

Jonathan Edwards [1734],  
*Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738 WJE Online Vol. 19 704-733*

## LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD, A DARK HEART

EDWARDS opens his "Speech to the Mohawks" in January 1751 with a common trope: "I bid you all welcome to New England. I am glad to see you. Your coming here will rejoice the hearts of all good men, as they hope it will be a means of your coming into greater light and knowledge in the Christian religion." Within the year he preaches to them on 1 Thessalonians 5:5, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness," again using the figure.<sup>1</sup> It is fitting—and all but certain—that he should, given his interest in light, from "Of the Rainbow" and "Of Light Rays" at Yale and *Christ, the Light of the World* at New York to the nearly score of sermons at Northampton, notably, *A Divine and Supernatural Light* in August 1733 and a series of four sermons delivered in late fall 1747 on Acts 26:18, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light."<sup>2</sup> Here, in a quarterly lecture delivered in August and November 1737, he borrows the last phrase of his text to frame his Doctrine, "Divine revelation is like a light that shines in a dark place," and plies its simile throughout both parts, at one point claiming, "The nations that are destitute of revelation are most of 'em under gross darkness, and barbarous, and are very brutish in their notions and customs; as we see in the many nations of Indians here on this continent." Like those nations "furthest off from the land of Canaan," the Indians of western Massachusetts in time would come to know the light (and "civility"), and, quite unexpectedly, Edwards would be asked to provide it.<sup>3</sup>

To those who turn from the light, namely, Muslims, Catholics, and

1. Thomas A. Schafer quotes these lines of a "kind of sermon" at the end of his unpublished index to JE's extant sermons at the Beinecke Library, Yale; the more formal sermon is dated December 1751.

2. Wallace E. Anderson dates the scientific papers "sometime during the later part of JE's first year of graduate study or early in the second," that is, 1720–21. Somewhat later, probably 1726, JE composed "Beauty of the World," and later still, 1732 or 1733, "Wisdom in the Contrivance of the World," both of which discuss the properties of light, though less scientifically (*Works*, 6, 297; the essays follow in order, pp. 298–310); for the New York sermon, see *Works*, 10, 535–46.

3. Following JE's dismissal in June 1750 and the death of John Sergeant, missionary at the Stockbridge outpost, some fifty miles west of Northampton, the Boston Commissioners of Indian Affairs "applied to him, as the most suitable person they could think of to be trust with that mission" (Hopkins, *Life and Character*, pp. 72–73).

-- 705 --

deists, not only darkness comes but the shadow of death. Edwards dispatches Muslims for their "fables almost too ridiculous to be mentioned in an assembly met for the worship of God" and indicts the Catholic church on a succession of charges—papal infallibility, the veneration of the Virgin Mary and the saints, transubstantiation, and the "capital crime" of keeping the common folk from reading the Bible in the vernacular; but he excoriates deists. Deists mock Scripture, blaspheme Christ, hedge an afterlife, and equate private vice with public benefit, pleading the lawfulness of fornication and drunkenness, adultery and infanticide. Without revelation, the world they read by the light of nature slips into rank barbarism and abject evil. "What is the reason," Edwards asks, "that the deists, that have been taught the principles of reason and religion, and pretend to great learning, as soon as they reject divine revelation begin to doubt, yea, absolutely to reject, 'em?" In a sense, he had already answered the question in a short history of the light of revelation preceding it, a narrative not unlike his far more extensive history of the work of redemption two years later. He traces the uncertain course of revelation from Noah and the patriarchs to Christ and the Great Migration, recounting the many lapses into apostasy and idolatry amid "some scraps of light and truth." But deism appears more troubling to him in that it is local, "fashionable," and, alarmingly, rational.

The second, more lyrical part of the lecture shifts the focus of light from the public record to private memory, from history to biography. Edwards speaks now of the light in the heart that "discovers things as they are." Much as natural light reveals the color, shape, and order of the physical world, so the spiritual light in the heart apprehends the glory and perfection of God and, through his word made manifest in Christ, the promise of redemption. Lovely and pure is the word, "sweet, and pleasant, and refreshing," more delightful than "the blue sky, the parti-colored clouds, the trees and fields" under the sun. "Thy word is a light unto my feet," as Edwards was fond of (mis)quoting, and guides the soul "the right way." Yet though it shines at conversion and continues through life, it is a "small" light in the dark of the heart, much as the morning star is a "dim" harbinger of dawn. Only in the Son, the "Sun of righteousness," does day begin.

\* \* \*

The first, or August, part of the manuscript runs to sixteen duodecimo leaves, the last blank but for one line atop the recto side; the second, or

-- 706 --

November, part of the manuscript runs to thirteen leaves. Edwards labels both a "lecture" on the first leaf, and though he preaches from both a second time, as he indicates in shorthand—the first in February 1758, the second undated from Luke 1:79, a text he cites there (L. 4V.)—he edits only the first at a later time, using different ink to delete whole passages (LL. 3r., 4r., and 9v.) and, more often, to substitute words or

phrases: "anticipation" for "prelibation" (L. 3r.), "filthy" for "obscene" (L. 5V.), "of Palestine" for "of Judea" (L. 6v.), and so on. The August lecture, strident in its rhetoric, merits four decibels and a sorting sign on the first leaf; the November lecture, more scriptural and compassionate, merits only a sorting sign.

-- 707 --

# LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD, A DARK HEART

*We have also a more sure word of prophecy;  
whereunto ye do well that ye take heed,  
as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.*<sup>4</sup>  
2 Peter 1:19

<sup>4</sup>. See JE's note (no. 265) on this verse of Scripture (*Works, 15, 217–18*).

THE Apostle had been exhorting the Christians that he wrote to, to give all diligence to grow in grace, and to live an holy life, and in this way to make their calling and election sure; and uses this argument with them to encourage 'em, and stir them up so to do, that in this way an entrance will be ministered to 'em abundantly into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. By "the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," the Apostle seems to have intended, and the Christians in those days to have understood, that glorious kingdom that Christ should set up and establish at his last coming. And therefore having mentioned their entering into the kingdom of Christ, the Apostle goes on to speak of, and insist upon, Christ's second coming, and to establish the Christians he wrote to, in the belief of it. And though he had often told 'em of it before, yet he says, 2 Peter 1:12, that he would not be negligent to put 'em "always in remembrance of these things," though they knew them, and were "established in the present truth." That the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ would come by his second appearing, and that such an holy life as he had spoken of was the way to enter into it, seems to be what the Apostle here calls "the present truth"; because there were some apostates lately risen up, that he speaks of in the 2 Peter 2–3, that denied and opposed it. They denied the Lord that bought them, and denied that Christ would ever come any more, as in the beginning of the 2 Peter 3. They were scoffers that said, "Where is the promise of his coming?" And they also denied the necessity of virtue, temperance, patience, godliness, etc., and were exceeding dissolute in life, as the Apostle very particularly describes them to be in the 2 Peter 2.

-- 708 --

Therefore the Apostle says he won't fail to put them in remembrance, and to be establishing them in this truth, viz. that Christ would come to reward the holy, and destroy such wicked livers. And he tells 'em that when he and the Apostles had in times past told 'em of Christ's coming to judgment, he had not followed cunning, devised fables.

These apostates that the Apostle speaks of, it seems, gave out that what the Apostles preached about Christ's coming again the second time, were only cunningly devised fables, devised by Jesus their master, to set up him, self, and deceive his followers; and that his disciples were such fools as to believe him, and to expect that he would appear in the world a second time.

And therefore the Apostle shows that they, the disciples, were not deluded by any cunningly devised fables of their master, as they supposed; for they had not only heard him say that he would come, but they were eyewitnesses of his majesty. Christ did not only tell 'em that he would come with power and great glory, but he gave 'em an earnest of it in the glory of his transfiguration; as we see [in] Matthew 16, [the] last verse. Therefore Christ tells his disciples of his coming in his kingdom. And then presently, after the next thing that we have an account of, is Christ's transfiguration; as in the beginning of the next chapter, and so in all the evangelists that give any account of the transfiguration. This the apostle Peter was an eyewitness of, when they not only saw Christ's glory, but also heard the voice of God declaring that this was his beloved Son,<sup>5</sup> in whom he was well pleased; as [the] 2 Peter 1:16–18, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." But then the Apostle says, as in the verse of the text, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts." The Apostle had mentioned a voice from heaven, by which they had been assured that Christ was the Son of God; and that what Christ had been saying about his coming was true, for it bid them hear him. But here the Apostle speaks of something that is surer than a voice from heaven, a word of prophecy, unto which they would do well to

5. MS: "this was Xs beloved son."

-- 709 --

take heed, a light that shines in a dark place. We may in the words observe two things.

1. What that is which is the subject spoken of. It is called "a word of prophecy," by which it is evident the Apostle means that written revelation of God's mind and will, that he had given to the church by the following verse: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." *Prophecy* is a word of large extent in Scripture. All that had the inspiration of the Spirit of God were called prophets: and by the "word of prophecy," we are here to understand all the word of God, that God gave to his church by inspiration of holy men; as appears by what the Apostle himself says, [the] 2 Peter 1:21: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2. Here are two things that are predicted of this word of prophecy, viz. that it's more sure than a voice from heaven, and that 'tis a light that shines in a dark place. I might here show the truth of the former, viz. how the standing, written revelation that God has given of his mind, is more sure (than prophecy); as it is elsewhere said, that "if we hear

not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

But the latter is what I would now take special notice of, viz. its being called "a light that shineth in a dark place." The Apostle advises those that he writes to, to give heed to it as such. When a man is in a dark place, where he is [in] danger of stumbling, and wandering out of the way, and being lost, and then has a light held forth to him to direct him; it behooves him to give heed to it diligently, to eye and observe it, and not to turn his eyes off from it, lest he stumble, and fall, and get out of the way.

They that the Apostle speaks to were as it were in a dark place. For besides the heathen they were surrounded with, it seems they were in the midst of heretics and apostates that denied Christ's coming, and breathed all manner of vile doctrines, and introduced vile practices. And besides persecution that they were subject to, they had many temptations to infidelity and wickedness, and had corrupt dark hearts apt to betray 'em, [and] mislead [them]. When Christ came, it would be a glorious morning; but till then it is as it were nighttime with us. The Apostle therefore advises them to give heed to that light that shines in the night, till the day dawn, and the daystar arise in their heart; that they might have some light in this dark place, as of a star in the night; some light before the morning of the day of Christ's coming, which would be as it were sun rising.

That they might have as it were a prelibation or earnest of that light in

-- 710 --

their dark hearts now, as of the light of the daystar, or the dawning of the day that goes before the dawning of the day.

DOCTRINE.

*Divine revelation is like a light that shines in a dark place.*

There is a two-fold light that God gives to the children of men to discover things to 'em that concern their true interest and happiness, viz. the light of nature, and the light of revelation. The light of nature is manifestation and evidence, that is given of these things to men's natural reason, from those works of creation and God's common providence, that all mankind behold. The other light is revelation, which is something above the light of nature. 'Tis that manifestation God has made of himself to the world by his word, or by his own immediate instructions, given in a miraculous manner by visions, miracles, and the inspiration of his Spirit.

Divine revelation used to be given of old, before Moses, to eminently holy men—as to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Job, Melchizedek, and others—to be delivered to others by oral tradition. And from Moses' time to the death of the apostle John, the church enjoyed a written revelation; and besides that, often had revelation in the other

way, viz. by oral tradition from inspired persons living. From that time to this, the canon of the Scriptures being completed, we have only a written revelation, which is contained in the Holy Scriptures. So that the church in all ages of it, has enjoyed a revelation one way or other, which has always been as a light that shines in a dark place. It is so in two respects.

I. As 'tis a light that shines in the world.

II. As 'tis a light that shines in the heart of man.

I. [6](#) Divine revelation is a light that shines in a dark place, as 'tis a light that shines in this world. This world since the fall is a dark world. Light shone in it in its first estate without darkness; but since sin entered, it has as it were extinguished that light that shone in it at first.

When man fell, the sun set, or rather suffered a total eclipse, and the world was left in darkness. 'Tis represented by the prophet Jeremiah, as

**6.** JE treats the first of these subjects here, and the second when he completes the lecture three months later. In August he marks the subject "FIRST," in November, "Prop."

-- 711 --

though the world was by sin reduced again to its first chaotic state before God said, "Let there be light," when it was without form and void, and darkness covered it. Jeremiah 4:22–23, "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light."

So that divine revelation is in the world as a light that shines in the dark, which may appear by four things: first, by considering the state that the world was in, while divine revelation was confined to one nation; second, how the world has been enlightened by divine revelation, since Christ came and revealed the gospel; third, what state those nations are now in that are destitute of divine revelation; fourth, by considering what has been the consequence, when divine revelation has been neglected or rejected in places that have once been blessed with its light.

*First.* This will appear if we consider the state that world of mankind was in, while but one nation enjoyed the light of divine revelation. When it first began to be thus, we are not able precisely to determine. We don't know how long the remembrance of the revelation that God gave to Noah and his ancestors, might be continued among other branches of his posterity, besides the line of Jacob; or how long God continued to give new revelations to them, as he did to Job and Melchizedek. But by degrees other nations apostatized, and God withdrew this light from them. And the corruption was become exceeding great and general in Abraham's time; which seems to have been the reason of God's calling Abraham, and separating him from the rest of the world, that divine

revelation might be continued and upheld in his posterity. And 'tis probable that the true religion wholly ceased in all other nations about Moses's time, when God solemnly entered into covenant with the nation of Israel in the wilderness, and gave the church the first written revelation, first the Law on tables of stone, and then the whole five books of Moses; after which time, till Christ's time, they only of all nations seemed to have been favored with divine revelation. And how dark a place this world is without revelation, appears by the gross darkness that all other nations were subject to, excepting the Israelites, during that space of time. Their foolish heart was darkened, as the Apostle says (Romans 1:22). Being without revelation, notwithstanding all the light of natural reason, they sunk into brutish ignorance and into such vain, absurd, and ridiculous conceptions of things, that we that have been taught better by divine revelation, can scarce conceive how it was possible for rational creatures to have such thoughts. There was not one nation in the whole world, but that of the Jews, that retained the knowledge of the true God. Instead of worshipping him, they

-- 712 --

worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, and their dead ancestors and kings. They made images of gold, silver, and brass, and worshipped them as gods. These images they made some in the shape of man; some in the form of calves and oxen; {some in the form of} serpents; some in monstrous shapes, as half human and half of a beast or fish. Some worshipped the fire, and some worshipped devils that used to appear in bodily shapes to them. Some worshipped beasts themselves, such as bulls and serpents. Some worshipped the growth of their fields and gardens. Some made gods of certain mortal diseases, and worshipped them, because they were afraid of them. And the manner of their worshipping their gods showed the gross darkness they were in, which was with innumerable ridiculous and monstrous rites and ceremonies. We read in Scripture of their cutting themselves, till the blood gushed out upon them. Some of their gods they worshipped with most obscene rites. They worshipped the god Bacchus by drunken revels to his honor, which they thought pleasing to him, because he was the god of wine. Others they worshipped with most obscene rites, acts of fornication, and other horridly obscene actions, and unnatural impurities, as not to be mentioned; and thought they did what was well pleasing to their gods. And the images of the gods that they thus worshipped were exhibited naked in a most obscene manner. So it seems to have been with the god of the Moabites that is called Baalpeor, which is a word that signifies one that publicly and boastingly shows his nakedness. And the Moabites used to worship him by acts of uncleanness. Hence the children of Israel, when they offered "in the matter of Peor," committed whoredom, as we are told, with the daughters of Moab, [in the] twenty-fifth of Numbers, of which Zimri and Cozbi were an instance. It was a common thing through the heathen world for 'em to offer human sacrifices to their idols, sometimes adult persons and sometimes children. So they worshipped the god Moloch. They were wont to offer their children to be cruelly tormented to death in the fire to that idol, burning them to death in burning brass.

They supposed their gods themselves to be guilty of many of the most hateful vices, such as fornication, drunkenness, adultery, incest;<sup>Z</sup> and so no wonder they thought 'em pleased with such things. And their gods that they worshipped were innumerable. Instead of one god, they had scores, and some hundreds. Besides the gods they had in their temples, they had their household gods, [and] endless fables and ridiculous stories about their gods.

7. JE inserts and deletes "murder."

-- 713 --

And as they had lost the kingdom of God, so they were miserably in the dark about another world. They had some notion of a future state, but had many strange, childish, and ridiculous notions about it. And they had in a great measure extinguished the light of nature about moral duties; for as has been said, they gloried in some of the worst of vices, and accounted 'em acceptable to their gods.

Indeed in some particular countries, as particularly in Greece and Rome, their philosophers and wise men had better notions of things than the generality of the people; and some of them held that there was but one God, but very poor and maimed notions they had concerning him. They had better notions of moral duties {concerning him}, and about man's true happiness, than the common people; but were yet woefully in the dark, and were dreadfully divided, and nothing settled amongst them, being involved in endless uncertainties and differences of opinion.

And in all probability, most of those parts of what is called natural religion, that were held by the heathen before Christ came into the world, were owing to tradition down from their forefathers, Noah and those generations of their ancestors that were over him; and that they had them the same way delivered down, that they had the custom of offering sacrifices, which they undoubtedly had by tradition, for it was universal all over the heathen world; and yet none knew how they came by it, or what it was for. So some scraps of light and truth were retained by tradition, some by one nation, and others by another; and their wise men and philosophers, by travelling from one country to another, gathered up what they could find of those. And many things they had from the Jews; for many of the wise men and philosophers of Greece travelled into Egypt and Phoenicia, or countries bordering on Judea, and so gathered something from them. But all those fragments of truth were originally from revelation. Hence it came to pass that those heathen countries that were furthest off from the land of Canaan, in the utmost parts of Asia, Europe, [and] Africa, were so vastly more barbarous than the nations that dwelt in Greece, Egypt, Syria, and Judea, that were nigher to the land of Canaan. There is no other account to be given of it, but that some were further from the light of revelation than others. The people of Judea, they enjoyed the light of revelation; and they were in the world, as they were in Egypt, They had light in their dwelling, when all the rest {were in darkness}; and they were a light in some measure to other nations. They learnt so much from 'em, as civilized 'em in some measure, though they did not

cast off their heathenism. Judea was a land of light, and it was a light in a dark place, a light in the midst of a dark world. And that the Jews might be a light to other

-- 714 --

nations, was probably one reason why God so ordered it, that they were placed as it were in the middle of the world, in the midst between those three great parts of the other continents, viz. Asia, Europe, and Africa; that, if haply, men might seek after God, and find him.

And though the nations had doubtless far less darkness than they would have, if it had not been for the reliques<sup>8</sup> of truth they had by tradition from their forefathers, and for some glimmering of light they received from the Jews; yet being not possessed of revelation themselves, they were in such exceeding darkness, as has been described, and so they remained ages after ages. Their wise men and philosophers could not deliver 'em from it.

There had been a thorough trial of the absolute need of revelation to enlighten them; for the whole world, except the Jews that had revelation, had remained in such darkness for a great many hundred years.

*Second.* That divine revelation in this world is as light shining {in a dark place}, may appear by considering how the world, which before was so dark, has been enlightened by divine revelation since Christ. After the utter insufficiency of all natural light had been thus thoroughly proved by the trial of so many ages, and the wisdom of the philosophers had proved utterly insufficient for a remedy; then God was pleased to send his Son into the world to give a more full, and clear, and extensive revelation of his mind and will. 1 Corinthians 1:21, "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

The Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father, came to be "the light of the world" (John 8:12), "a light to lighten the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32). He came and preached the glorious gospel, and sent forth his disciples to teach all nations, and [to] that end, sent down the Holy Spirit from heaven; who first in a remarkable manner came on them, on the day of Pentecost, and thenceforward abode upon them, giving them such a revelation of God's mind and will, that the former revelation under the Old Testament had in comparison of it no glory, "by reason of the glory that excelleth" (2 Corinthians 3:10). And thus divine revelation was sent forth into other nations besides the Jews, and it was to them like the rising of the sun after a long night of darkness. Christ, who is the Sun of righteousness, then rose; and then the nations of the world, who time out of mind had remained in such gross darkness, as we have heard, and whose countries were regions of the shadow of death, saw a great light. Multitudes, by the

**8.** Archaic var. of *relic*.

-- 715 --

preaching of the Apostles, and especially of the apostle Paul, were soon brought to see the vanity of idols, and to forsake all their former, ridiculous, heathenish customs, and brutish notions and practices. When revelation was sent forth out of Zion unto the heathen world, the light of it proved irresistible. All the power and wit of earth and hell could not hinder the effect of it. The Roman emperor, who ruled over the world, and others raised violent persecutions against it, and labored to put a stop to it, and if possible to root it out.

They slew many hundreds of thousands of Christians, and were resolved if possible to kill them all, so that there should not be so much as the name of a Christian left, and spared no torments or cruelties they could devise, and made edicts for the burning all the Bibles in the world; which they had many thousands of officers, with all the force of the vast Roman empire, to execute. They did what they could, and made a great many attempts, and continued their endeavors long. One emperor tried after another, being vexed by the frustration of the attempts of their predecessors.

But yet revelation prevailed in its enlightening influences against all that earth and hell could do: the gates of hell could not prevail. But in spite of 'em all, Christianity prevailed. The heathen oracles were silenced, and did [not] give answers, as they used to do. And being inquired of why, they answered that there was a child born in Judea, viz. Jesus, that was king of the gods, that had bid 'em go to hell. And so revelation prevailed more; and Christians, instead of being extirpated, multiplied daily. They could not destroy the Bibles, though they so much endeavored. Till in about three hundred years after Christ, Christianity filled the Roman Empire, that was then called the world, being the principal part of the world of mankind. Christianity ascended higher and higher, till it got possession of the imperial throne, and came to be established, under Constantine the Great, throughout the whole Roman Empire by human laws. Thus Satan, that prince of darkness, that king and god of the heathen world, was cast out that had had possession for so long a time. The idols were destroyed, the heathen temples burnt, and the light of the gospel filled the greatest part of the then known world. Thus was there a remarkable accomplishment of that, Jeremiah 10:11, "The gods that han't made these heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens."

This was the greatest change and revolution that ever happened in the world of mankind, when the greatest part of mankind were soon brought utterly to cast off their old darkness, old gods, and old religions, that they had been bound to much longer than any of their histories gave any account, they knew not when the beginning.

-- 716 --

Before it was a thing unknown for a nation to change their gods. Jeremiah 2:10–11, "For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and

see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods?" But now the greater part of all the nations of the known world were brought to cast off all their former gods. That multitude of gods that they worshipped was all forsaken. Thousands<sup>9</sup> of 'em were cast away for the worship of the true God and Jesus Christ, the only Savior. And there was a most remarkable fulfillment of that in Isaiah 2:17–18, "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he will utterly abolish."

And now those gods that were once so famous in the world, Jupiter and {Juno}, are only now heard of as things that were of old. They have no temples, no altars, no worshippers, and han't had for many hundred years.

And after Constantine's time, there were many barbarous nations that were enlightened; and where the gospel came, it did not only deliver the nations from idolatry, but also from barbarism and brutality, and it civilized them. Most of the nations that now are famous for civility and learning were, before the gospel came among them, barbarous nations living more like beasts than civilized nations. So were the Germans, {the} French, {and} the inhabitants of Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Muscovy, and also Great Britain and Ireland. These countries were much further from Judea than Greece [and] Italy. Our ancestors were, before the gospel came among [them], ignorant and barbarous, much like the Indians here in America. Wherever the gospel has come, it has civilized the people, and brought not only the knowledge of God, but all other useful knowledge.

And all the knowledge or profession the world at this day has of the true God, is owing to the gospel revelation. For though there be many that ben't Christians that worship but one God, as particularly the Turks or Mahometans, who now possess [a] great part of the world; yet they borrowed this from the Christians, and it all came originally from the gospel.

And we have had a remarkable instance, within this two hundred years, of enlightening [a] great part of the world by divine revelation, as these vast American regions; which before, when the Europeans first came and brought the gospel, was full of people; yet it had as it were a vast dark wilderness, a doleful desert and region of the shadow of death, we know not for how many ages, the numerous inhabitants being heathenish and brutish, as we all know. And now civility, and some knowledge of the true

9. JE inserts "many hundreds" for "thousands" (in different ink).

God, and the great things that concern us, is extended along this American continent for thousands of miles; where two or three hundred years ago, the name of the true God and Christ was not mentioned, and the inhabitants were like beasts, differing more from 'em in their slavery to the devil than any other way.

*Third.* This may appear by considering what state those nations are in that are now destitute of divine revelation; as there are many such multitudes in Asia in the eastern and northeastern parts of it, and multitudes in Africa, and innumerable multitudes here in America. And they are all under gross darkness. There is no nation to be found in the world, that have any knowledge of the true God, or any tolerable notions of morality, or any rational account of the creation of the world, and how men came to fall, nor any tolerable notion of a future state, or how we must come to be happy in another world; but only those who have had it from the Scriptures, though we can't suppose but that other nations have as much of the natural gift of reason as they. The nations that are destitute of revelation are most of 'em under gross darkness, and barbarous, and are very brutish in their notions and customs; as we see in the many nations of Indians here on this continent.

*Fourth.* And lastly, this may be manifest by considering what darkness has been the consequence, when divine revelation has been rejected in places that have enjoyed it.

Not only are those that never had divine revelation under gross darkness, but those that have had it, and have apostatized from it, have soon been involved in strange darkness and delusion; and have soon seemed to have even the very light of nature darkened, and in a great measure extinguished in them, by the ridiculous, absurd notions and practices they have approved of and run into.

I shall mention particularly three instances, viz. first, those people that have fallen off from Christianity to Mahometanism; second, in the papists; third, in the deists at this day in our own nation.

1. The Mahometans. Those that first invented and preached Mahometanism were nominal Christians, and those that had enjoyed the light of the Holy Scriptures; and many of those that were drawn to embrace their religion were such. But they forsook the Scriptures, the true revelation<sup>1</sup> that God gave to mankind. And the consequence is that they are become exceeding vain, childish, and ridiculous in their notions and customs. They expect an heaven of sensual pleasures and delights, that

1. JE inserts "and deny it to be the true or at least the chief" for "the true" (in different ink).

consists in gratifying their lusts, and particularly describe how, in a manner not fit to be mentioned. They hold ridiculous things about the manner in which they suppose Mahomet, their great prophet, was called, and went through seven heavens, fables almost too ridiculous to be mentioned in an assembly met for the worship of God: as how the angel Gabriel came to him with twenty pair of wings, and went with him to the first heavens, all of silver, where the stars hung on chains of gold; and saw angels, some in the shape of birds, and others of beasts; and saw among the rest a cock as white as snow, that his head reached to the second heavens, the distance of five hundred days'

journey, his wings extending from east to west; that every morning God singing an hymn, the cock joins with him so loud as to set all the cocks in the world acrowing; and in the second heaven saw an angel so big that it was seventy thousand thousand days' journey between his eyes. And innumerable other such ridiculous fables, too childish to be insisted on in an assembly met for the worship or God, are the principles of their religion. To hear or read them is enough to fill one with astonishment at<sup>2</sup> the blindness and sottishness of the world of mankind, when not guided by revelation, notwithstanding all that men's natural reason, or the light of nature teaches.

2. Another instance is that of the papists. As most of the eastern part of the world that formerly owned the Bible [is] now under Mahometanism,<sup>3</sup> so the western part of it by degrees fell off to popery. Almost all European countries besides what were under the Turk, embraced the popish religion; which in a great measure set aside the Bible, that revelation that God has given to mankind, and set up the decrees of the pope and the canons of their church; which they say is infallible, and make even superior to the Scriptures, making it the very foundation on which they build the Scripture authority. And they value their unwritten traditions and foolish fables they have about the Virgin Mary and saints above the Scriptures. The Bible is wholly taken away from the common people, and they don't suffer it to be seen among them in their mother tongue: it is a capital crime for any of them to be found with a Bible in their own language. So that divine revelation is taken from [them], and the consequence is, they have sunk into gross darkness in many things, not short of the darkness of the heathens: {they} have innumerable superstitions, [and] worship God by images: {they} hold [the] bread and wine in [the] Eucharist [to be] turned into {the body and blood of Christ}: {they} make [the] pope of equal authority

2. MS: "and."

3. MS: "Mahometan."

-- 719 --

to Christ: {they} have many magical kinds of ceremonies, {such as} baptizing babes [and] driving away the devil with holy water. {And} they worship the host: {they} worship reliques of saints: {they worship} pieces of wood they say are pieces of the cross: {they have} superstitious respect for pieces of linen they say the Virgin Mary used in childbed. {They} foolishly buy pardons of sin and indulgences, as liberty to break God's commands.

And innumerable other things that might be mentioned that show the strong delusions and exceeding darkness men are subject [to], that ben't guided by the light of revelation. [Without revelation] all useful knowledge came in a great measure to heathens exceeding dangerous<sup>4</sup> learning.

3. Another remarkable instance is that of the deists at this day in our own nation. They reject the Bible and all revealed religion, and hold that the Bible is a mere human book

and Christ, a cheat; [that] God never gave any revelation of his mind any otherwise than by the light of nature. This of late has made an amazing progress in our nation. Deism has been growing in the nation for some time, till at length grown fashionable, [so that a] great part of the nation are become deists. [The] Bible is derided, Christ openly blasphemed, and all doctrines and miracles ridiculed in public houses and open streets. And 'tis surprising to see what darkness and confusion they have run into, having set up their own reason as a sufficient guide. 'Tis strange to see where their boasted light has led them. Some of 'em hold one thing, and others another, about another world and future state; and some deny any, but hold that men die like brutes.

And with respect to morality, having denied revelation under a pretense of the sufficiency of reason, their own custom, and not their reason, becomes their guide. Many are come to that, to deny that there is any difference between moral good and evil, but only custom; that for instance there is no more moral evil in murder and robbery than in a deed of charity. It is a principle that has been maintained among them, that private vices are public benefits; and plead that the civil authority ought to tolerate vice, and plead<sup>5</sup> for the lawfulness of drunkenness, and fornication, adultery, murder, and robbery. Yea, they plead it lawful to kill their own children, and have of late practiced upon it, and done it in cold blood. These things show that, let us say what we will about the light of nature, if ever we come to cast off revelation, there is no tenet or principle of the light of nature, but what men will call in question and reject. And it remarkably

4. MS: "danger."

5. MS: "& to plead."

-- 720 --

shows what a dark place this world is without revelation. And [it] may convince us what fallen mankind would have been without revelation, if God had let 'em alone, and left 'em only to their own reason, and had not given a light from heaven to enlighten the dark world to guide and direct us.

Corrupt mankind without revelation tend to brutality, to be like beasts, to extinguish their own reason, and to hasten to the state of the brute creatures; yea, to be worse, and more abject, and vile than beasts to beasts and devils together.

We make a distinction between the things that we know by reason and things we know by revelation. But alas we scarce know what we say; we know not what we should have known, not what we should have been ignorant of, had it not been for revelation. Knowledge is easy to him that understands. Many of the principles of morality and religion that we have always been brought up in the knowledge of, appear so rational that we are ready to think<sup>6</sup> we could have found 'em out by our own natural reason. But what is the cause that many barbarous nations {that are enlightened} don't know 'em? What is the reason that the deists, that have been taught the principles of reason and

religion, and pretend to great learning, as soon as they reject divine revelation begin to doubt, yea, absolutely to reject, 'em?

All the learning, yea, all the common civility that there is in the world, seems to be either directly or indirectly from revelation, whether men are sensible of it or no. The nations that are now most civilized and learned, how ignorant and barbarous were they before. And how do we see that nations that cast off revelation, go down hill into barbarism again. God in mercy has given a revelation to this dark world, and 'tis that [that] has kept the world from sinking down into the dirt. All fallen man's help is from heaven. Man by the fall has ruined himself; and most elegantly does the prophet Jeremy<sup>7</sup> represent it by sin's reducing the world again to its primitive chaos, when "it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light." The world would have remained after the fall in such a kind of state had not God have sent the light of revelation. All our help, all our useful knowledge, is from above, from something divine. Everything that is good and useful in this fallen world, is from supernatural help. If God had not sent something out of heaven to us, the world of mankind had been like a vast wilderness of wild beasts.

6. MS: "thing."

7. That is, Jeremiah 4:23.

-- 721 --

#### APPLICATION.

I have dwelt so long on the doctrinal part, that I have left room for but a very brief application, which may be in four uses.

I. Hence we may learn how unreasonable they are who reject or doubt of the authority of the Holy Scriptures; for 'tis most evident that this, and no other, has in fact been that revelation that has, from the beginning, been such a light in this dark world, as we have heard.

It would be a strange thing indeed that God should make that such a light to a dark world to teach men truth, that is itself falsehood and darkness.

If the Scriptures ben't the Word of God, it is the greatest<sup>8</sup> cheat and falsehood that ever was in the world. For from the beginning to the end, it has that show and pretense that it is the Word of God. This is evident in fact, and cannot be not denied, that it has been owing to the Bible, and that only, that the world has been brought to own one only true God; which now we are told it. Reason, as well as Scripture, demonstrates [he] is the only true God. But till the Bible was sent abroad in the world, all the world lay in ignorance of him; but when this came, it was successful to bring the world to an acknowledgement of him. And this is evidential, that the Bible is the proper means for teaching the world concerning God. For 'tis unreasonable to suppose that God would

order it, so that the world should be brought to the knowledge of him by improper and false means; and by no other than 9 that he would make use of a falsehood, and that only to bring the world to the knowledge of the truth.1

'Tis this, and this only, by which the world ever received any account at all that was not childish, and ridiculous, and self-confuted; upon what terms man, after he has sinned, may be reconciled to God, or whether he can be reconciled at all; or any tolerable account what punishment men should have for sin, and what happiness God intended to bestow on good men.

Either God never has made known these things at all, which it is unreasonable to think, or he has made them known in the Bible. There is no nation this day upon earth that professes the true God, and have any rational account {of these things}, but what first had it from the Scriptures; and but what history gives an account how and when they were first taught

8. JE inserts "most complicated, most artful" (in different ink).

9. MS: "that."

1. JE inserts "greatest and most important and most divine truth" for "truth" (in different ink).

-- 722 --

in by this revelation; which shows how unreasonable and brutish they are that reject this glorious light, and won't so much as own it to be the word of God.

II. Hence we see what cause we have to be thankful to God that we enjoy this revelation. We are blessed with this light. If not, {we have} no manner of reason to think any other than that we should have been as barbarous and brutish in our notions and customs as any other nations, that never were blessed with this revelation. Our forefathers were {blessed with this revelation}; and so doubtless we their posterity should have continued to this very day {to be blessed}, as other nations do to this day continue destitute {of light}.

When we consider the things that have been said, we have reason to be ashamed that we have no more sense of God's goodness to us in giving {the light}. We have always had that sun to shine upon us, and we ben't thankful that we don't live in perpetual night, as other nations do.

III. Since we have this light in our hands, let us prize it, and make use of [it]. O! what a precious treasure have we, in that we have this very revelation {of God's will}. Let us therefore not neglect, and let it lie by, as if it were good for nothing, a thing of no use. Let us consider it is something sent from heaven to enlighten a dark world, and what a blessing has it been made to the world. And we may hope it will be a blessing to us, if we improve it; but otherwise of what significancy can it be to us, unless it be to aggravate our condemnation? Shall we have this revelation in our hands, and not read and search it, and diligently use it from day to day?

Let us be stirred up to converse more with our Bibles, and endeavor to understand them. We possess no more of this revelation than we understand, any more than the papists, who have the Bible in an unknown tongue, which is as if they had it not at all.

Let us read, and labor to understand what we read, and apply it to ourselves, that it may be a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths.<sup>2</sup>

What will it advantage a man that is in a dark place to have a light held forth to him to guide him, if he gives no heed to it?

IV. Let us pray for the times when this light shall enlighten the whole world. Such a time is spoken of abundantly in the Scriptures, when all kings and all nations shall come to this light; when all idols shall be utterly abolished, and all the ends of the earth shall look to Christ.

Now many nations, [a] great part of the world, [are] under gross darkness.

2. JE reverses the imagery of Psalms 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

-- 723 --

[A] great part [of the] heathens never had the light {of revelation}. Mahometans have rejected {it}. Papists, who shut it up in an unknown tongue, {have hidden it}. And 'tis a dark time among Protestants, especially in our nation, where deism prevails, who reject and laugh at this light.

We hope that that glorious day is at hand, and that the day will soon dawn, and the sun shall rise, and scatter all the darkness. That will be a blessed day indeed, when the world shall cease any longer to be such a dark place, as we have heard; but the whole earth shall be filled with the light of this glorious revelation that God has given. Let us earnestly pray for it, agreeable to Isaiah 62:6-7, "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."<sup>3</sup>

[DOCTRINE RESUMED.]

You may remember that something has been already spoken from these words [of the text] at our last public lecture. We then observed that by the "word of prophecy," the Apostle manifestly intends that standing, written revelation of his mind and will that he had given to his church; the same with the Holy Scriptures, all that written word of God that God had given by inspiration of holy men. And this is evident by the two following verses: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The doctrine that has been observed from the words was this: *Divine revelation is like a light that shines in a dark place.*

There is a two-fold light that God gives the children of men, the light of nature, and the light of revelation. The light of nature is that manifestation that God has given of truth by the works of creation and common providence to the eye of men's natural reason. Divine revelation is that discovery of truth that God had made by his own immediate instructions and teachings, supernaturally given to the world in his word; and particularly in the Holy Scriptures, which is a standing revelation that God has given for his church to resort to at all times for their instruction, counsel, and comfort.

3. Here ends the first part of the lecture. At the head of the second part is "Lecture November 1737," the citation and text, and following that "second time from Luke 1:79" (in shorthand).

-- 724 --

We observed that this divine revelation was as a light that shine in a dark place in two respects.

I. As 'tis a light that shines in the world, and,

II. As 'tis a light that shines in the heart of men.

It has already been shown how it is as a light that shines in a dark place in the former respect, in a particular discourse from this proposition, viz.

[I.] Divine revelation is in this world as a light that shines in a dark place.

I now proceed to show how it is as a light that shines in a dark place in the latter respect, viz. as it shines in the heart of men.

So that the proposition that I would make the subject of my present discourse is this, viz.

[II.] Divine revelation is in the hearts of those that do truly entertain it as a light that shines in a dark place. 'Tis evident that the Apostle had respect to this by the words next following.

In handling this subject, I would, first, show in what respect divine revelation may, in those that entertain it, be compared to a light in the heart; second, how it is there as a light shining in a dark place; and then make improvement.

*First.* It may be inquired in what respects divine revelation may be compared to a light in the heart. It might be shown to be so in many respects, but it is so chiefly in these three respects, viz. first, as it manifests and discovers things as they are to the heart as

they be; second, as the appearance of it, and the discoveries that are made by it, are sweet and comfortable to the heart; third, as it directs and guides the heart in its acts.

1. Divine revelation is a light in the heart by the manifestation and discoveries that are there made by it. The nature of light is to discover and manifest things to our eyes: without light, things are hid from us. Though they be right before us, and however near they may be to [us], and no obstacle between us and them; yet if there be no light to discover them, they will be hid. If we are placed in the open world with innumerable objects on every side, and many that are very beautiful and excellent; yet without some light, nothing will be seen. All things will be as perfectly hid from us. But when light comes to shine, it makes things manifest. Things are then seen as they are in all their variety, all in their places, and in their true shapes and colors, and in their order and situation, one with respect to another.

So is divine revelation in the hearts of those that truly entertain it. It gives a manifestation of spiritual objects that otherwise are wholly undiscovered and unseen. Divine revelation, in those hearts that receive it, has

-- 725 --

the same effect as to spiritual objects that the light of the sun has as to outward and visible objects. 'Tis the same to the eyes of the mind that external light is to the eyes of the body. It gives the heart that receives it a true apprehension and right understanding of things.

It reveals God to the soul, and enables it to apprehend him as he is, and to have a right apprehension of the perfections and glory of that being who is the being of beings, the first and the last. And proportionably, as it discovers him, it gives a right understanding of all other things. He that is ignorant of God, the great fountain and sum of all being, understands nothing aright: he knows nothing as he ought to know [it]. That light that he has is darkness. There is no true knowledge or wisdom where there is no knowledge of God. But by God's word is imparted the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation. It gives a true manifestation of the nature of sin and holiness: it gives a right knowledge of ourselves and of others, of the things of this world, and that which is to come. In the Psalms 19, the word of God seems to be compared to the light of the sun in this respect, that it enlightens and makes manifest his law and statutes, his commandment and judgments.

On this account, divine revelation is fitly compared to a light in the heart, because it makes things manifest there, Ephesians 5:13, "Whatsoever maketh manifest is light." On this account, divine revelation is called light in the Scriptures. Psalms 119:130, "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple."

2. 'Tis fitly compared to a light shining in the heart by reason of the sweetness of it, and the comfort that it brings to the heart that truly understands it. Darkness is

uncomfortable, and the light sweet. Ecclesiastes 11:7, "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."

Light or brightness is a very beautiful object of sight. Hence 'tis so common in speech, when we would represent anything as very beautiful or glorious, to say that it shines bright, or that it outshines this or that. Hence the sun is the most glorious of all objects in the inanimate creation, because of it having a greater fullness of light than any other body that we behold.

On this account, divine revelation, or the word of God in the heart that truly receives, is fitly compared to a light. It is sweet, and pleasant, and refreshing to the eyes of the mind, and much more so than the light of the sun is to the eyes of the body.

Trouble and sorrow is very often in Scripture called darkness; and spiritual comfort and joy, or that which gives it to the heart, is called light. Psalms 97:11,

-- 726 --

"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." And Proverbs 13:9, "The light of the righteous rejoiceth." And because the word of God is so sweet, and brings such comfort to the heart, it is compared to light in the Scriptures. Psalms 19:8, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes"; Psalms 19:10, "More to be desired are they than gold 'yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

The word of God appears lovely to the heart that truly understands it: it appears lovely, because of the divinity and holiness that is seen in it. It is clean and pure as the light: the light is a pure thing. There is no defilement in light, neither is there in God's word: the words of the Lord are pure words. Psalms 119:140, "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth [it]." The heart that receives the word of God has a sense of superlative excellency in it.

'Tis sweet and joyful on the account of the gloriousness and excellency of the objects it reveals: it discovers to the heart the most glorious objects in the world. The enlightened soul beholds wondrous things in God's law; and hence the gospel is a light shining in the heart, because it exhibits glorious things to its view. 2 Corinthians 4:4, "Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

The light of the sun exhibits many pleasant objects to our view, such as the blue sky, the parti-colored clouds, the trees and fields, and many pleasant objects on the face of the earth. But God's word discovers far more delightful and glorious objects. Hence the godly love the word of God. Psalms 119:97, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day"; Psalms 119:103, ] "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey!"

3. Divine revelation is a light in the heart, as it directs and guides the soul in its acts. Light serves to guide men in the way that they go: without light to direct 'em, they would soon wander out of the way. John 12:35, "He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." And so it is by light only that men see to do any work they are about: if they had not light to guide 'em, they would commit sin blindly, and could scarce bring any work to pass. So is the word of God in the heart that entertains it. It shows the soul the right way: it leads and conducts it in all its conduct and behavior. Hence the Psalmist says, "Thy word is a light unto my feet."<sup>4</sup> And therefore also Zacharias says, as Luke 1:79, "To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." The words of God don't only discover objects for the soul's view

4. The Psalmist actually says "a lamp unto my feet."

-- 727 --

and contemplation, but also guides it in actions and practice, and so makes the soul not only knowing, but wise. Thus divine revelation is a light in the heart. I proceed now,

*Second.* How it is there as a light shining in a dark place. And it is so in two respects: first, when it first shines into the heart, it shines into that that before was a dark place; second, as long as the saint lives in this world, the heart that this light shines in, continues still in a great measure a dark place.

1. When this light first shines into the heart at conversion, it shines into that which till now has been a dark place. This light first shines in the heart in conversion. Although men read the word of God, and often hear it before they are converted, yet the light of it never shines into them till they are converted; and that because, though they read and hear it, yet they don't understand. They don't see those spiritual things that are contained and declared in it. Isaiah 6:9, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." The soul till then remains in darkness; and therefore persons are in Scripture represented as being brought out of darkness into light in conversion. 1 Peter 2:9, "Ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." And Isaiah 29:18, "Then shall the deaf hear the words of this book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." And hence the work of conversion is compared to God's causing the light to shine out of darkness, when he first said, "Let there be light." 2 Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The soul before conversion remained in a benighted state. It was time of night with it. The light that shines in conversion is the first daylight that ever shines into it.

Therefore in the verse of the text, we are commanded to give heed to divine revelation, till the day dawn, and the daystar arises in our hearts. The dawning of the day, or at least

the rising of the daystar, is the first that begins to put an end to the darkness of the night. When a man is converted, then the word of God first shines into the heart to give a discovery of spiritual objects. Till then the soul had remained in perfect darkness, as to any spiritual understanding. Never was anything apprehended or understood spiritually. There was never the least glimmering of spiritual light before. But then are those glorious and before-unknown objects discovered. Then light is let in. The day dawns, and [the] daystar arises to him that before dwelt in midnight darkness.

-- 728 --

Before that, the soul never had any true comfort; and commonly a little before, the soul is brought into the greatest darkness of spiritual trouble and distress. The soul always was in darkness; but then it is brought into sensible darkness. Everything seems to look dark and dismal. If they look upward to heaven or downward to the earth, [they] behold trouble, and darkness, and dimness of anguish. If they look on God, things look dark on that side. He appears as a dreadful enemy and provoked sovereign. If they look on themselves, [they] behold nothing but darkness.

If they look into their own hearts, all things appear dark. There is nothing to be seen thence, whence any light can arise, or encouragement can be drawn. If they look backward, and consider how they have lived, all looks dark. If they look forward, and consider their mortality, and an approaching judgment and eternity, [they] behold nothing but the blackness of darkness. If they look on their fellow creature, no light arises from them. They cannot help 'em. If they look on the means of grace, they appear dark. They have had no good effect on them, and it seems to them they only tend to aggravate their misery. But when God by his Spirit comes to make the light of his word shine into the heart, this dissipates this darkness. This causes a lovely and glorious daystar to arise to scatter this gloom.

The promises and sweet encouragements of the gospel shine into the heart, as so many bright stars with sweet and refreshing light; and the day begins to dawn, and the light like that of the dawning day begins to come in more and more. There now arises the light of hope, and of a sweet peace and joy in God. Glorious objects are discovered that bring such a sweetness and refreshment to the soul, as heals the wounds it before labored under, and gives a before-unexperienced gladness, and puts a new song in the mouth. And then the soul that before seemed to be shut up, and knew not where to go, nor what to do, which way to turn itself, has its way made plain before it. It is guided into [the] way of peace, and taught its duty, and the grounds and reasons of it, in a way that it never was before. Isaiah 42:16, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; and I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

And 'tis only by divine revelation that light is thus caused to shine into the heart at conversion. There is nothing else that ever scatters that darkness that naturally fills the

soul. There is no other light that puts an end to the night with which the hearts of men naturally are benighted, but the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.

2. This light, in continuing to shine into the heart after conversion,

-- 729 --

shines in that which is still in a great measure a dark place, as long as the saint lives in this world. Though there be a great change, and it be far otherwise with the heart than it was before, and it be a lightsome heart in comparison of what it has been; yet there is so little light in comparison of what is needed, and in comparison of what will be hereafter, and so much remaining darkness, that [the] heart may still be said to be a dark place. Though the light be of a divine, glorious, and joyful nature, yet [it] is not great enough to scatter away all darkness; but it is so small, that it is a light in a dark place. Because of its smallness, therefore 'tis in the context compared to a star, though a bright star, even the morning star. The light of the morning star, though it be a beautiful, pleasant, and bright light, yet is often a light in a darkness. Though it be the forerunner of the day, yet it is not sufficient to put an end to the darkness of the night, and is but a very small light in comparison of the light of the risen sun that follows. The light of the dawning of the day, though it be a sweet light after total darkness, yet is but a dim sort of light; and that is a kind of mixture of night and day together, and a great deal more darkness than light. The saints in this world, they see and know but in part, and as the Apostle expresses it, "see through a glass, darkly." Their spiritual knowledge is but as the knowledge of little children that just begin to know anything. 1 Corinthians 13:11–12, "While I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

There is yet a great deal of blindness and ignorance. The heart is yet a very dark heart, and the heart is still liable to the darkness of spiritual trouble. A saint may be in great trouble and darkness. Isaiah 50:10, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." And the godly are liable still to be often in doubt, and under difficulties and entanglements, and to be much at a loss about their duty, and greatly to stand in need of counsel and direction. But still God's word is as a light that shines in their heart: they have light in the midst of darkness. Psalms 112:4, "To the upright there ariseth light in the darkness."

By God's word they gain more and more knowledge, and acquaintance with God. Psalms 119:104, "Through thy precepts I get understanding."

And 'tis by this that the saints have light and comfort under troubles and afflictions. When their hearts are bowed down heavily under any sorrow, 'tis God's word that gives 'em light, and so is to them a light that shines in a dark place. The light of the godly is an interrupted light, and a night of darkness

-- 730 --

sometimes comes upon them. But when it is so, the light that delivers them is the light of God's word; that is a light that shines in a dark place. If at any time the saint falls under decays, and gets into bad frames, and there arise thick clouds after the day has dawned, so as to cause a kind of return of the darkness of the night, it is by God's word that he is recovered. This is the light that shines in a dark place, and as it were brings the dawning of the day again, and commonly causes a more glorious dawn than before.

If the saint be exercised with darkness through the hiding of God's face, or be brought into distress through doubts of his own condition, it is by the light of God's word that he is delivered. This is the light that shines in the dark place.

And when the saint is under great temporal afflictions and distress, and meets with sorrow through sickness, or bereavements, or persecutions, or otherwise, {it is by the light of God's word that he is delivered}. Psalms 119:50, "This is my comfort in mine<sup>5</sup> affliction: for thy word hath quickened me." And when the saint comes to die, and to walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death, the word of God oftentimes is in the midst of this dark valley as a light that shines in a dark place, [and] gives a sweet, and supporting, and most comfortable light in the midst of such a dark place.

The saint all the while he is in this world, is like a pilgrim in a dark wilderness; but God's word gives him light and comfort in it. Psalms 119:54, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." If it were not for the word of God, the saints would often sink in their darkness. Psalms 119:92, "Unless thy law had been my delights, I had perished in mine affliction."

#### APPLICATION.

I. Here is in this doctrine a powerful reason why we should love and prize the word of God. What can we love better than light which is in its own nature so excellent, and lovely, and sweet to the eyes of those that behold it? How vitiated and depraved indeed must that nature be that hates the light, and loves darkness? He that does so appears to be like the inhabitants of the netherworld, the world of darkness; and it is manifest that the prince of darkness has as it were poisoned his nature, and breathed his spirit into him.

Light is sweet and pleasant, and especially light in darkness. Light is never so recommended to our esteem and value as when held forth in a

5. MS: "mind"; AV: "my."

-- 731 --

dark place. Certainly when men have been wandering about long in a dreadful wilderness, amidst hideous forest, and swamps, and miry places, and amongst wild beasts, and in a dark night, not knowing where to go; and some friend should come, and hold forth a light to him to enlighten and direct him; it would be a pleasant sight to him. He would love and rejoice in that light.

If a man had lived ten or twenty years in a long night, and never had seen any glimmering of light all that time, and at length the daystar should arise, would it not rejoice his heart? Would not so bright a star appear pleasant and beautiful to such a man? Would he not spend all his time in viewing of and feasting his eyes in beholding that brightness, and valuing it the more, because it was a forerunner of the day that should put a final end to his long-continued night?

II. Here is a strong argument to induce us to love the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the fountain of this light. That divine revelation that we have been speaking of, is his revelation: 'tis made by him. John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

'Tis he that makes known divine things to the world by his word. John 15:15, "All things that I have heard of the Father I have made known unto you." The word of God is all given by Christ, insomuch that Christ himself is often called "the Word of God." John 1, at [the] beginning: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; i.e. Christ. Revelation 19:13, "His name is called the Word of God."

And he is the fountain of that spiritual influence whereby this light is caused to shine into the heart: he is the luminary whence all this light shines into the heart. And therefore he himself is the daystar, or morning star, that rises in the heart. Revelation 22:16, "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star." 'Tis he that brings light out of darkness, and causes it to shine in a dark place. Were it not for him, we must have eternally remained in that gross darkness into which {we fell}. Christ tells us that he is "the light of the world" (John 8:12).

Christ hath the place of the sun in the spiritual world, and therefore he is called "the Sun of righteousness." As the natural world is all enlightened with the light of the sun, so is the church of God and the whole spiritual world by Jesus Christ. As the sun, when he rises, does as it were bless the world with his light, [and] scatters away the darkness of the night; so doth Christ in the souls of all the elect. As the sun, by his return in the spring, revives all the face of the earth, and as it were puts new life into all things on the face of the earth, quickens the seeds and roots that lie hid in the

earth, and causes the grass, and herbs, and trees that seemed to be dead to live again; so doth Christ quicken and enliven dead souls, and puts new life into souls after decays,

and turns of spiritual coldness, and benumbedness, and causes souls to increase and grow.

As the sun as it were adorns the trees and fields in a beautiful green, and decks them with pleasant and fragrant flowers; so the Sun of righteousness, by shining in the souls of men, puts a lovely beauty upon them, and adorns them with the sweet and lovely graces of his spirit. As the sun in the spring brings a joyful, pleasant time of the singing of birds, and rejoicing of all nature; so Christ fills the souls of his saints with gladness, and rejoices the spiritual world, and fills it with sweet and pleasant songs of praise. As the sun by his light causes the growth of the earth to bring forth fruit, and ripens them, and brings them to perfection; so Christ the Sun of righteousness, by his spiritual light and divine influences, causes the souls of his people to bear fruit to God's praise, and ripens and brings 'em nearer and nearer to perfection of grace, till grace is perfected in glory.

As the sun by his beams enlightens the whole world, and makes all the face of the earth and the heavens appear lightsome and bright; so doth Christ by his light and spiritual comforts enlighten the spiritual world, as the light of [the] sun causes flowers to send forth a fragranc. As the sun not only communicates light but warmth for the quickening and comfort of all living; so doth Christ communicate that influence whereby the soul is not only enlightened, but there is an inward warmth or heat that cometh with the light, that is comfortable and powerful.

As the light of the sun is reflected from the moon and planets, and they shine by his light; so do the ministers of the gospel, and all that he improves as instruments to instruct and enlighten men's souls, shine only by Christ's light. They can do nothing of themselves, but only through the light, and grace, and immediate influence of Jesus Christ.

This shows the excellency and glory of Christ, and what great cause [we] have to love him.

III. Let us hence be exhorted earnestly to seek that this light may shine into our hearts, agreeable to the words next the text, "until the day dawn."

*First.* Our hearts are all naturally full of darkness.

*Second.* How doleful is this darkness, and how dreadful its consequences will be, if this light don't shine into our hearts. All that are involved in this darkness are in a lost condition, like persons lost in the night in a vast howling desert. All are in the kingdom of darkness: this darkness is from hell. If this light don't shine into {our hearts}, we shall surely never find the way to true happiness: we shall forever wander, [and] never find the way out

of the wilderness, This light is like the pillar of fire that guided the children of Israel in the night in the wilderness. If they had not followed that guide in the land of darkness, and the shadow of death, of pits, and drought, and fiery {serpents; they should never find their way out of the wilderness}.

If this light don't shine {into our hearts}, we shall surely stumble and fall and never rise more {out of this darkness}: [we shall] fall into the blackness of darkness forever.

*Third.* How glorious will be the consequences, if this light shines into your heart.

This will be the beginning of an everlasting light, [a] never totally extinguished {light}, [a] sun [that] shall never set more. {There shall be} no return of that night, no shadow of turning. [The] Lord shall shine,<sup>6</sup> [an] everlasting light.

[It shall be the] sure forerunner of day. [It] shall be an increasing light. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18).

In a little time [the] sun shall rise in glory; for the reflected light of the dawn [has] turned, [and you] shall have an immediate sight of the sun.

[You] shall be in heaven, that world of light where [there is] no need of the sun nor moon. [You] shall yourself shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father.

[You] shall see [the] glorious brightness of Christ's body, the glory of his human nature; and shall have your own body changed to be like Christ's glorious body.

[You] shall see the glory of his divinity, and {shall have} your soul changed {to be like his}.

[IV.] *General direction* is that in the text, viz. to take heed to this light of God's word. If one that is in a dark place would have any benefit, {he} should take heed {of this light of God's word}. To what purpose otherwise [is it] held forth?

Give heed to the instructions of God's word, [the] threatenings, promises, [and] encouragements.

Give heed to the means appointed in the word.

Persevere herein. This perseverance in giving heed is the way to be savingly enlightened; as appears by the manner of expression in the text, into which "light shineth unto a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts."

**6.** MS: "Lord shall be shine."

## **Finis**

By accessing this content (registered and unregistered), you agree as follows:

The *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online* is a digital learning environment that provides free access to Jonathan Edward's writings, as well as other content relevant to the writings. These materials are made available solely for educational or scholarly purposes. Users must keep intact, and not modify or remove, any copyright or other proprietary notices contained on the original screens on any copy you make. You are not permitted to sell, lease, license, rent, transfer, disassemble, modify, post, or publish any aspect of the materials, or authorize others to use these materials for commercial purposes. Any is prohibited. In the event you wish to use these materials other than as provided above, including quoting from or publishing texts in whole or in part, you must obtain explicit written permission from the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, [edwards@yale.edu](mailto:edwards@yale.edu)

Transcripts are the result of countless hours of labor and are not in the public domain. Any unauthorized reproduction will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. If you have inquiries about this, please email [edwards@yale.edu](mailto:edwards@yale.edu).

All documents are © 2008-2011 Jonathan Edwards Center, Yale University.

In a Dark World by TryHardNinja is a song for a video game called Deltarune. The song is produced by Peter Litvin, and is featuring Cami-Cat.Â [Chorus: All] We can be heroes Heroes in a dark world Fighting for kindness Inside of every heart When destiny calls Out of us. We can be heroes We can be heroes In a dark world. [Verse 2: Cami-Cat] I don't know, I don't know What if I'm in Way over my head? It's so hard to think I could be one to the save All of them.Â [Bridge: TryHardNinja] The balance of Light and dark So walk with me, walk with me On the edge of both. Restore the kindness Torn apart So walk with me, walk with me Till it turns to gold And then. Those days the world around me seems me dark, I cannot see anythingâ€¦ All my thoughts & dreams were vanishedâ€¦ I became dreamless & thoughtlessâ€¦ I had no dreams on those daysâ€¦ Butâ€¦ sometimes in the midst of my sleepâ€¦ A thought arises gives me inspiration to runâ€¦ But it remains for a momentâ€¦â€¦ I donâ€™t know what happened to meâ€¦ I donâ€™t know what is happening around meâ€¦ The Dark Heart, also known as the Frightful Heart,[1] is an artifact associated with Namira through some of the cultural interpretations of Lorkhan, specifically Lorkh and Lorkhaj. Physically appearing as a sphere of darkness surrounded by a radiant aquamarine corona, it is a piece of primal Void trapped on Nirn that warps existence around it.[2] According to ancient Khajiit, Namira became a shadowy imitation of Lorkhan's heart,[3] while Reach belief holds that the darkness left his heart after his sacrifice for the creation of the realm of.Â Both the Reachmen and the ancient Khajiit tell stories detailing the origin of the Dark Heart, and its history may be surmised from these legends. Khajiit[edit]. "And Azurah tore out the dark heart of Lorkhaj, and all of the darkness in him came with it, and she cast it