes clothed with rags (Proverbs 23:21).

F B Meyer - The sun was not a god, but a creation. He can only pursue his destined path and retire at night to the tent of darkness. This is evidently metaphor, but is not the orb of natural day a true emblem of the Sun of Righteousness, the Bridegroom of human souls, who once tabernacled amongst men? Let us warm our cold hearts in the heat of His life-giving rays.

Vance Havner - Sunrise Tomorrow

There has always been a peculiar charm about sunrise. It has been the theme of many popular songs like "The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise" and that wedding favorite, "At Dawning." Poems aplenty have been written about sunsets, but there is a different beauty that belongs to sunrise. Probably not many of us see enough sunrises to enter into their secrets. I am not parading myself as an early riser. I miss more sunrises than I see. But some that I have seen will abide in my heart forever. There is something about darkness giving way to light, the mystery of a new day being born, the eastern sky aflush and then

aflame, that lingers in the soul.

Sick people can tell us much about sunrise, for they have passed many a restless night longing for the break of day. They know what the Psalmist meant when he said, "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning." They understand Job when he said: "When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day."

I remember such a night years ago when I was suffering from nervous exhaustion and was unable to sleep. I spent the night in a cottage beside a lovely lake. I was to preach next day in a city church near by, and I needed a good night's rest but could not obtain it. Of course, the harder one tries to sleep, the less likely he is to succeed. Toward morning, I gave up and resigned myself to watching for the day. I remember the first faint intimation of coming light. I could not put my finger on the clock at any one minute and say, "Here began the day." But there was the gentle, gradual fading of the darkness; a few birds chirped in the trees; there was soon a glint on the water; by and by, the first rosy tint flushed the east; and through it all grew the mystery of the world waiting for the sunrise.

One who has passed sleepless morning hours may learn to "meditate in the night watches," to pray if he cannot sleep. He begins to understand why the saintly fathers rose early for a session with God. He knows why the New England Pilgrims prayed at sunrise. Bradford tells of an Indian attack at daybreak while they were so engaged. He recalls William Law and that he rose at five because he was a Christian and, when tempted to stay in bed, reminded himself, "I am an old man and am far behind with my sanctification." So he flung himself out of bed before the servants had made their fires or the farmers had yoked their horses, for he thought it a shame to lie folded up in bed when life was so short and there was so much to do.

Again, one thinks of Jacob wrestling with the angel and crossing Peniel at sunrise, limping but having power with God and men. Especially does one think of the Saviour, who, rising up a great while before day, went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed." Evidently He found it good to wait on God while the world was waiting for the sunrise.

We are told that during Paul's experience in the storm at sea "they cast out four anchors and wished for the day." We are passing through one of the worst moral and spiritual hurricanes in history; multitudes are at sea, and many are wishing for the day. Whether on beds of pain or bowed down with sorrow or burdened with the uncertainty of today and dread of tomorrow, millions were never so weary of the night and so anxious for the day. And never have so many been homesick for heaven. They have cast their anchor safe and sure and are waiting till the day dawn and the shadows flee away. "Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning."

But so many dear souls are not sure about the sunrise. There is small comfort in a vague hope that "everything will turn out all right." There is little solace in a mere Pollyanna optimism and a Micawberish philosophy that "something will turn up." Nor will Utopian

dreams of a better world, a brotherhood of man welded together by politicians and diplomats, satisfy the soul.

In the account of one of the appearances of our risen Lord it is stated: "When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore." The Christian is looking for morning. For him "the morning cometh." But to him sunrise means Son-rise, it is the Son that brings the morning. "To depart and be with Christ" is daybreak for the saint. Then he says good night here and good morning up there.

But I am thinking of another sunrise that is due some tomorrow. It is the sunrise the Saviour promised when He said, "I will come again." It is the sunrise promised at His ascension: "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go away." It is the sunrise Paul promised when he wrote, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." It is the sunrise Peter promised when he said, "The chief shepherd shall appear." It is the sunrise promised by John when he wrote: "When he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is." Christ is both Son and Sun, both Son of God and Sun of Righteousness, of whom it was said that He should arise with healing in His wings. He was called the Dayspring from on high and Peter tells us to take heed unto prophecy until the day dawn and the Daystar arise in our hearts. For the Son-rise, for the return of Christ the world is waiting. Ruined by sin, it has never been happy and never will be until He shall reign whose right it is.

THE PHYSICAL WORLD IS WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE. "For the earnest expectation of the creature [or creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:19-22). This world of tooth and claw, of thorn and thistle, of sweat and blood, is a world that crashed because of sin. The animals that cringe in fear, the birds that furtively look around with every step they take, all proclaim a reign of terror that started with Adam and shall end when the Saviour shall redeem the earth, when the lion and lamb shall lie down together. The Scriptures describe such a blessed state: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; and their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9). Here is a picture of a world which we have never seen but which we shall see after sunrise, when the night is past and the day has dawned.

THE POLITICAL WORLD IS WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE. The politicians do not know it, of course. They would try to make the day dawn by their efforts around conference tables. But the hope of a better day rests with only One, the Lord of Glory. Only in Christ can you bring men together. Capital and labor have no trouble when they meet in the Lord. When

Boaz saluted his laborers by saying, "The Lord be with you," and they answered, "The Lord bless thee," they gave us then and there the only solution of the labor problem. The white man and the black have no trouble when they both love the Lord. They have most trouble when starry-eyed idealists try to solve their problems. The rich man and the poor meet in Christ: there a Joseph of Arimathea stands on equal footing with fishermen-disciples. The learned and unlearned meet in Christ, and an uneducated D. L. Moody can work with renowned scholars and theologians bound by a common love. National lines melt in Him with whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free.

The scattered pieces of this bleeding world can never be put together by any conference of experts. Only the return of our Lord holds the answer. There may be armistices and breathing spells while fresh confederacies form, but Christ alone will bring an end to dictators, just as He will bring an end to death and disease and depravity and the devil.

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD IS WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE. "And not only they [the creation], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23). The people of God are looking for the Lord. Certainly that was the New Testament attitude, not alone readiness but also expectancy, anticipation. They were not merely looking for something to happen, they were looking for Someone to come. "To wait for his Son from heaven"; "Unto them that look for him shall he appear"—that is the note of early Christianity. The Christian who understands his Bible is looking for the sunrise because he is looking for the Sun! Men may call him a pessimist, but he is looking for morning, not night. He has the brightest outlook of all, for he is looking for a day when there shall be no night. He has the happiest hope in all the world, for he anticipates a day when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes. He has the surest hope, for back of it is the authority of God's Word.

We are looking for Sunrise Tomorrow. And it might be today! For indeed "the night is far spent, the day is at hand!"

Robert Neighbour - "I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR." The Lord comes as the "Morning Star" in the rapture; He comes as the "Sun of Righteousness" in His revelation. He is the "Morning Star" to His Church; He is the "Sun of Righteousness" to Israel... the believer in prophecy does not dwell upon these days of darkness. He sees in the coming of the Lord the "Bright and Morning Star," to the Church; and the "Sun of Righteousness rising with healing in His wings" to Israel.

Spurgeon Comments On Sun of Righteousness.

Morning and Evening Quotes

All earth's candles cannot make daylight if the Sun of Righteousness be eclipsed. He is the soul of our soul, the light of our light, the life of our life. Dear reader, what wouldst thou do in the world without him, when thou wakest up and lookest forward to the day's battle? What wouldst thou do at night, when thou comest home jaded and weary, if there were no door of fellowship between thee and Christ? Blessed be his name, he will not suffer us to try our lot without him, for Jesus never forsakes his own. Yet, let the thought of what life would be without him enhance his preciousness.

The Christian should be like those lovely spring flowers which, when the sun is shining, open their golden cups, as if saying, "Fill us with thy beams!" but when the sun is hidden behind a cloud, they close their cups and droop their heads. So should the Christian feel the sweet influence of Jesus; Jesus must be his sun, and he must be the flower which yields itself to the Sun of Righteousness. Oh! to speak of Christ alone, this is the subject which is both "seed for the sower, and bread for the eater." This is the live coal for the lip of the speaker, and the master-key to the heart of the hearer.

The season of spring is welcome in its freshness. The long and dreary winter helps us to appreciate spring's genial warmth, and its promise of summer enhances its present delights. After periods of spiritual depression, it is delightful to see again the light of the Sun of Righteousness. Our slumbering graces rise from their lethargy, like the crocus and the daffodil from their beds of earth; and our heart is made glad with delicious notes of gratitude, far more tuneful than the warbling of birds. The comforting assurance of peace, which is infinitely more delightful than the turtledove's cooing, is heard within the soul.

Like the moon, we borrow our light; bright as we are when grace shines on us, we are darkness itself when the Sun of Righteousness withdraws himself.

nothing can so certainly bring my heart into a right condition as the presence of the Sun of Righteousness, who brings healing in his wings.

But watchman, when comes the morning? The Bridegroom tarries. Are there no signs of his coming forth as the Sun of Righteousness? Has not the morning star arisen as the pledge of day? When will the day dawn, and the shadows flee away? O Jesus, if thou come not in person to thy waiting Church this day, yet come in Spirit to my sighing heart, and make it sing for joy.

Shine, blessed Sun of Righteousness, and drive the blights away.

If you would triumph over darkness, set yourself in the presence of the **Sun of Righteousness. There is no place so well adapted for the discovery of sin, and recovery from its power and guilt,** as the immediate presence of God.

Light is also the cause of beauty. Nought of beauty is left when light is gone. Without light no radiance flashes from the sapphire, no peaceful ray proceedeth from the pearl; and thus all the beauty of the saints above comes from Jesus. As planets, they reflect the light of the Sun of Righteousness; they live as beams proceeding from the central orb. If he withdrew, they must die; if his glory were veiled, their glory must expire.

Our Beloved has gone away from us until the day of his reappearing, —until the night of his Church's anxiety is over, and the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings

(Eccl 11:7) "The light is pleasant, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun." - Spurgeon comments "And as it is so pleasant for the natural eyes to behold the natural sun, how much more pleasant is it for the spiritual eye to behold the Sun of righteousness! Sweet as the light of the sun is, the light of the Sun of righteousness is far sweeter."

As the sun rises first on mountain-tops and gilds them with his light, and presents one of the most charming sights to the eye of the traveller; so is it one of the most delightful contemplations in the world to mark the glow of the Spirit's light on the head of some saint, who has risen up in spiritual stature, like Saul, above his fellows, till, like a mighty Alp, snow-capped, he reflects first among the chosen, the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and bears the sheen of his effulgence high aloft for all to see, and seeing it, to glorify his Father which is in heaven.

In heaven there shall be no interruptions from care or sin; no weeping shall dim our eyes; no earthly business shall distract our happy thoughts; we shall have nothing to hinder us from gazing for ever on the Sun of Righteousness with unwearied eyes. Oh, if it be so sweet to see him now and then, how sweet to gaze on that blessed face for aye, and never have a cloud rolling between, and never have to turn one's eyes away to look on a world of weariness and woe! Blest day, when wilt thou dawn? Rise, O unsetting sun!

Mar 16:2. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the **rising of the sun**. - There had already been another **rising of the sun** that morning, for the **Sun of righteousness had risen**; and, **with his rising, our hopes had risen**, and eternal life had come to light. These holy women proved their affection to their Lord by being there so early. Love will not wait; it delights to render its service as speedily as ever it can: "**They came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun.**"

Malachi 4:2 Notes - What a change of figures! To the wicked "an oven"! (See verse 1.) To God-fearing men a "Sun"! Our text was fulfilled at our Lord's first coming. It awaits a far larger fulfilment at his second coming. It is always true as a general principle, and it is felt to be true when the Lord Jesus spiritually draws near to his people.

Feeding 5000 - Mat 14:19-21. A wonderful evening that must have been. Just as the sun's slanting rays would fall upon the mighty mass of people, Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness, was scattering his beams of mercy over them at the same time.

1Th 5:5-6. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others;—Night is the time for sleep, and we sleep best in the darkness; **but if we have come into the daylight, if the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon us**, let us be wakeful, let us be watchful. When the sun is shining, it is not right that men should sleep: "Therefore let us not sleep,

as do others;" —

We long to see our fellowmen turned from darkness to light, and we love Him as the Sun of Righteousness who alone can illuminate them.;

Sermon #2642 - "Think it not a strange thing that you are subject to this eclipse—others have been eclipsed, too—and all those who have found the Sun of Righteousness have had to run through the dark to get at Him! There must be a dark tunnel before we can get at Christ and we must grope through worse than an Egyptian night before we behold the face of God with joy."—1899,

Sermon #3314 - The glory of the Scriptures is like the glory of the heavens—'in them has He set a tabernacle for the sun' (Ps 19:4KJV - "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun")—and in the Word of God there is a tabernacle for the Sun of Righteousness. **It is within the Truths of Divine Revelation that Jesus Christ abides as the sun does in its proper sphere. What would the heavens be without the sun? And what would the Scriptures be without the Sun of Righteousness?"**—Volume 58,

Sermon #3172 - "And oh, poor troubled Soul, you see nothing and you know but little until Christ comes to you! But if He shall arise upon you as the Sun of Righteousness, you shall know all that you need to know and perceive everything that is delightful and comforting—and so your heart shall be glad!"—Volume 55

SUN-DIAL WITHOUT THE SUN - "A sun-dial may be well and accurately set, and yet, if the sun shines not, we cannot tell the time of day." Our evidences of grace are in much the same condition: they are good signs, but we cannot see them unless the grace of God shines upon them, and then we can almost do without them, even as an observant person can tell the time of day without a sun-dial, by looking to the sun itself. Present faith in a present Saviour is better than all the marks and evidences in the world. Yet let no man be content if the marks of a child of God are absent from his life, for they ought to be there, and must be there. The presence of sensible evidences must not be too much relied on; but the absence of them should cause great searching of heart. Our main concern should be to look daily and hourly unto Jesus, trusting in him, and not in evidences; judging the progress of our soul's day, rather by our view of the Sun of righteousness than by our own sun-dial. If Jesus be gone, all is gone: without his love we are darkness itself. What a sun-dial is without the sun, that is the fairest character, the choicest past experience, and the maturest knowledge without Jesus' fellowship. Rise, O Sun of my soul; end my doubts, if I have any; prevent them, if I have none.

WHY MEN ATE ACORNS - "The main reason why men dote upon the world is because they are not acquainted with a higher glory. Men ate acorns till they were acquainted with the use of corn; a candle is much ere the sun riseth." Now it has happened unto us to eat the bread of angels, and to see the Sun of righteousness, and never again can we find content in baser things. All the joys of the world are now but beggarly elements to us, compared with our delight in Christ Jesus our Lord.

BIRDS ON THE WING - "Birds are seldom taken in their flight; the more we are upon the wing of heavenly thoughts, the more we escape snares." O that we would remember this, and never tarry long on the ground lest the fowler ensnare us. We need to be much taken up with divine things, rising in thought above these temporal matters, or else the world will entangle us, and we shall be like birds held with limed twigs, or encompassed in a net. Holy meditation can scarcely be overdone; in this age we fear it never is. We are too worldly, and think too much of the fleeting trifles of time, and so the enemy gets an advantage of us, and takes a shot at us. O for more wing and more use of the flight we have! Communion with Jesus is not only sweet in itself, but it has a preserving power by bearing us aloft, above gun-shot of the enemy. Thoughts of heaven prevent discontent with our present lot, delight in God drives away love to the world, and joy in our Lord Jesus expels pride and carnal pleasure: thus we escape from many evils by rising above them. Up, then, my heart. Up from the weedy ditches and briery hedges of the world into the clear atmosphere of heaven. There where the dews of grace are born, and the sun of righteousness is Lord paramount, and the blessed wind of the Spirit blows from the everlasting hills, thou wilt find rest on the wing, and sing for joy where thine enemies cannot even see thee.

April 27 Daily Help - Christ never lingers long with dumb souls; if there is no crying out to Him, He departs. What a marvelous influence prayer has upon our fellowship with Jesus! We may always measure one by the other. Those who have been constant attendants on the kind Intercessor pray most fervently and frequently, while, on the other hand, those who wrestle the hardest in supplication will hold the angel the longest. Joshua's voice stayed the sun in the heavens for a few hours, but the voice of prayer can detain the **Sun of Righteousness** for months and even years.

Spurgeon comment on Jn 18:3 - What strange paraphernalia they brought with them to the garden of Gethsemane,- "lanterns" to show them the way to the Sun of righteousness, "torches" with which to find out the bright and morning Star and "weapons" with which to overcome the Lamb of God, who had nothing to oppose to them but his own innocence.

The Spare Half Hour - Surely, we are in a fog—the best of us feel the dread shadow of the fall hovering over us. O Sun of Righteousness, shine forth! Remove our darkness; in thy light let us see light. Then will our glad voices ring out thy praises, when we shall see thee as thou art, and shall be like thee! We would not give up what little we do see of our Beloved for all the world, for though it be but a glimpse, it is, nevertheless, a vision so blessed that it enables us to wait patiently until we shall see "the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off."

Flashes of Thought - Believers Influenced by Christ - Brethren, the Christian minister should be like these golden spring flowers which we are so glad to see. Have you observed them when the sun is shining? How they open their golden cups, and each one whispers to the great sun, "Fill me with thy beams!" but when the sun is hidden behind a cloud, where are they? They close their cups and droop their heads. So should the Christian feel the sweet influences of Jesus: so especially should the Christian minister be subject to his Lord.

Jesus must be his sun, and he must be the flower which yields itself to the Sun of Righteousness.

Sermon #3046 - "The most profound astronomer admires the Sun of Righteousness! The best-taught geologist has no quarrel with the Rock of Ages! The greatest mathematician marvels at Him who is the sum total of the universe! He who knows the most of the physical, if he knows aright, loves the spiritual and reverences God in Christ Jesus! To imagine that to be wise one needs forsake the Incarnate Wisdom is insanity! No, to reach the highest degree of attainment in true learning, there is no reason for departing from Christ."—Volume 53,

Feathers for Arrows - ORDER IN DUTY—its Beauty. Linnaeus, the great Swedish botanist, observing the beautiful order which reigns among flowers, proposed the use of a floral clock, to be composed of plants which open and close their blossoms at particular hours; as for instance the dandelion which opens its petals at six in the morning, the hawkweed at seven, the succory at eight, the celandine at nine, and so on; the closing of the flowers being marked with an equal regularity so as to indicate the progress of the afternoon and the evening.

"Thus has each hour its own rich hue,
And its graceful cup or bell,
In whose coloured vase may sleep the dew,
Like a pearl in an ocean shell."

Would it not be a lovely thing if thus with flowers of grace and blossoms of virtue we bedecked every passing hour; fulfilling all the duties of each season and honouring him who maketh the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice! Thus with undeviating regularity to obey the influence of the Sun of Righteousness, and give each following moment its due, were to begin the life of heaven beneath the stars.

Spurgeon exposition of Ps 19 - The sun rises... - The sun has his place, and keeps it, so let us keep ours. The sun is glorious in his goings forth,—“as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,”—glad himself, and making all things glad in his gladness; the whole world rejoices at the sight of the face of the sun. The sun is strong to go through his appointed orbit, and fulfill his ordained course. So may it be with us; may we not only have the gladness of our conversion, when we are “as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,” but may we have strength and grace to run the race set before us from the start to the finish. The sun makes his influence felt wherever he goes: “there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” So also may it be with us; may our influence be felt wherever we go! **The sun is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness; but he is also a type of what every Christian should be, for “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;”** (Pr 4:18) and there should be nothing hid from the fervent heat of our Christian character. We ought so to serve God that our influence should be felt everywhere. May God give us more of his light and his heat that we may shine and burn to his glory!

Spare Half Hour - Are we not all more or less traveling in a fog through this land

of cloud and gloom? What is life? 'Tis but a **vapor**; and that **vapor** is often a thick, light-obstructing mist! Of the forms around us in God's fair universe have we much more discernment than a fog-picture? To some extent "a formless gray confusion covers all." Where we see one trace of our glorious God, do we not fail to perceive a thousand of the divine touches of His pencil? We may not dare to say even of earthly things that "we see," or those who have formed some guess of what true seeing means will soon declare us to be blind. As to the revelation with which our heavenly Father has so graciously favored us, how little have we gazed upon it in the clear daylight of its own glory. Our prejudices, predilections, fancies, infirmities, follies, iniquities, unbeliefs, and vanities have raised a marsh-mist through which heaven's own stars can scarcely dart their cheering rays. There is light enough abroad if the dense fog would suffer it to reach us, but for want of the wind of heaven to chase away the obscuring vapors we walk in twilight and see but glimmerings of truth. We are proud indeed if we dream of attaining a clear view of heavenly things by our own carnal minds, while we grope under moral, mental, and spiritual glooms, which have made the best of men cry, "Enlighten our darkness, good Lord." Well did Paul say, "Here we know in part," and, "here we see through a glass darkly." We have not yet attained face-to-face vision: happy day shall it be when we escape from this cloud-land, and come into the true light where they need no candle, neither light of the sun. We who have believed are not of the night nor of darkness, but yet the smoke of things terrestrial dims our vision and clouds our prospect. When we think of the doctrines of grace, of the person of Christ, of the inward work of the Spirit—when we think of these simpler matters—to say nothing of the heaven which is to be revealed, of the prophetic apocalypse, or of the glorious coming of the Son of man, how great does our ignorance appear and how small our knowledge! Faith believes what her God has told her; but by reason of "the turbid air" in which we live, how little do we understand of what we believe! When our fellows boastingly cry, "We see," how readily may we detect their blindness. Those men who claim to know all things—who are incapable of further enlightenment—whose creed is made of cast iron and can never be altered—these are the most blind of us all, or else they dwell amid the thickest and densest mists. Surely, we are in a fog—the best of us feel the dread shadow of the fall hovering over us. **O Sun of Righteousness, shine forth! Remove our darkness; in thy light let us see light. Then will our glad voices ring out thy praises, when we shall see thee as thou art, and shall be like thee! We would not give up what little we do see of our Beloved for all the world, for though it be but a glimpse, it is, nevertheless, a vision so blessed that it enables us to wait patiently until we shall see "the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off."**

I. LET US THINK OF OUR LORD AS THE SUN.

1. He is the centre of the whole system of grace.
2. He is to us the Grand Attraction, and Holdfast, keeping us in our places, as the sun keeps the planets in their orbits.
3. He is the source of all good. His beams are righteousness: all that emanates from him is good: all good emanates from him; even as all light and heat come, directly or indirectly,

from the sun.

4. He is without variableness or shadow of turning. James 1:17. In himself he is for ever the same, shining on without ceasing.

5. To us he has his risings, and his settings. If for a while we are in the shade, let us look for his arising.

6. To those who fear him not he never rises, for they are blind, and know no day, and see no light.

What the world would be without the sun, that should we be without our Lord. Can we conceive the gloom, the death, etc.?

II. LET US ENJOY THE BLESSINGS WHICH HE SCATTERS.

1. What light of knowledge, what warmth of love, what radiance of joy we receive from him! Let us walk in it.

2. What health he gives! Healing for the sick, health for the strong.

Every sunbeam is medicinal, every word of Christ is life.

The earlier we come to Christ the better: his rising is attended with sparkling dews of joy.

The more we commune with him the better: let us bask in the sunlight.

3. What liberty he brings! "Ye shall go forth."

When the sun has reached a certain point in his annual course, the cattle which have been stalled are led forth to the mountain pastures; so the Lord Jesus sets his people free, and they go forth—

To enjoy spiritual privileges.

To perform spiritual duties.

To reach spiritual attainments.

To carry abroad spiritual influences.

4. What growth he fosters!—"and grow up as calves of the stall."

When the Lord Jesus is with his people—

They are abundantly fed.

They are comfortably housed.

They are regularly tended.

They advance rapidly to maturity.

A heart which communes with Jesus possesses a freshness of youth, an ease of life, and other advantages, which admirably fulfil the comparison of “calves of the stall.”

As all this comes of fearing the Lord, let us be diligent in worship, careful in obedience, and reverent in spirit.

As all this comes through our Lord Jesus, let us abide under his sweet influences, and never move out of his sunshine into that far off country, where the Arctic winter is never cheered by the Sun of righteousness.

We have not to make a Sun, or move the Sun, or buy the Sun; but only to step into the free and blessed sunshine. Why do we hesitate?

Why do we not by faith pass from darkness into his marvellous light?

THE RISING SUN

A Sermon DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”—Malachi 4:2.

THE Jews expected that the coming of the Messiah would exalt every one of the Israelitish race. Their expectations were great, but they were also carnal and sensuous, since they looked for an earthly king, who would make the despised nation victorious over all its enemies, and enrich every man of Abraham’s race. The Scriptures gave them no ground for such universal expectations, but quite the reverse, and in the chapter which is now before us **the prophet explains that the coming of Christ would certainly be like the rising of the sun, full of glory and of brightness, but the results would not be the same to all.** To those who thought that they were righteous, and despised others, but who were wicked in their conversation, the rising of that sun would bring a burning, withering day. Read the Malachi 4:1.

“The day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble.” They shall not be like plants full of sap that would flourish in the tropical heat, but like stubble, which becomes drier and drier, until it takes fire: “and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord, that it shall leave them neither root nor stock,” for so might it be translated, and then the figure would be congruous throughout.

It would scorch up the stubble-field in which there was no life, so intense would be the heat. Now that was the consequence of Christ’s coming. The religion of the Jews at his coming was dry and dead, like stubble. The Pharisee thought that he was righteous

because he put on a broad phylactery, and tithed anise, and mint, and cummin, and such trifles; the Sadducee thought much of himself because he was a man of common sense, a thinker, a rationalist; and other sectaries of that period found equally frivolous grounds for glorying. The ministry of Christ dried them right up, and they have ceased to be.

We use the name of Pharisee and Sadducee to-day, but there is no person in the world who would like to wear either name. The result of Christ's coming, by his Spirit as well as by his personal advent, is always much the same. Should the Spirit of God visit this church with revival it will not have an equally beneficial effect upon all. To some the rising of this sun will bring healing and blessing, but to others it will bring scorching and withering. Know ye not that the summertide which fills the corn and makes it hang its golden head, blushing in very modesty for the blessing which has come upon it, fetches up also the noxious weeds from their secret lairs. Tares gather encouragement from the sun as well as doth the wheat, and so the bad come to their ripeness as well as the good; but the ripeness of that which is bad is only a hurrying on to destruction: the dryness of the stubble is the preparation for its being utterly consumed. We may well pray for revival, but we must not suppose that to the mere formalist a revival will bring a blessing. It may possibly disgust him, and drive him from religion altogether. He will discover that he has no true religion, as he sees the work of the Spirit of God around him, and so the day of the Lord will to him "burn as an oven," and being proud and at the same time doing wickedly, his empty profession of religion will consume like the stubble.

The coming of the Messiah was to bring to another class a fulness of blessing, and it is of these we have to speak. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise," not with scorching, but "with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth,"—ye shall not be dried up, and burnt, and destroyed, but ye shall "grow up as calves of the stall." You shall obtain great blessings through the presence of your Lord. Two things will take up our attention; the first is, the description of the people of God—"**Unto you that fear my name**"; and the second is, the blessing which is promised to them—"**the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.**"

I. Here are TRUE SAINTS DESCRIBED. Let us look at them. The description may be divided into two parts. First, here is their abiding character—they fear the name of the Lord; and secondly, we gather from the text their accidental character, a character which is not always theirs, but into which they sometimes fall, namely, that they need healing, for were they not sick there would be no need of the promise that the Sun of righteousness should arise upon them with healing in his wings.

Notice then, first, their abiding character, they fear the name of the Lord. I am delighted to think that this promise is given to this particular character, for it thus comes to beginners in grace. "**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,**"—it is not the highest grace, nor the loftiest attainment of the spiritual nature. Bless the Lord, therefore, ye weak and feeble ones, that the promise is given to you. You do fear the Lord. There are times when we ask ourselves whether we know the rapture of love, and we question greatly whether we ever had the assurance of faith, but even then we know that

we have an awe of God.

Jonah in the ship was in a very sinful state of mind, and was fleeing away from God, but yet he did not hesitate to say, "I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord." This is the abiding character of the saints in their worst state. If they backslide, they still fear the name of the Lord. They fear it at times very slavishly, with the spirit of bondage, but they do fear it. They lose the evidence of their sonship, and they cease to walk in the light, but still they have a fear of the Most High: they do not treat him lightly, they could not sin against him cheaply, there is still within their hearts a sense of his greatness. It generally assumes the form of a reverence of his person. They know there is a God, and they are sure that he made the heavens and the earth; they are equally clear that he is everywhere present, marking the ways of men. Others may blaspheme, but they cannot; others may sin and make merry with it, but sin costs them dear; others may feast themselves without apprehension, but they cannot, for they fear the Lord. I know that this expresses all true religion and has a very comprehensive meaning, but it suits my purpose just now to view it as a description of believers, which is true of them all, into whatever state they may come. They still fear the Lord.

Now, soul, dost thou tremble before God? There is something in that. I do not ask thee whether thou tremblest at hell. That were no sign of grace, for what thief will not tremble at the gallows? I do not ask thee if thou art afraid of death. What mortal man is not, unless he has a good hope through grace? But dost thou tremble in the presence of God because thou hast offended him, and dost thou tremble in the presence of sin lest thou shouldst again offend him? Does it ever come over thee thus—"**How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?**" Just as some men are kept back from crime by the fear of the law art thou kept back from folly by the fear of God? Just as some are impelled to energy by the fear of poverty, so art thou impelled to the divine service by a sense of the fact that not to serve him is to abide under his wrath? It is a low and small matter compared with the higher graces which God worketh in his people, but still it is a precious thing even to tremble at his word. I am glad to think that many of you have lately begun to fear God. I bless his name that you cannot live now as you once did. You are uneasy in your former careless way. I am right glad of it, and though I cannot be sure that this fear may not be a slavish fear, yet I hope for the best, and pray that it may ripen into that real fear of God which is always a work of grace in the soul, so that the promise of our text may belong to you.

Now, beloved, I have said that the description which is here given of the people of God denotes not only their **abiding character**, that they fear the Lord, but it also mentions their **occasional character**. They sometimes fall into a condition which they deplore, and this the text intimates, first, by the fact that **the Sun of righteousness is to arise upon them; for this implies that they were in the dark until then. Whatever other light there may be, we every one of us know that until the sun rises our condition is one of comparative darkness. There are children of God who walk in darkness, dear children of God, too; indeed, I am inclined to think that every child of God gets into the dark sometimes.** Some begin with brightness, and then

they get a cloudy time in the middle of their experience, while others have their worst darkness at last. Knox and Luther had their sharpest temptations when they came to die. It has been well said that God sometimes puts his children to bed in the dark. It does not matter, for they wake up in the light, in the eternal morning; but a dark season usually happens to us somewhere between the new birth and heaven, perhaps to make the brightness all the brighter when the night shall be for ever ended. **Are you in the dark at this moment, dear brother, and are you, wondering at it because everybody else seems so lively in their religion? Dear sister, does it seem to you as if, though you have been a believer for years, you were never in a worse state than now, while others are rejoicing?** Then ask yourself—Do you fear the Lord still? Is your soul humbled in the presence of his majesty, and have you a desire for his glory? Never despair; the Sun shall rise upon you soon.

Very clear is it from the text, too, that the children of God may sometimes be in ill health, for the Sun of righteousness is to arise upon them with healing in his wings, which would not be so needful a promise if they were not sick. A Christian may be bowed down with grievous spiritual maladies. His pulse may beat slowly, his heart may become feeble; he may be alive, and that may be about all; lethargy may seize him, palsy may make him tremble despondently, he may have wandered from his God. Alas! even an ague fit may be upon him, in which he shakes with unbelief from head to foot. It may be his eyes have become so blinded that he cannot see afar off; and his ears may be dull of hearing, and he may be like the fools in the psalm, whose souls abhorred all manner of meat. He may have put away from him the comforts of the promise, and he may be brought very low; yet he shall not die, but live, and proclaim the works of the Lord, for the soul sickness of a saint is not unto death. He shall be recovered from it, and he shall sing of the Lord whose name is “Jehovah Rophi, the Lord that healeth thee.” Oh, child of God, if thou art in a sick and sorrowing state, cry mightily unto thy Lord, and the Sun of righteousness shall arise upon thee with healing in his wings.

Note again, that the children of God, according to our text, may be in a condition of bondage, for it is said that when the Sun of righteousness arises “they shall go forth as calves of the stall.” Understand the figure. The calf in the stall is shut up, tied up with a halter at night, but when the sun rises the calf goes forth to the pasture; the young bullock is set free. So the child of God may be in bondage. The recollection of past sins and present unbelief may halter him up and keep him in the stall, but when the Lord reveals himself he is set free. Even true children of God may sometimes have to cry like Paul that they are sold under sin; they may forget the blood of redemption for a season, and think themselves still to be slaves, and yet be the true children of God. Hence the beauty of the promise that they shall go forth.

Yes, and there is more in the text. The children of God may be in such a state that they are not growing, for else we should not have the promise, “Ye shall go forth and grow up” when the Sun of righteousness shall shine. Do you, my dear brother, feel as if you had not grown in grace for months? You need the Sun of righteousness to shine upon you, and you will grow as the plants do. The trees are all bare in winter, and their boughs apparently

sear and dead, but bring us the spring sun, and the buds will begin to swell, the leaves will appear, and the trees shall blossom and yield fruit. So shall it be with you. The Lord has not left you. You may have stayed in your growth awhile, but you shall grow again.

Once more, the child of God may get into such a condition that he has lost his joy, for I will tell you a secret about the text: it might be, and probably ought to be, translated, for the Septuagint has it so, and the Hebrew has that force, "They shall go forth and leap like calves of the stall." The young cattle may have been kept under cover in the winter, but when the sun brings the spring the fields are green, and you let the calves loose. There is joy about the creatures' movements. Even so when the Lord appears to his people, they move with delight, and dance for joy of heart. The Lord's love within them shall make them give expression to their joy. I pray that you may feel this intense delight in gospel liberty and leap for joy. Thus I have described the people to whom the promise comes.

II. My second and most pleasing duty is TO OPEN UP THE PROMISE ITSELF. "The Sun of righteousness shall arise." Child of God in the dark, in prison, ungrowing and unhappy, what a promise is here for you! "The Sun of righteousness shall arise." His rising is to do it all, there is nothing for you to do, no works for you to perform in order to get the needed blessing. The Sun of righteousness shall arise; now, the rising of the sun is one of the most wonderful things in nature, not merely for its grandeur and beauty, but for its sublime display of strength. Who could hold back the horses of the sun? What hand could block the golden wheel of his chariot, or bid him stay his course? The time is come for him to rise, and lo, he delights the world with dawn. Holy Spirit, such is thy power. When it is thy time to work who can stand against thee? As the sun floods the whole earth with his splendour, and no power can hinder his movements, so will the Holy Spirit work, and none can let him. Plead ye then this promise to-night and cry: "O Sun of righteousness, arise upon those that fear thee: come now in all thy majesty and wealth of grace: pour upon us thy light and heat and life, and fill this place with thy glory."

Now mark what will be the result of his rising. As soon as ever this sun is up and Christ begins to shine upon his people, they enjoy a clear light. They were in the dark before, but they are in the light now. I have been living for awhile in a country where the sun is everything. The temperature and the atmosphere are made salubrious and delicious, I had almost said celestial, by his presence. When he shines not the sick pine and the healthy are gloomy, but when clouds no longer veil his face we are as in the garden of the Lord. Everything depends upon the sun. Step down into a valley where he has not shone, and you will find frost; cross the street into the shade, and you shiver in the cold. So clear does the atmosphere become through the removal of all fogs and mists that sometimes we have seen a hundred miles across the sea, rising up like a fair vision, the mountains of distant Corsica. I cannot help using the illustration, because it is so distinctly before me. When the Sun of righteousness arises upon a Christian, and shines full upon him, he does not see islands a hundred miles away, but he sees the golden gates of the celestial city, and the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off; for the presence of Christ clears the atmosphere, and enables us to see the invisible. Unto you that fear his name may the Sun of righteousness arise and give you just such clearness and light.

But according to the text, the Sun of righteousness, when it rises on those that fear the Lord, gives them healing. There is healing in its wings. By the wings of the sun are meant the beams that shoot up from it into the air, or seem to slant down from it when it is aloft in the sky. There is really healing to men's bodies in the sun. Have we not seen them come to the sunny land consumptive and doubled with weakness, and as they have sat in the sun and warmed themselves for a few weeks, the wound within the lung has begun to heal, and the consumptive man has breathed again, and you have seen that he would live. Some have gone thither who scarce could speak, and beneath the sun they began to speak again, like men whose youth has been renewed. The sun is the great physician. Where he enters not the physician will be needed, but where he shines men speedily revive. As for the Sun of righteousness, oh, how he heals the sick! I would like you sick Christians to sit in his sunlight by the year together, if you did nothing else but bask there, as animals delight to bask in the sun. The flowers know the sun, and they turn their cups to him and drink in of the health he gives them from his golden store. Oh, that we had as much sense to know the Sun of righteousness, that we might by prayer, and meditation, and holy living, bask and sun ourselves in his delicious beams. We shall be strong indeed if he rises upon us with healing in his wings. He has risen, but we wander into the shade: he has risen, but we get into the ice wells of worldliness and sin, and shut out his warmth, and then we wonder we are sick, but sick we always shall be till we come out into the light again, and Jesus shines on us from morn till eve.

I must not enlarge upon any one point, for my time is limited; but I would have you notice how the text says that when the Sun of righteousness shines the Christian gets his liberty. "Ye shall go forth." I have been staying where the invalid does not venture out if the wind blows, and if it is a little chill and the sun is not bright he must stay indoors or lose the benefit he has received; but when the sun is out and the air is calm, then he comes forth and leaves his bedroom, and is all alive once more. There are Christians who have been kept indoors a long time; they have not walked the length of the promise, nor spied out the breadth of the covenant, nor climbed to the top of Pisgah to gaze upon the landscape. O beloved, if the Sun of righteousness, even the Lord Jesus, shall shine upon you, you will go forth not only to enjoy Christian life, but to enter into Christian service, and you will go further afield to bring others to Christ.

Then you will begin to grow. That is another effect of the sun, and how wonderfully the sunlight makes things grow. Here we have in our hot-houses little plants that we think so wonderful that we show them to our friends, and put them on our tables as rarities, but I have seen them in the sunny south ten times as large growing in the open fields, because the sun has looked upon them. The rarities of our country are the common-places of the land of the sun. I have known Christians who have received a little faith and been perfectly astonished at it, and God has blessed them with a little love to Jesus, and they have felt as though they were splendid saints; but if they lived in the sunlight they might move mountains by their faith, and their love would lead them to devote their whole life to Jesus, and yet they would not be astonished. The Sun of righteousness can produce fruits rich and rare. Our cold, sunless land, beneath its cloud and fog, what can it yield in the winter? In more favoured parts of the earth, even in our winter, the trees are golden with fruits. So

is it with the soul. What can it grow if it lives in worldliness? What can it produce if it lives to itself? But when it knows the love of Jesus and the power of his grace, even in its worst estate it brings forth the richest and the rarest fruit to the glory of his grace.

I shall close by exhorting my fellow church members to live in the sunlight. Get out of the shadows. There are dreary glens in this world where the sun never shines: they are called glens of pleasure, and sometimes the pale moon looks down on them with sickly ray; but the saint knows the light of the sun from the light of the world's moon. Get away from those chill places into the clear light. "But," says one, "I did not know there were joys in religion." My dear friend, do you know true religion then? for it is "a thing of beauty, and a joy for ever." He who knows Christ has seen the sun, but till he has known him he has seen but the glow-worm's glitter. Peace, deep peace, he never knew who never knew the power of the blood; and joy, real joy, such as angels call joy, he never knew who never trusted in the Saviour's atoning sacrifice. Oh, come ye depressed and distressed and despondent ones, whose religion has been slavery, and whose profession has been bondage: get a true baptism into Christ by faith in him, and when you have been plunged into the Godhead's deepest sea then shall you know a joy and peace which pass all understanding. The world gives them not: it cannot take them away. "Unto you that fear the Lord, the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings."

I would encourage those who fear the Lord a little, I mean the seekers. Come ye into the light. Come and welcome, none will question your right. I never heard of anybody yet who said "I must not sit in the sun; the sun is not mine." The lords of this world have hedged in every acre, and there is scarce a sterile mountain side which is not guarded with "trespassers beware." But they cannot hedge in the blessed sunlight; no, not even for an hour. Through the poor man's window, though the glass be broken and stuffed up with rags, a beam of sunlight will pierce its way as gladly as into the halls of monarchs: it shines on the beggar's rags as well as on the prince's scarlet: it is free. When Diogenes bade Alexander get out of his sunlight he had a right to do so, for the sunlight belonged as much to Diogenes in his tub as to Alexander who had conquered a world. O meanest of the mean in thine own judgment, lowest of the low in thine own esteem, guiltiest of the guilty as thy conscience calls thee before God, know thou that the Sun of righteousness has risen, and his light is free. Come into the sunlight; come into the sunlight! "Oh, but I shall get better soon: I am sick, but I shall get better soon." Come into the sunlight, man, for there is healing beneath the wings of the Sun of righteousness, but nowhere else. "I am kindling a fire, I am hoping that I may get warm by the sparks of my own kindling." Come into the sunlight, man. What were all thy fires? Though thou shouldst set Lebanon upon a blaze, and take all the timber that ever grew on Sirion to make a pile thereof, what were it as compared with yonder mighty furnace of the sun, which has burnt on for ages, and will burn on till the last eye of mortal man shall have looked upon it? O soul, go not about with thy whims and thy fancies to save thyself: but come into the sunlight! Come into the sunlight, man! "But perhaps I may not." Who is the poorer if the sunlight shine on thee? There is enough for others even though it pour its floods on thee. The sun is no brighter if thou hast not his beams; he will be no duller though thou and a thousand like thee should lie by the century together basking in his light. So with Jesus. "In him dwelleth

all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." If thou take all the mercy that can be wanted to lift thee up from the gates of hell to heaven itself he will have as much mercy left. If all the merit thou canst want to save thy condemned spirit and make thee into a child of God should be thine, as I pray it may, there will be as much merit left in Christ as ever. Why keep back? Why keep back? "But I am so base." Does not the sun shine on dunghills? May not the mercy of God shine on thee, thou dunghill sinner? Thou canst not be too low, thou canst not be too vile; the infinite mercy of God, like the infinite light of the sun, can reach thee. "Alas, I am dark." And what night was too dark for the sun to turn it into day? "Alas, I am cold." But what iceberg was too cold for the sun to thaw it? What winter was too severe for the sun to turn it into summer? Yield thyself up, thou icicle, yield to the sun, and it will melt thee. Yield thyself up, thou dead and shrivelled bough, to that dear sunbeam which waits to kiss thee now, and it will awaken life within thee, and warm thee till thou shalt be laden with rich fruit, to the praise and glory of the Sun of righteousness which has risen upon thee. The Lord grant it may be so with us all, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

A Sermon

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 12TH,
1871, BY
C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

"In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bride-groom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."—Psalm 19:4, 5, 6.

"The Sun of righteousness."—Malachi 4:2.

WE should feel quite justified in applying the language of the 19th Psalm to our Lord Jesus Christ from the simple fact that he is so frequently compared to the sun; and especially in the passage which we have given you as our second text, wherein he is called "the Sun of Righteousness." But we have a higher justification for such a reading of the passage, for it will be in your memories that, in the 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul, slightly altering the words of this psalm, applies them to the gospel and the preachers thereof. "Have they not heard?" said he, "Yea, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." So that what was here spoken of the sun by David, is referred by Paul to the gospel, which is the light streaming from Jesus Christ, "the Sun of Righteousness." We can never err if we allow the New Testament to interpret the Old: comparing spiritual things with spiritual is a good mental and spiritual

exercise for us; and I feel, therefore, that we shall not be guilty of straining the text at all when we take the language of David in relation to the sun, and use it in reference to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not your hearts often say, "What shall we do, or what shall we say to render honor unto our Redeemer?" Have you not often felt confounded as to what offering you shall bring to him? If you had been possessor of all the worlds, you would have laid them at his feet; if the universe had been your heritage, you would cheerfully have resigned it to him, and felt happy in stripping yourself of everything, that he might be rendered the more glorious by your sacrifice. Since you have not all this wealth, have you not again and again asked of your soul,

"Oh what shall I do,

My Saviour to praise?"

I would write the best of poems if so I could extol him, but the faculty is not in me; I would sing the sweetest of songs, and compose the most melting music, if I could, and count art, and wit, and music exalted by being handmaidens to him; but, wherewithal shall I adore him, before whom the best music on earth must be but discord; and how shall I set him forth, the very skirts of whose garments are bright with insufferable light? At such times you have looked the whole world through to find metaphors to heap upon him; you have culled all the fair flowers of nature, and made them into garlands to cast at his feet, and you have gathered all earth's gems and precious things wherewith to crown his head, but you have been disappointed with the result, and have cried out with our poet:—

"The whole creation can afford

But some faint shadows of my Lord;

Nature, to make his beauties known,

Must mingle colours not her own."

At such times, while ransacking land, and sea, and sky for metaphors, you have probably looked upon the sun, and have said: "This great orb, the lord of light and lamp of day, is like my Saviour; it is the faint image of his excellent glory whose countenance shineth as the sun in its strength." You have done well to seize on such a figure. What Milton calls the golden-tressèd sun is the most glorious object in creation, and in Jesus the fulness of glory dwells; the sun is at the same time the most influential of existences, acting upon the whole world, and truly our Lord is, in the deepest sense, "of this great world both eye and soul; he "with benignant ray sheds beauty, life, and joyance from above. The sun is, moreover, the most abiding of creatures; and therein it is also a type of him who remaineth from generation to generation, and is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The king of day is so vast and so bright that the human eye cannot bear to gaze upon him; we delight in his beams, but we should be blinded should we continue to peer into his face; even yet more brilliant is our Lord by nature, for as God he is a consuming fire, but he deigns to smile upon us with milder beams as our brother and Redeemer. Jesus, like the

sun, is the centre and soul of all things, the fulness of all good, the lamp that lights us, the fire that warms us, the magnet that guides and controls us; he is the source and fountain of all life, beauty, fruit-fulness, and strength; he is the fosterer of tender herbs of penitence, the quickener of the vital sap of grace, the ripener of fruits of holiness, and the life of everything that grows within the garden of the Lord. Whereas to adore the sun would be idolatry; it were treason not to worship ardently the divine Sun of Righteousness.

Jesus Christ is the great, the glorious, the infinitely blessed; even the sun fails to set him forth; but, as it is one of the best figures we can find, be it ours to use it this day. We will think of Jesus as the Sun this morning; first, as in the text; secondly, as he is to us; and then, thirdly, for a few minutes, we will bask in his beams.

I. First, then, we will contemplate JESUS AS THE SUN IN THE TEXT.

Note how the passage begins: "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun." Kings were accustomed in their pompous progresses through their dominions to have canopies of splendour borne aloft over them, so that marching in the midst of their glittering soldiery they were themselves the main attraction of the gorgeous pageant. Our Lord Jesus Christ in his church is, as it were, traversing the heavens in a majestic tabernacle, and, like the sun, scattering his beams among men. The Redeemer is canopied by the adoration of his saints, for he "inhabiteth the praises of Israel." He is from day to day advancing in his glorious marchings through the universe, conquering and to conquer, and he will journey onward till the dispensation shall terminate, and the gospel age shall be closed by his second advent. When the text saith that there is a tabernacle set for the sun in the firmament, we are reminded of Christ as dwelling in the highest heavens. He is not alone the Christ of ancient history, but he is the Christ of to-day. Think not always of him as the lowly man despised and rejected, as nailed to the cross, or buried in the tomb; he is not here, for he is risen, but he still exists, not as a dream or phantom, but as the real Christ. Doubt it not, for up yonder, in the seventh heaven, the Lord has set a tabernacle for the Sun of Righteousness. There Jesus abides in splendour inconceivable, the joy and glory of all those blessed spirits who, having believed in him on the earth, have come to behold him in the heavens.

"Bright, like a sun, the Saviour sits,

And spreads eternal noon;

No evenings there, nor gloomy nights,

To want the feeble moon."

That Jesus lives is a deep well of consolation to the saints, and did we always remember it our hearts would not be troubled. If we always remembered that Jesus both lives and reigns, our joys would never wither. We worship him, it is true, as one who was slain and hath redeemed us unto God by his blood; but we also extol him as one who is "alive for evermore, and hath the keys of death and of hell."

Let your faith to-day behold Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, even the Father. He sits

there because his atoning work is done, and he is receiving the infinite reward which his Father promised him. He is exalted as a king upon his throne, expecting until his enemies are made his footstool. He dwells within his tabernacle of praise, adored and admired by angels and glorified spirits. He sits there, not as a weary one, feeble and exhausted, but with the keys of universal monarchy at his girdle, for “the government is upon his shoulder, and his name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God.” I want you fully to grasp the thought of the living Saviour,—of the Sun in his tabernacle in the highest heavens, for this must be the fulcrum upon which we shall work this morning. We shall get our leverage here: the living Saviour, the mighty Saviour, the reigning Saviour; he is the church’s joy and hope in the present and for all years to come.

The text proceeds to speak of Jesus as the sun, and describes him first as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. A beautiful description indeed of the sun when he rises in the early morning. He comes forth from the vast obscure, as from within a secret chamber. He withdraws the veil of night, and floods the earth with fluid gold. From curtains of purple and vermillion, he looks forth, and scatters orient pearl around him. Clad with a blaze of glory, he begins the race of day. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ when he rose from the dead, was as the sun unveiling itself. He came forth from the sepulchre as a bridegroom from his chamber. Observe that dear name of bridegroom. The Lord of heaven and earth, between whom and us there was an infinite distance, has deigned to take our humanity into union with himself of the most intimate kind. Among men, there is no surer mode of making peace between two contending parties, than for a marriage to be established between them. It has often so been done, and thus wars have been ended, and alliances have been established. The Prince of Peace on heaven’s side condescends to be married to our nature, that henceforth heaven and earth may be as one. Our Lord came as the bridegroom of his church out of his chamber, when he was born of the virgin and was revealed to the shepherds and the wise men of the east; yet, in a certain sense, he still continued in his chamber as a bridegroom all his life, for he was hidden and veiled, the Jewish world knew not their king; though he spake openly in their streets and sought not mystery, yet he was unknown, they did not discern him; and in some respects he did not then desire to be discerned, for he often bade his disciples to tell no man what was done. That was the time when the bridegroom was in his chamber, being made perfect through suffering and perfectly conformed unto his church, bearing her sicknesses and her sorrows, suffering her wants, enduring her shame, and thus completing the marriage union between the two. To this end, he actually descended by dark steps of anguish into the silent inner room of the grave, and there he slept in his chamber, perfectly wedded to his church. Come and look at him, you who admire the lover of your souls; he stooped to death and the sepulchre, because manhood had fallen under their yoke; his church was subject to death, and he must die. She deserved to suffer the penalty due to God’s insulted law, and, therefore, Jesus bowed his head to the stroke.

“Yea, said the Son, with her I’ll go

Through all the depths of sin and woe;

And on the cross will even dare

The bitter pains of death to bear.”

And he did bear them, and in the darksome chamber of the tomb, he proved how true a bridegroom he was to his church. Before his great race began, of which we are soon to speak, it behoved our mighty champion to descend into the lowest parts of the earth, and sleep among the dead. Before every day there is a night wherein darkness seems to triumph. It behoved Christ to suffer, and then to rise again. His descent was necessary to his ascent; his sojourn in the chamber to his race and victory.

Thus I have introduced to you the prelude of the race, the bride-groom in his chamber. Now observe the coming out of it. The sun comes forth, at the appointed hour, from the gates of day, and begins to gladden the earth; even so on the third day, early in the morning, Jesus, our Lord, arose from his sleep, and there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre. Then did the Sun of Righteousness arise. Then did the great Bridegroom come forth from his chamber, and begin his joyful race. It must have been a ravishing sight to have beheld the risen Saviour; well might the disciples hold him by the feet and worship him. Methinks, if ever angels sung more sweetly at one time than another, it must have been on that first Easter morning, when they saw the divine champion break his bonds of death asunder, and rise into the glorious resurrection life. Then was he revealed to the sons of men; and, no longer hidden: he began to tell his disciples the meaning of those enigmas which had been dark to them; things which they had not understood, which seemed inexplicable, were all opened up by him, for now was his time to come out of his chamber. His words, though plain enough, had aforesaid hidden him even from those who loved him; but now he speaketh no more in proverbs, but showeth them openly concerning himself and the Father. He hath laid aside the incognito in which he traversed the earth as a stranger, and he is now divinely familiar with his friends, bidding them even touch his hands and his side. In his death the veil was rent, and in his resurrection the High Priest came forth in his robes of glory and beauty. A little while he was gone away, but he returned from the secret chambers of the ivory palaces, and showed himself unto his disciples. Blessed were the eyes that saw him in that day.

Though during the forty days in which our Lord lingered among his followers upon earth we may truly say that he had come out of his chamber, we perceive that he more fully did so when, after the forty days had been accomplished, he took his disciples to the top of Olivet, and there ascended into heaven, out of their sight. Then had the sun indeed ascended above the horizon to make his glories stream along the heavens. See ye not the angelic bands poising themselves upon the wing in mid-air, waiting until he shall return all glowing with the victory won in long and deadly fight. Mark ye well that matchless spectacle as he is “seen of angels.”

“The helmed cherubim

And sworded seraphim,

Are seen in glittering ranks, with wings displayed.”

They have hastened to meet the Prince of Glory, and attend him to his ancient patrimony. Right glad are all the heavenly band to welcome back the Captain of the Lord's host, and, therefore, they harp in loud and solemn quire to Heaven's triumphant Heir. As for the glorified of mortal race, redeemed of old by his blood which in the fulness of time was shed, they hail him with gladdest hymn, and lift up their sweetest symphonies to extol him who finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. Then the bridegroom came out of his chamber with fit marriage music: his beauties hidden awhile in the chamber, where he was regarded as without form or comeliness, blazed forth with renewed splendour, such as confounded both sun and moon.

In another respect, Christ came out of his chamber at his ascension, because, when he ascended on high, leading captivity captive, he received and gave gifts for men. The gifts were intended for the manifestation of himself. His church, which is his body, was by his own command sitting still in the chamber, tarrying till power was, given. But, on a sudden, the bridegroom's power was felt, for there was heard the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, which filled all the place, and then descending upon each favoured head came the cloven tongue, and, straightway, you could see that the bridegroom had come out of his chamber, for the multitude in the street began to hear his voice. It was Peter that spake, we say, but far rather was it Christ, the bridegroom, who spake by Peter. It was the sun, from the chambers of the east, bursting through the clouds, and beginning to shine on Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and Rome, and Egypt, and making the multitudes in far off lands to see the day which prophets and kings had waited for, but which had never visited their eyes. Do you hear the joyful motion among the people, the joy mingled with the sorrows of repentance? This is the singing of birds, and these the dewdrops which hail the rising sun. The people cry, "What must we do to be saved?"—the shadows are fleeing. They believe in Jesus, and are baptised into his name,—the true light is shining. Three thousand souls are added in one day to the church, for truly the bridegroom is awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine (Psalm 78:65). Then was the gospel race commenced with a glorious burst of strength, such as only our champion could have displayed. Meditate at your leisure upon this first general manifestation of our Lord to the general multitude. He had not gone out of Israel before. "I am not sent," said he, "save to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." Palestine was his chamber: lie went to the windows of it, and looked forth on Tyre and Sidon wistfully; but he had not come forth of his chamber till that day, when the gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles also, and in fulfilment of the gift of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out upon all flesh, the apostles went everywhere preaching the word. When even we, the dwellers in the far off northern isles, received the gospel, then, indeed, had the bridegroom come forth out of his chamber.

But enough of this, or time will fail me. After the coming forth, we have to consider in the text his course. The course of Jesus has been as that of the sun, or like that of a mighty champion girded for running.

Notice, under this head, his continuance. Our Lord's gospel has been no meteor that flashed for a while and then passed away, but it has remained as the sun in the heavens.

What systems of philosophy have come and gone since on Calvary the Christ of God was lifted up! What speculations, what lo-heres and lo-theres have shone forth, have dazzled fools, and have been quenched in night, since he left the chamber of his marriage! Yet he continues still the same; nor, brethren, are there any marks of decrepitude either in him or in his gospel. They tell us that the idolatry of Hindostan is evidently crumbling: it falls not yet, but it is worm-eaten through and through. Equally sure is it that the false prophet holds but a feeble sway among his followers, and we can all see that though popery makes desperate efforts, and its extremities are vigorous, yet it is paralysed at its heart, and the Vatican is made to feel that its time of power is short.

As for the gospel, it wears the dew of its youth after eighteen centuries of struggles; and it predominates most in those young nations which have evidently a history before them. The old systems are now most favoured by those nations which are left behind in the race of civilisation, but the peoples whom God has made quick by nature are those to whom he has given to be receptive of his grace. There are grand days coming for the church of God. Voltaire said that he lived in the twilight of Christianity; and so he did, but it was the twilight of the morning, not the twilight of the evening. Glory be unto God, the little cloud the size of a man's hand is spreading; it begins to cover the heavens, and the day is not far distant when the sound of abundance of rain shall be heard. Christ was not a strong man, who bounded forth at a leap, and then put forth no more strength, but he rejoiced to continue his work, and to run his race. He was not a shooting star that sparkles for a moment, but a sun that shall shine throughout the livelong day.

Note next in this metaphor the unity of our Lord's course, for it is clear in the text: "Rejoicing as a strong man to run the race." A race is one thing; there is the one goal, and the man gathers up his strength to reach it. He has nothing else to think of. They may throw the golden apples in his road, but he does not observe them; they may sound harp and sackbut to the right, and breathe the lute or sweeter instruments of music to the left, but he is deaf to all; he has a a race to run, and he throws his whole strength into it. This is a fit image of our Lord; he has never turned aside, he has never been compelled to retrace his steps, to revise his doctrine, to amend his system, or change his tactics. On, on, on has the course of Jesus been, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

A certain people now-a-days who yet dare to call themselves Christians, are always hankering after something new, pining for novelties, and boasting of their fresh discoveries, though, forsooth, their fresh things are only fragments of broken images of heresies, which our fathers dashed to shivers centuries ago. The great thinkers of the present day are nothing more than mere translators—you know the London meaning of that word—buyers of old shoes who patch them up, and send them forth again as if they were something new. Old shoes and clouted are common enough among those Gibeonites who would deceive Israel, and whose boast is that they have come from far, and bring us treasures of wisdom from remote regions. Sirs, we want not your new things, for our Lord's race is the same as of old, and as he continues in one course so also will we. To spread righteousness and, in so doing, to save sinners and to glorify God, this is the one purpose of Christ; from it he will never cease, and nothing shall ever tempt him from the pursuit of

it. Look, I pray you, with pleasure and see how our Lord, from his first coming out of his chamber until now, has continued still in the gospel to shine forth with rays of glory, without variableness or shadow of a turning. Though we believe not, he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself; he changes not in work or way. For Zion's sake he worketh hitherto, and the pleasure of the Lord prospers in his hand.

But now, observe next, the notable idea of strength which the text conveys to us. "Rejoicing as a strong man to run his race." It is no drudgery to the ascended Lord to carry on his cause:

"The baffled prince of hell

In vain new efforts tries,

Truth's empire to repel

By cruelty and lies;

Th' infernal gates shall rage in vain.

Conquest awaits the Lamb once slain."

There is a race to be run but Jesus is strong enough for it; he does not come panting up to the starting place, and thence go creeping on, but like a strong man he surveys the course. He knows that he is equal to it, and, therefore, he delights in it. When he began his race he was opposed, but the opposition only made him triumph the more readily, for "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." When our Lord arose like the sun, the clouds were thick and heavy, but he painted their fleecy skirts with gold; persecution hung over the eastern horizon, but he turned it into the imperial purple of his sovereignty. As he pursued his course the ice of centuries melted, the dense gloom of ages disappeared. No chains could bind him, and no bonds could hold him. He dashed on with undiminished energy, and the gates of hell could not prevail.

As no cloud has ever stayed the sun as he has "whirled his car along the ethereal plain," so no difficulties impeded the onward course of the gospel in the days of its dawning. To the first days of the church Thomson's lines to the sun are fully applicable—

"Now, flaming up the heavens, the potent sun

Melts into limpid air the high-raised clouds,

And morning fogs, that hover'd round the hills,

In party-coloured hands; till wide, unveil'd,

The face of nature shines, from where earth seems

Far stretch'd around, to meet the bending sphere."

The gospel soon shed its light in every land, and all nations felt its, benign power. Men

ceased to persecute, and bowed before the cross.

Anon fresh clouds arose, and the church passed through them. Errors and heresies multiplied, filthy dreamers led away a huge apostacy, Rome became the mother of harlots and abominations, but the true church, and the true Christ within her, went right on. The church was not less triumphant in her second trial than in her first. Rome Papal was overcome as surely as Rome Pagan. Popes were no more her conquerors than bloody emperors had been of yore. To the thoughtful eye the sun of Christ is not less bright over the valleys of Piedmont than over the waves of the sea which bore Paul and his fellow apostles. The champion's race was as eager and as triumphant as before.

Since then, dense banks of spiritual deadness and false teaching have barred the visible heavens, and have appeared to mortal sight an ebon wall impenetrable as steel, but the Lord reigneth. He that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh, the Lord doth have them in derision. Strong is his right hand, and his enemies shall be broken. On goes the Sun of Righteousness, nothing impedes him, his tabernacle is above them all, he rideth on the heavens, yea, he rideth on the wings of the wind. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength. Christ has failed in nothing, the decrees have been executed, the eternal purposes have been fulfilled, the elect have been saved, his kingdom is established, and shall continue as long as the sun. Who shall stay his hand? Who shall resist his will?

Observe, therefore, how the force is coupled with joy. Weakness brings sorrow, but strength begets joy. Christ is always glad, and he would have his people rejoice, for his cause goeth right on and he shall not fail nor be discouraged. He rejoices as he divides the spoil with the strong. When a man has a task to do which is easy to him, and which he can readily perform, he sings at his work; and so this day doth Christ rejoice over his church with joy, and triumph over her with singing. His cause goes on in spite of foes, and his strength is so great, that even the battle fills him with delight. I remember to have heard a Welsh preacher make use of the following simile. He was speaking of the joy of Christ in heaven, and he said, "You tell me that the church is sorrowful on earth and I tell you that Christ is joyous in heaven; and then you ask me how this can be? You see yonder mother with her babe, and she is washing the child; its face is foul and she desires to see it shine with brightness, she would see it white as the marble mingled with the redness of the rose. Therefore she washes it; but the child cries, it is fretful and knows not what is good for it, so it whines and struggles; the mother does not cry, or share its sorrow, she keeps on singing because she knows that all is right, and that her darling will smile like a cherub when all is over; she sees the good results coming, while the babe only feels the present discomfort, so she sings her song and never stops, let the child cry as it may." And so the Lord Jesus has pleasure in his work; he is purifying his church, and making her fit to be presented to himself, and though she winces and laments, it is the flesh that makes her so to do. The Lord sings still joyously, because he sees the end from the beginning! Earth may be swathed in mist, but the sun is never so, he shines gloriously evermore.

The text mentions one other fact connected with Jesus as the sun,—“There is nothing hid from the heat thereof;” by which is meant, nothing is able to escape the powerful

influence of Christ Jesus. His own chosen people must, in due season, feel his power to save. They may wander as they do, and sin as they may, but when the time appointed comes, they shall be redeemed out of the land of the enemy. The sun's power is felt in the darkest and deepest mines; that there is a sun still shining might be discoverable even in the bowels of the earth! and so, in the darkest haunts of sin, God's elect shall be made to feel the sovereign power and omnipotent grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When you and I shall die, and when we shall be buried in the grave, we shall not there be hid from the heat of this Sun of Righteousness, for by-and-by he shall kindle life within our bones again; he shall create a soul within the ribs of death, and we shall spring upward as the grass, and as the willows by the watercourses, when the sun renews the year. Our dry bones shall live, and in our flesh shall we see God. Meanwhile, while the gracious operations of Christ thus fall on all his elect, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof, other operations are at work on all the sons of men. He rules in providence over all people, whether they believe in him or not, and if men do not accept the gospel, yet they are affected by it, in some way or other. Even the darkest parts of the world feel something of the presence of the Christ of God. Responsibility is heaped on those that hear of him and reject him; he becomes a savour of death unto death where he is not a savour of life unto life. There is nothing hid from the heat thereof. Oh, how this ought to encourage you Christian people to work! The Lord has gone before you; there is nothing hid from the heat of his presence. Jesus is King of the darkest settlements of the heathen, and he reigns in the lowest haunts of London's vice. Go there, for you are not intruders; you have a right to go anywhere in your Master's dominions; and the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. Be not afraid to face the vilest blasphemer, or the most foul-mouthed infidel, for Christ is Master, and if you bring the gospel before his enemy, he will be made to feel its power, either so as to yield to it a willing submission, or else to be condemned by it, In either case, you shall have done your part, and uttered your testimony, and freed your head of his blood.

In these thoughts combined, we see Christ Jesus, the risen Saviour, pursuing his ever glorious course till he shall descend again the second time to take his people to himself to reign with him.

II. Very briefly indeed in the second place. Let us think for a moment of JESUS AS A SUN TO US. Worship and bless our Saviour, it is ever meet and right to do so. Let him be extolled and be very high. Some would give him a secondary place, let it never be so with us. As the sun is the centre, so is Christ; as the sun is the great motor, the first source of motive power, so is Christ to his people; as the sun is the fountain from which light, life, and heat perpetually flow, so is the Saviour; as the sun is the fructifier by which fruits multiply and ripen, so is Christ: and as the sun is the regulator and rules the day, and marks the seasons, even so is Jesus owned as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Think these thoughts over in the following respects. When you take the Bible remember that Christ is the centre of the Scriptures. Do not put election in the centre; some do, and they make a one-sided system. Do not put man in the centre,—some do, and they fall into grievous errors. Christ is the centre of the entire system of the gospel, and all-will be seen to move with regularity when you perceive that he is the chief fixed point; you cannot be

right in the rest unless you think rightly of him. He is the centre and King of all truth.

He is the centre of the Church too. Not the pastor, not the church itself, not any rule or government, no bishop, no priest, and no Pope can be our centre, Christ alone is our central sun. We follow as planets where he leads the way: around him we revolve, but we own no other Lord.

Let it be so in the world. Believe that even there Christ governs and is the centre of all history. You will understand history better when you know this, for this is the key of the world's story, the reason for the rise and fall of empires. You shall understand all things when you know Immanuel, God with us.

And let him have this place in your hearts. There enthrone him! Establish him as the central sun, and let him rule your entire being, enlightening your understanding, warming your hearts, filling all your powers, passions, and faculties with the fulness of his presence. To have Christ in us, the hope of glory—oh, what blessedness! But let us take care that it is so, for we know not Christ aright unless we give him such a place in our hearts as the sun occupies in God's world.

III. But time fails me, and we must now pass on to the last point, and let us for a minute or two BASK IN HIS BEAMS. How shall we do it?

First, we must realise that he is. Sinner, saint, Christ lives: he who trod the wave of Galilee lives on. He who was marked with the nails rules on. Oh, sinner, does not that comfort you? The Saviour lives, the redeemer lives; he who forgives sins still lives. Saint, does not this comfort you? The man of the tender heart still lives, with a bosom still to be leaned upon, and with lips still ready to speak endearing words. There is a tabernacle for the sun; he is not extinct; he shineth still, he blesses still. Bask in his beams, then, by realising that he is.

Then come and lay your souls beneath his divine influence. O my soul, if thou art guilty come and rest in his atonement, if thou art unrighteous come and take his righteousness. If thou art feeble lay hold upon his strength. If thou canst not pray accept him as thine intercessor. If thou art in thyself nothing, take him to be thy all in all. Some creatures delight to warm themselves in the sun, but oh, what a pleasure it is to sun ones self in the presence of Christ. Never mind, how little I am, how nothing I am, how vile I am, how foul I am; all I am he has taken to himself, and all he has belongs to me. I sin, but he has taken all my sin: he is righteous and all his righteousness is mine. I am feeble, he is mighty; his mightiness is mine, I wrap myself in his omnipotence. Christ is all and Christ is mine. Why, I utterly fail when trying to talk about such things as these; talking is but stuttering on such a theme. Faith must enjoy rather than express her delight. Come, plunge ye all into this sea of sweetness, dive deep into this abyss of happiness—Christ Jesus is yours for ever and for ever. The sun is very great but it is all for me, and Christ is very bright and glorious, but he is all my own.

Then next, if you would sun yourself in his beams, imbibe the joy of his strength. He is like a bridegroom rejoicing to run his race. Now, brethren and sisters, I am often afraid lest in serving God, we should grow dispirited and downcast, and think that things are not going

on as they should. The joy of the Lord is your strength. If you begin to say, "Our cause is very feeble, the gospel will not prevail among us, you will slacken your efforts." Do not so, but remember that Jesus Christ does not fret or sadden himself about his kingdom. He runs on full of strength and rejoices as he runs; and I bid you, in the power of the Holy Spirit, do the same. Cast away your doubts and fears, the kingdom is the Lord's, and he will deliver his adversaries into your hands. I fret and worry myself sometimes about these inventors of new doctrines, and those ritualists who bring up the old rags and stale tallow of the past ages. Let us fret no more, but think that these are only like the clouds to the great sun; the gospel will still proceed in its career. Let us laugh the enemies of God to scorn and defy them to their faces. They defy the Lord God of Israel as did the Philistine of old, but God himself is mightier than they, and the victory is sure to the true church and to the gospel of his Son. Be ye very courageous! Be not alarmed with sudden fear! Trust in Jehovah, for the Lord will surely give unto his own servants the victory in the day of battle.

And brethren, if you would sun yourselves in Christ's beams, let me bid you reflect his light whenever you receive it. He is the sun, and you are the planet, but every planet shines, shines with borrowed light. It conceals no light, but sends back to other worlds what the sun has given to it. Cast back on men the light which Jesus gives you. Triumph in Christ's circuit, that it is so broad as to comprehend the world, and compass all time. Enlarge your own hearts, and let your light shine far and wide, believing that the power of God which gives you light will go with the light which you reflect. Comfort your hearts! "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Who shall stop the Christ of God in his race? Let him first go pluck the sun from his sphere. Who shall stay the champion of God who has girt himself for his race? Whosoever cometh in his way woe unto him, for if Samson smote a thousand men hip and thigh, what shall our immortal Samson do? Let all the armies of pope and devil come against him, he will utterly defy them, and drive them like chaff before the wind.

Sing ye unto his name, for he hath triumphed gloriously! Begin the everlasting song, for he is the Lord and God, and to the uttermost ages shall he reign; yea, for ever and ever is he priest and king.

God bless you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

BRIGHT PROSPECTS FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS

A Sermon PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH, 1909,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
On Lord's-day Evening, November 11th, 1866.

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his

wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”—Malachi 4:2.*

THIS great promise was fulfilled at the coming of our Lord. There were many waiting for it, like Anna and Simeon, mourning the darkness in which they dwelt, and scarcely cheered by a single star, for the voice of prophecy had ceased. Then suddenly Christ came, and so the Sun of righteousness arose upon those who feared the Lord. They went forth into blessed liberty, rejoicing in him; and their light afterwards was greatly increased in brightness, and their life in happiness as they grew in divine knowledge and holiness. It is difficult for us to conceive the revulsion of feeling which must have come into the hearts of such patient waiters for the Lord as Anna and Simeon. They must have triumphed exceedingly, magnifying the Lord, with Mary, that at last he had come, the Light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel.

This promise has also had a practical fulfilment in the death-bed experiences of God's people. Tortured with disease, they have been lying in the darkness and gloom of death. Perhaps fears have come in, and physical infirmity has been the platform upon which Satan has planted his heavy guns of temptation. But, suddenly, a wondrous light has surprised them; their dying bed has become a throne of glory; they have found themselves arrayed in royal garments as though it were their coronation rather than their departure out of this world. They have been enabled to sit upright in the bed, and to tell others that they had beheld the brightness of the coming glory, and that they had experienced in their souls the foretaste of joys unspeakable and divine even before their bodies were released from infirmity and pain. Though the body has been fast bound with cords, the soul has mounted up, as on the wings of eagles, in sacred rapture and holy bliss. The Sun of righteousness has risen upon them. Ere their earthly sun went down, the heavenly Sun lit up their sky with a sacred, high, eternal noon; and unto you who fear the name of the Lord, whatever gloom may surround your departure from the earth, the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings, and one day you shall find him rise even upon your mortal bodies.

“From beds of dust and silent clay

To realms of everlasting day,”—

your very bodies shall wing their flight to dwell—

“For ever with the Lord.”

While the promise in the text has had these two fulfilments, there is no doubt that it awaits another. We are looking for the return of the Lord Jesus; and though, perhaps, we have no right to expect that he will come to-day or to-morrow,—for there are many prophecies which, apparently, must be fulfilled, before he comes, and which may require long periods of time,—yet we are to expect him, and are to be as servants who know that their master will come to call them to account. Perhaps, just when the Christian Church shall become most weary, when the hands of her ministers shall hang down through feebleness, when the warriors shall be “faint, yet pursuing,” when Gog and Magog and the hosts of the enemy shall have gathered themselves together for battle, and everything seems to

forebode a long dark night for the Church and for the world;—perhaps, just then Christ will suddenly appear in the clouds of heaven; perhaps at such a time as that the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings, and the triumphant saints shall go forth to meet him, clothed with his brightness, sharing in his kingdom, and, as the next verse solemnly tells us, treading down the wicked, who shall be as ashes beneath their feet in the day of their Lord's appearing. Perhaps this is to be the great fulfilment of the text.

But I do not intend to dwell to-night upon any of these three probable fulfilments of the prophecy. I want rather to talk about matters which more nearly concern us just now, and to put a few practical soul-matters before this entire congregation, hoping that God may press them home upon some, so that they may find healing beneath the wings of Christ to-night.

I. The text speaks, you will observe, of a certain class of persons, **THOSE WHO FEAR GOD'S NAME.**

The great multitude of people in the world do not fear the name of God; they do not care whether there is a God or not. If there were no God, their conduct would not be very different from what it is now. God is not in all their thoughts; they live as if they were their own creators and sustainers, and practically join in the language of Pharaoh, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice?" Now, for such people, the Bible contains no blessing; how should it when they reject both it and the God who wrote it?

But there are some in the world—thank God, more now, perhaps, than at any former period,—who do fear God. Some have not advanced far in this heavenly wisdom; they are like scholars on the first form at school. They fear God just so much as this, that they would not wilfully sin. They are checked from presumptuous sins by the fear of God; and this is well. It is so good a thing that I believe it is like that smoking flax which Christ will not quench; and that the man who really fears to sin because God would see him, and who desires to do right because God would have him do right, is not far from the kingdom of God; if, indeed, he is not actually in the kingdom.

Others have advanced so far in this fear that they have been brought into torment by it. They know that they have already sinned, and they dread the thought of the terrible One who has said that he "will by no means clear the guilty." They have heard the thunder-clap of that dreadful verse, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" and they therefore fear God. It is a fear that bringeth bondage, but even that is better than no fear at all. They believe God, and they tremble, and we are thankful to see them trembling; for now, perhaps, they will begin to say within themselves, "We will seek our Father's face; we will fly to him, and ask him to save us from his own wrath through his own Son."

This fear in some, however, has happily advanced still further. They have come to fear God with a childlike fear. Their sin has been forgiven, they have put their trust in the Saviour, they have heard the voice which saith, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions; and, as a cloud, thy sins;" and now they fear God with a fear with which

love is perfectly consistent; they fear him as a loving, tender-hearted child fears to disobey a gracious, kind, wise, loving father. God is in their thoughts; nay, more, God is in their hearts. They love him. They could not bear to live without God; they would be orphans, their Father would be gone. Without God, they would be poverty-stricken, for their wealth is found in him.

I know there are some of you here who could do wonderfully well without a God; indeed, you would be much happier than you now are if it could be proved that there is no God, for the thought of God is a bugbear to some of you, and you try as much as possible to shut the ears of your soul against the cry of conscience when it tells you that there is a God, and a God who will bring you into judgment for all your actions. Well, the promise in the text is not for you, but it is for those who realize that there is a God, and who have respect unto his Word; who tremble before him, and yet who rejoice in him, having been brought nigh to him by the precious blood of Jesus, and having been reconciled to him by Christ Jesus, the Mediator between God and man. Dear friend, if thou dost but fear God, take thou the text, and live upon it. It is a precious hive of honey, and thou mayest extract the utmost sweetness from it. Let us go to it now, and feed upon it, as it is here given to us as food from heaven for our souls.

II. Having found out the persons to whom the text is addressed, let us next notice that, according to this verse, **SOME OF THOSE WHO FEAR GOD ARE IN THE DARK.**

They fear God, but they have not any happiness. They are doubtful, timid, and possibly they are constitutionally dull and sad. Beside that, they are diseased, and need the "healing" of which the text speaks. They are not what they want to be; they have a bad temper to struggle against, or some besetting sin to mourn over.

Now observe the promise that is given to them, that they shall be visited in a remarkable manner by the Lord Jesus; and that, in consequence of this visitation, they shall receive the two things that they specially need, namely, light and healing. They are in the dark, so they shall receive light and comfort; they are sick in soul, but they shall receive healing from Christ. The great blessing promised is that Christ shall appear to them, but see in what an aspect it is said that he shall appear. He is called "the Sun of righteousness." What a title for our blessed Lord! He who did hang upon Calvary in the thickest darkness was the Sun of righteousness. He is sometimes compared to a star, but this figure is more full, and more worthy of him. Christ is the centre of the universe. "Without him was not any thing made that was made." "By him all things consist." As the sun, with secret bands, keeps all the planets in their places, and is the great regulator of the solar machinery, so is Christ the great centre of the world, and especially of his own Church. Forth from the sun, floods of heat and light are continually being scattered. We do not know that the sun borrows anything from any other source; he is himself the source, in his stupendous furnace, of the light and heat which gladden all the worlds of which he is the centre and controller. So is it with our Saviour; borrowing nothing, but having all fulness dwelling within himself, he pours forth, out of his own inexhaustible heart of infinite mercy and compassion, floods of light to make glad the ignorant, and floods of heat to comfort the sorrowing.

We can scarcely bear to look upon the sun, he is an orb of such surpassing splendour, giving out continually such vast masses of light, if I may use the expression; and, oh! who could look upon the unveiled splendour of the Lord Jesus? Perhaps, if we could see him as he now is in heaven, we might feel as if we were not prepared for so great a sight, our eye not being yet strong enough to be able to bear the burning splendour of the great Sun of righteousness. If you could get any adequate idea of the light and heat that come from the sun, you might then form some faint conception of the—

“Streams of mercy, never ceasing,”—

which flood the universe from Christ, the great central orb of the love of God. Oh, happy are they who bask in his beams! Blessed are they who walk in his light! Best of all and most happy are they who, like Milton’s angel standing in the sun, dwell amid the very fulness of Christ’s glory where he sits upon his Father’s throne.

Christ, then, is the Sun of righteousness. Now, sinner; now, trembler; if thou fearest God, Christ will be a sun to thee. Thou wilt have no want of knowledge, then, depend upon it, for he shall teach thee all things. If Christ shall arise upon thee, thou shalt see thy sins clearly enough; but thou shalt also see God, and therefore thou shalt see hope, thou shalt see pardon, thou shalt see peace, thou shalt see heaven. What will not the sun reveal? Everything is in darkness till he appears; but when he rises, everything is discovered. And oh, poor troubled soul, thou seest nothing, and thou knowest but little, until Christ comes to thee; but if he shall arise upon thee, as the Sun of righteousness, thou shalt know all that thou needest to know, and perceive everything that is delightful and comforting, and so thy heart shall be glad.

But the figure employed in the text is a double one. It is said that, sometimes, in the East, after a long time of calm, the very air gets putrid, and the glowing sand reflects the burning heat; till, presently, a refreshing land breeze comes up with the sunrise. So Christ is here pictured as a sun, his beams being like the wings of some gigantic golden eagle, and those wings, like refreshing winds, bringing health to the poor sickly inhabitants of earth who are ready to die. Certainly, when Christ comes in all his splendour of light, for he is “the Light of the world,” he comes also with health to sick souls. Do not believe, soul, that thy sickness is incurable, though Satan may tell thee a thousand times that it is. If Christ comes to deal with thee, man, though thy disease should be the deadly cancer of blasphemy, he can cure it; though thou shouldst have the fever of drunkenness within thy soul, Christ can heal thee of that fiery malady. I ventured to say, this morning, that there is no hospital for incurable souls now* because Christ can cure all manner of spiritual diseases.

You perceive that the text does not say that they who fear the name of the Lord shall be cured of their spiritual maladies by what they do themselves. No, but that Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shall arise upon them, and in his light they shall obtain the health they lack. Get Jesus, poor soul, and thou needest not trouble thyself about much else. There is everything that a sinner requires in the person of the appointed Saviour. Arise, O thou blessed Jesus Christ, like the sun upon the darkness, that some who are in this place now

may leave their sins, and rejoice in thy power to save!

You perceive also that the way in which those who fear the Lord get light is not by their raising the sun,—that would be impossible, but it is through the sun itself rising upon them. Some sinners seem to think that they are to get comfort and light for themselves; but it is not so, Christ must bring it all to you. You are not to bring anything to Jesus, but to come to his fulness to receive everything. Dost thou understand me, man? Supposing that thou art full of sin, full of hardness of heart, and of everything that is bad, and contrary to the mind of God, yet, if thou art saved, it will be by Christ appearing to thy mind's eye,—and that mind's eye seeing him, and thy soul trusting in him; and if thou doest so, thou art saved. "What!" sayest thou, "is there nothing for me to do?" There is nothing for thee to do, in order that thou mayest be saved, but believe in Jesus. Thou shalt do many things after thou art saved; I shall go on to tell you of them directly; but the work of saving your soul does not rest with you. Christ is the Saviour, and he will do it all; you are not to help in that work.

"It is not thy tears of repentance or prayers,

But the blood that atones for the soul:

On him, then, who shed it believing at once

Thy weight of iniquities roll.

"We are heal'd by his stripes;—wouldst thou add to the Word?

And he is our righteousness made:

The best robe of heaven he bids thee put on:

Oh! couldst thou be better array'd?

"Then doubt not thy welcome, since God has declared

There remaineth no more to be done;

That once in the end of the world he appear'd;

And completed the work he begun."

Imagine people lighting their candles after the sun has risen! "Oh!" say they, "but we may as well add to the light." But do your candles add to the light when you have the sunlight? Do they not rather mock the light? Are they not an impertinence in the presence of the great orb of day? And, sinner, do not thou light thy candles to add to the light of the Sun of righteousness; do not thou bring thy nothingness and thine emptinesses to add to the perfection of Christ's finished work. Thou canst not help him to save thee, so do not insult him by attempting to do so; but take the text, and from thy heart pray, "O God, let the Sun of righteousness arise upon me with healing in his wings, for I do, I trust, fear thy name!"

I do hope this truth will not pass away from your memories; I do feel so concerned lest any

of you should miss the blessing that God is giving us just now. I know I have with me the opinion of hundreds who fear the Lord, that God is very marvellously present with us as a church, and that he has been so for some little time; but I fear lest the cloud should pass away before the heavenly rain falls upon more of you. I do trust that it will not, but that you may receive the blessing in your souls.

III. Now I must go on to observe THAT WHICH IS TO FOLLOW IN THE CASE OF THOSE UPON WHOM THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARISES. The promise to them in the text is, "Ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."

It is a subject of great anxiety to earnest church-officers as to what will become of our young converts. Many are added to our numbers who know but little of the doctrines of grace. Now you perceive that here is the blessing for them which may remove our anxiety; may all of you who have lately been converted share in that blessing!

The promise is that they "shall go forth." Of course, this means that they shall enjoy spiritual liberty. When Christ comes into the heart, whatever bondage there may have been there before, it all disappears in his presence. Where Jesus comes, he is the true Liberator. No chains are worn in the court of King Jesus. The moment he enters the heart, he proclaims perfect emancipation, and—

"The prisoner leaps to lose his chains."

Yet the realization of this emancipation may be gradual, and a true convert may be saying, "I wish I could enjoy the promises, and go forth and walk at liberty in the green pastures." Well do I recollect when I heard some believers singing,—

"Yes, I to the end shall endure,

As sure as the earnest is given;

More happy, but not more secure,

The glorified spirits in heaven;"—

and I thought then, "Ah! I shall never be able to sing that; it is too high a note for me." But I can sing it now, and sing it truthfully too, and so will you, who have but just seen Christ, be able to do; you shall go forth in the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free.

You shall go forth, too, in Christian ordinances. Perhaps you say, "I should be afraid to be baptized; it is such a solemn thing to profess death, burial, and resurrection with Christ, I do not think I could dare to do that; and as to going before a Christian church, and avowing my faith in Jesus, I am afraid I could not do that, my lips would be tightly closed through fear; and I should not feel at liberty to come to the Master's table, I should be so afraid of eating and drinking condemnation to myself, not discerning the Lord's body." Ah, poor trembler, I know just how you feel; but when the Sun of righteousness arises upon your soul, you will get liberty in all these matters, and will go forth in obedience to your Lord's commands. If a stranger were to come to your house, he would stand at the door, or wait

in the hall; if he were a person of any sense, he would not think of walking into your parlour, or your drawing-room, or your bedroom, for he would not be at home there; but your child makes himself free in your house because he is at home. So is it with the child of God, for a child may come where a stranger may not venture to go. When the Holy Ghost has become to you the Spirit of adoption, you will go forth to Christian ordinances without fear.

So will it be with the Christian's inward privileges. I know you think, poor seeker, that you never may "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." If you may but just get inside Christ's door, or sit at the bottom of his table, you think you will be well content. Ah! but you shall not have any less privileges than the greatest of God's children. God makes no differences between his children so far as their privileges are concerned. He will not make us his hired servants, but we, even we, shall feast upon the fatted calf, and shall have the music and the dancing as much as if we had never gone astray. Yes, young Christian, you shall go forth. You do not know what is before you; there is the goodly land, and it is all yours. Do not imagine that you are always to be a babe in grace; you shall grow, and become, I hope, a full-grown man in Christ Jesus; yea, a father in Israel. Imagine not that you are always to be like that little green blade which is just peeping up above the cold sod; you shall one day be like the corn in the ear; yea, more, you shall one day be like the golden corn which bends its head through its ripeness, and the glad harvest home shall be shouted over you. You shall not always be weak and feeble, and afraid to enjoy your Christian privileges. You would not know yourself if you could see what you will yet be. The songs you are yet to sing, the grapes of Eshcol you are yet to pluck, the fair days of joy you are yet to spend, the feasts and banquets, the real enjoyments which you are yet to know on this side of the grave, might well make you happy if you could but get a foretaste of them. Yes, you shall go forth; only have Christ as your Saviour, and there shall be no end to your happiness. Let the Sun of righteousness but rise upon you, and your light shall never be put out.

But that is not all, for the text also says, "Ye shall grow up as calves of the stall." That is to say, these very people, who are so timid now, shall advance in the divine life at the fastest rate. The calf grows very rapidly, and it ought to do so when, it is put into the stall on purpose to help it to grow. The reference is to the calves that are stalled for fattening, those that are fatted regularly, fatted abundantly, by those whose aim it is to make them grow. So the text tells the young Christian that he shall grow like the calf in the stall. God's ministers shall feed him, God's Word shall be the granary out of which his food shall come, and God's Spirit shall enable him to feed upon that food, and make him to grow thereby. Christ himself shall be that poor trembler's daily bread, his meat and his drink. He who feeds upon Christ must grow. It is no cause for wonder if the saints are fat and flourishing, and bring forth fruit in old age, when they feed upon Christ. Whenever a Christian has to say, "My leanness, my leanness, woe is unto me," it cannot be because suitable food has not been supplied, it must be because he has not fed upon it; for if we have fed upon Christ Jesus, how can we help growing in faith, and knowledge, and holiness, and every spiritual gift?

I am hopeful, therefore, for our young members, that God will take care of them, and that they will surprise us by the advance which they will make. I only hope that they will surpass all who have ever gone before them. Ah, dear young friends, never take us as an example in stopping short of the true Christian ideal. Follow us as far as we follow Christ, but go beyond the very best of us where you see that we come short of what we ought to be. I hope you will be more earnest, more prayerful, more conscientious, more diligent than any of us have been. May the next generation of Christians outshine the present one, and so may it continue to be until Christ himself cometh, and his Church shall be in her glory! Do you recollect that passage in the Revelation about the woman clothed with the sun? How bright she must be! But that is the Christian Church, and it is you also in your measure, for you are to be clothed with the sun. Your brightness and holiness are to be such that men shall know that the Sun of righteousness has risen upon you. You have not any light in yourselves; but when you receive the light from Christ, take care that you reflect it. How bright should those be who shine in the beams of Jesus Christ himself!

There is one translation of the last clause of the text which I should like to mention. It is thought by some eminent divines that the word rendered "stall" bears also the meaning of "yoke." If it be so, then the genuine Christian grows up like the heifers that wear the yoke; that is to say, he is a worker as well as a feeder. He grows, but he is willing to bear the yoke, and serve his Lord. I would not thank God for the addition to this church of a man who would be idle, captious, selfish. I would deprecate such a diminution of our strength, even though it might be an augmentation of our numbers. The church-members we want are those who are willing to consecrate themselves wholly to the Lord, and to whom religion is a reality. With many it is a sham, a mere pretence, a thing to make them appear respectable, but not a matter which eats up their life, and takes away their energy, bearing them onward in service as in a chariot of fire. May you who are converted grow up as heifers that wear the yoke! May you plough to the end of your field, and back again, and on, and on, ploughing in the Master's service till the time shall come for the yoke to be taken from your necks! The crest and the motto of the American Baptist Missionary Union should be ours; the crest is an ox standing between a plough and an altar, and the motto is "Ready for either." May we be ready to be offered up in death or to serve God in life!

Now I have to say this to you who fear the Lord, and who are seeking to have Christ in your hearts,—Seek to get him as the Sun of righteousness shining within you. Do ask, after you have got Christ, that you may be helped to grow in grace; that you may not be dull and heavy as some have been, that you may not be cumberers of the ground, that you may not be the mere baggage of Christ's army impeding the march of his heroes, but that you may be men who shall be swifter than eagles and bolder than lions, consecrated men, to whom work shall be pleasure, and loss shall be gain; men who, as the arrow speedeth from the archer's bow, turning neither to the right nor to the left, shall speed onward to the prize of your high calling, thinking of nothing except of winning Christ, and being found in him.

May God grant us this blessing now! Let the prayer be breathed, "Arise upon us, Sun of righteousness," and then let the other prayer follow, "Make us to go forth, and to grow up

like calves of the stall, and may we serve thee, O God, and receive thy blessing, world without end! Amen.”

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G Campbell Morgan sees one's attitude toward the day of His coming as crucial in regard to how they live life today and where they will live eternally!...

The final secret is that of hope in the coming One; in the dawning of that new day which is to have two effects.

For behold, the **day** is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the **day** that is coming will set them ablaze,” says the LORD of hosts, “so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.” (Malachi 4:1-2)

That is not two days, but one. When that day comes, and the Sun arises, it will burn or it will heal. It will burn the plant that has no roots and no river resources; but it will heal the tree planted by the river.

The present position of **Christendom** (**Ed**: Morgan uses this as a synonym of nominal Christianity) is vividly portrayed by Malachi. Let us draw a very sharp line of distinction between the **Church** and **Christendom**. The terms are not synonymous. The **Church** consists of those who are His own. **Christendom** is the external appearance in every form. **Christendom** is characterized by formality devoid of power (2Ti 3:5). Formality is not peculiar to one section of the Church. The form may not be the same. It may be stately ritual, or it may be of the simplest. **Formality is the result of a conception that religion consists in external observance.** To that condition the message of Malachi is: The day is coming which will be a day of healing, or a day of burning according to the condition of those who come to its dawning.

What is our attitude towards that day? That is the supreme test of our position. As the last word of the Old Testament economy was a word declaring the coming of that day, so also is the last word of the New Testament economy. The attitude of men towards that day determines their ultimate relation thereto, and their ultimate destiny.

Let us live, putting all our trust in the Name, in holy and unbroken fellowship with each other around our possessions therein, waiting for the daybreak (2Pe 1:19), that so we may not be ashamed from Him at His coming (1Jn 2:28)

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,

Christ, the true, the only Light,

Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Day-star, in my heart appear.

Sonrise - My state's name, "Idaho," according to one legend, comes from a Shoshone Indian word, "ee-dah-how." When translated into English, it means something like, "Behold! The sun rising over the mountain." I often think of that when the sun breaks over the eastern peaks and spills light and life into our valley.

Also, I think of Malachi's promise: "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4:2). This is God's irrevocable promise that our Lord Jesus will come again and all creation "will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Ro. 8:21).

Each new sunrise is a reminder of that eternal morning when "bright heaven's Sun" will arise with healing in His wings. Then everything that has been made will be made over and made irrevocably right. There will be no throbbing backs or knees, no financial struggles, no losses, no aging. One Bible version says that when Jesus returns we will "go out and leap like calves released from the stall" (Mal. 4:2 NIV). This is my highest imagination and my hope.

Jesus said, "Surely I am coming quickly" (Rev. 22:20). Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

**High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.**

[Be Thou My Vision - Selah](#)

**You have reason for optimism
if you're looking for Christ's return.**

Malachi 4:2 - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. Malachi 4:2

At the end of the Old Testament it is meet that the sun should break out. The morning that broke on Paradise was clear enough. It was without clouds. But the sky soon became darkened, and at last veiled, with only here and there a chink of blue sky left. All through the dark succeeding centuries there have been gleams of sunshine to let men know that the sun was shining still. Every precious promise, every solemn type, every holy life, that was bathed in supernatural beauty, was like a shining forth of the sun through the bars of human darkness and sin. But evidently more was in store than Old Testament saints had dreamed; and the time was coming when the reign of type, symbol, and parable, would be

succeeded by the clear vision of the face of God.

We live in the days of open vision. Let us go forth and exult. We are to rejoice in every good thing He gives us. As the young calves of the early spring manifest their exuberant life in their caperings and gambols in the pastures, so let us give expression to our joy. Exult because of the clear shining of God's love: exult because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth: exult because He is coming again, as surely as He came once. Wake up, my soul, take psaltery and harp, and sing. The Bridegroom is at hand. Hark! are those his chariot wheels reverberating through the air? Even so! Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Malachi 4:2 LET'S GET GROWING

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18

Several years ago my interest in flowers had our home resembling a nursery. There's something about the presence of growing plants that I find very enjoyable. As I daily inspected their progress, I gained from my little green friends a new appreciation of the joy and necessity of the wonderful process of growth.

As Christians, we too are like plants. We should put down our roots, break up through the earth, spread out our branches, and burst into blossom. Such a thriving condition, however, isn't always evident in our lives. It's so easy to become bored and listless in the bland routine of our daily activities. Often we just hang on and merely exist without moving steadily toward maturity and fruitfulness.

At such times we are at a spiritual standstill and must allow Jesus the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2) to warm our hearts anew with His love. We must send our roots deep into the Word of God by meditating on it day and night (Ps. 1:2). Then we will be like a fruitful tree planted by rivers of living water, and our branches will extend outward in an ever-increasing influence and witness. They will be filled with blossoms that reflect the beauty of righteous living.

If we've become dormant, let's get growing! Martin R. De Haan II (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

If God can make a tiny seed
Into a flower so fair,
What can He make, O soul, of thee
Through study, faith, and prayer?
Anon.

When growth stops, decay begins.

Malachi 4:2 Restoring Order

As I looked at family members gathered around the Thanksgiving table, I smiled at the

range of talents represented. At one end were doctors; at the other end were musicians. Thanks to doctors, human bodies operate more efficiently. Thanks to musicians, beautiful sounds uplift our spirits and soothe troubled minds.

Although their abilities are very different, doctors and musicians rely on the same thing: an orderly universe. Without order, there would be no predictability; without predictability, there would be no music or medicine.

Within our orderly world, disease is a sign that something is “out of order.” Healing is a sign that God will some day restore all things to their original condition (Acts 3:21). When John the Baptist wanted to know whether Jesus was the “Coming One,” Jesus said, “Go and tell John ... the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Luke 7:20-22). Healing was evidence that Jesus was Israel’s Messiah (Mal. 4:2).

I am thankful for music that soothes my troubled mind and soul, and for medicine that heals my body, because they remind me of the ultimate healing and restoration that Christ is accomplishing. — by Julie Ackerman Link

What are the prospects for this earth?

What hope is there for man?

A world restored through Jesus Christ

In whom we see God’s plan. —D. De Haan

Jesus specializes in restoration.

Malachi 4:2 Songbird In The Dark

Just before the sunrise, we often hear songbirds welcoming the dawn. Despite the darkness, we know that the radiant light of the sun will soon appear.

Fanny Crosby has been called “The Songbird in the Dark.” Though blinded in infancy, she wrote hymns that inspirationally envision our future reunion with Christ. Early in her life, Fanny had a dream in which she saw the panorama of a glorious heaven, and many of her songs reflect that theme. By the time of her death, she had penned at least 8,000 hymns. Songs such as “Tell Me the Story of Jesus” and “To God Be the Glory” are still popular today.

When Zacharias praised God in anticipation of the Messiah, he also looked forward to a spiritual sunrise. Citing Malachi 4:2, he proclaimed: “The **Dayspring** [sunrise] from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness” (Luke 1:78-79). That Messiah came to earth, died for our sins, rose again, ascended, and promised to return for us.

Do you feel surrounded by dark and confusing circumstances? You can still lift your praise to God for the bright future you will share with His Son. The words of Fanny Crosby’s beloved hymn “Blessed Assurance” encourage us as we anticipate this glorious reunion

with Christ. — by Dennis Fisher

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!

O what a foretaste of glory divine!

Heir of salvation, purchase of God,

Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. —Crosby

For the Christian, the dark sorrows of earth will one day be changed into the bright songs of heaven.

Malachi 4:2- C H Spurgeon- Faith's Checkbook -Never Despair

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”—Malachi 4:2

FULFILLED once in the first advent of our glorious Lord and yet to have a fuller accomplishment in His second advent, this gracious word is also for daily use. Is it dark with the reader? Does the night deepen into a denser blackness? Still let us not despair: the sun will yet rise. When the night is darkest, dawn is nearest.

The sun which will arise is of no common sort. It is THE sun—the Sun of Righteousness, whose every ray is holiness. He who comes to cheer us, comes in the way of justice as well as of mercy, comes to violate no law even to save us. Jesus as much displays the holiness of God as His love. Our deliverance, when it comes, will be safe because of His righteousness.

Our one point of inquiry should be: “Do we fear the name of the Lord? Do we reverence the living God, and walk in His ways?” Then for us the night must be short; and when the morning cometh, all the sickness and sorrow of our soul will be over forever. Light, warmth, joy, and clearness of vision will come, and healing of every disease and distress will follow after.

Has Jesus risen upon us? Let us sit in the sun. Has He hidden His face? Let us wait for His rising. He will shine forth as surely as the sun.

Malachi 4:2 - C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook - Grow Up

“And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”—Malachi 4:2

YES, when the sun shines, the sick quit their chambers, and walk abroad to breathe the fresh air. When the sun brings spring and summer, the cattle quit their stalls and seek pasture on the higher Alps. Even thus, when we have conscious fellowship with our Lord, we leave the stall of despondency, and walk abroad in the fields of holy confidence. We ascend to the mountains of joy and feed on sweet pasturage which grows nearer heaven than the provender of carnal men.

To “go forth” and to “grow up” is a double promise. O my soul, be thou eager to enjoy both blessings! Why shouldst thou be a prisoner? Arise, and walk at liberty. Jesus saith that His sheep shall go in and out and find pasture; go forth, then, and feed in the rich meadows of boundless love.

Why remain a babe in grace? Grow up. Young calves grow fast, especially if they are stall-fed; and thou hast the choice care of thy Redeemer. Grow, then, in grace and in knowledge of thy Lord and Savior. Be neither straitened nor stunted. **The Sun of Righteousness has risen upon thee. Answer to His beams, as the buds to the natural sun. Open thine heart, expand and grow up into Him in all things.**

Malachi 4:2 Sunshine For Your Soul

Psalm 84:1-12

The Lord God is a sun and shield. --Psalm 84:11

Many people feel cheerful in fair weather, but they are depressed when skies are gray. The travel industry thrives on this fact by luring millions of people to brighter climates. There's nothing wrong with enjoying the sun and its many benefits. But if we rely on good weather to maintain our good cheer, the climate of our inner world will be as changeable as the weather.

This was my condition before I became a Christian while in my teens. Each morning I would check out the weather. If it was bright, I felt happy; if it was gloomy, so was I. One night I realized I needed Jesus. Kneeling by my bed, I accepted His forgiveness for my sins and invited Him into my life. The next morning I forgot to check the weather! It simply didn't matter anymore. The "Sun of Righteousness" had risen in my heart (Malachi 4:2) and had replaced my fickle source of happiness with Himself.

Since then, my personal world has known some dark times, but the Lord has been my constant "sun and shield" (Psalm 84:11). I still prefer sunny days, but I'm no longer a "sun-worshiper." Instead, I'm a worshiper of God's Son who shines brightly within me—whatever the weather.

Which kind of worshiper are you? —Joanie Yoder (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

There is sunshine in my soul today,
More glorious and bright
Than glows in any earthly sky,
For Jesus is my light. —Hewitt

Lasting happiness doesn't come from sunny days but from the Son of God.

Malachi 4:2 J. C. Philpot. Daily Portions

J C Philpot - Just as the sun rises in the east and gradually mounts up into the meridian sky, dispersing with every ray light, warmth, and gladness; so this blessed Lord Jesus, as the Sun of righteousness, is ever dispersing the beams of his grace and the rays of his favor; and whenever those beams come, and those rays fall, there is light and life, and everything to make the soul holy and happy. Now a man would act very foolishly if, wishing to have light in his room when the sun was shining at noonday, he should shut all the shutters, and strike a match to give him a little light for a few moments. Let us not then be so foolish as to look for happiness or comfort in our own performances when the glorious Sun of righteousness is at the right hand of God, and shining thence upon believing hearts. But when the veil is over the heart, it is like shutters in a room--there is no light to show who, what, or where Jesus is. And then need we wonder that men strike a light and make a fire, that they may "walk in the sparks of their own kindling?" But what is God's word against all such? "This shall you have of my hand, you shall lie down in sorrow" (Isaiah 50:11). - Daily Portions

September 2 J. C. Philpot. Daily Words for Zion's Wayfarers.

"Unto you who fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Malachi 4:2

Oh, what a mercy for the Church of Christ that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus has not left her as he might justly have left her, to perish in her sins, but has provided for her a Savior, and a great one, and does from time to time encourage every poor, self-condemned sinner to hope in his mercy! The very things, poor, exercised soul, that most try your mind are the very things that make such a Savior suitable to you. You are dark; this makes the Sun of righteousness exactly suitable to enlighten you. You are cold; this makes you need the Sun to warm you. You are cheerless and cast down; this makes you need the Sun to gladden you. You are barren and unfruitful, and lament that you cannot bring forth fruit to God's glory; you need the Sun to fertilize you. You are, at times, very dead in your feelings, and can scarcely find any inclination to pray, meditate, or read the Scriptures; you need the Sun to enliven and revive you. Are not, then, these very trials and temptations necessary to make you feel that the Lord Jesus is the Sun you need, the very Sun that David (Psalm 84:11) felt him to be? What value do those put upon the Lord Jesus who make a fire for themselves, and walk in the sparks of their own kindling? What is Jesus to those who know no trouble of soul? What real and earnest prayer or fervent desire have they after him? what ardent longing for his appearing? what breathings to see and feel his blood and righteousness? Oh! it is sharp exercises, manifold trials, and powerful temptations that make the soul really value the Lord Jesus. -

Malachi 4:2 The Power Of The Sun

READ: Psalm 85:1-13

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise. --Malachi 4:2

I remember the day I arose early to work in my garden but found dense fog over the entire landscape, limiting my vision to only a few feet. It was so wet that work was out of the

question. But my early rising was not in vain. As I sat on a potato crate in the doorway of the barn facing east, I was to behold one of the grandest of all heavenly spectacles, the sunrise.

First there was a brightening of the fog. As the sun shed its light and warmth, the mist began to move upward, and at last the sun burst through in all its glory. The trees dripped with moisture, and a thousand dewdrops on the grass and shrubbery sparkled like so many diamonds as they reflected the sun.

I sat transfixed, forgetting about the beans I had planned to pick. I saw in the sunrise my own experience. Once I too was in a fog, lost and confused until the Sun of Righteousness arose in my heart. First a glimmer of hope, and then one day in a moment the light burst through and I saw the One who scattered all my doubts and fears.

O that we today, like the sparkling dewdrops, would reflect His light and glory. As "we walk in the light" (1 Jn. 1:7), may men and women see the Son shining brightly through our lives and words. —M. R. De Haan (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Sun of my soul, Thou Savior dear,
It is not night if Thou be near;
O may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes. --Keble

Christians are windows through which the glory of Jesus can shine.

Malachi 4:2 Robert Morgan - We can even go to the book of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, written about 400 years before Christ was born, and find this theme. In Malachi 4—the last chapter of the Old Testament—the ancient prophet avows that the Messiah's coming will be like the sun rising in the morning, with healing in its rays.

It takes eight minutes and fifteen seconds for a particle of light to travel through space from the sun to the earth. That means that if at this moment the sun would suddenly burn out like a light bulb when the filament blows, we would have just about eight minutes of life left on this earth. Then suddenly the world would be plunged into darkness. I suppose our power stations would work for a few minutes, and I suppose we could see the distant twinkling stars. But for the most part, this planet would be plunged into pitch blackness and we would all be groping around like blind men.

And then, of course, the deadly blasts of cold air would blanket the planet, and temperatures would plunge into a deep freeze. The weather systems would all collapse, and without the sun's gravitational pull, our planet would wobble out of its circuit and float away into the blackness of the void.

That's what a person's life is like without Jesus Christ! The Son of God is to the human soul what the sun above is to planet Earth. He provides warmth and light, and our lives are to revolve around Him in a ceaseless orbit of faith and obedience. Without Him, we grope in the darkness, looking for hope, but all is dark and cold, and our lives grow wobbly and gradually lose altitude until they're lost in the blackness of eternity.

The Psalmist said, "The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life—of whom shall I be afraid" (Psalm 27:1). ([Inside the Tabernacle - Christ: Our Sufficiency](#))

Malachi 4:2; Psalm 84:11 Today in the Word

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. - Numbers 6:24-25

When was the last time you watched a sunrise? Perhaps you've slept in too often, and can't remember. If you've been up, perhaps you've been busy or stuck in traffic, and not taken the time to enjoy this daily drama of nature. Perhaps because sunrise is so frequent, you've been taking it for granted. Yet no two sunrises are exactly the same—our Creator makes a new masterpiece each and every morning!

Today's verses use the sun as a metaphor for God. Notice there is no confusion between the sun and God, as in the case of the pagan nations which surrounded Israel. The sun is a created object, and only the Creator is worthy of worship.

In that case, what attributes of God do the Jewish writers want to highlight by comparing Him to the sun? One answer is His righteousness and glory (Mal. 4:2). For those who revere the Lord, a new day is coming. Like the sun rising, God will appear on the horizon of our wicked world, dispelling the darkness and bringing the fire of judgment to evildoers and granting healing and redemption to His worshipers (v. 1).

In exactly this way, the first coming of Christ was like a sunrise: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned" (Isa. 9:2; cf. Luke 1:76--79). When the day of the Lord is full, there will in fact be no more need for the sun—"the Lord will be [our] everlasting light" (Isa. 60:19-20).

A second meaning of this sun metaphor spotlights God's blessing or favor (Ps. 84:11). That's why the standard priestly blessing included the phrase, "the Lord make His face shine upon you" (Num. 6:25). As with the first meaning, this happy result is only for those who are living righteously, "those whose walk is blameless."

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Schedule a time soon to get up early and watch the sun rise. Pick a good vantage point. Allow plenty of time. You might even invite a friend to join you.