

morning-hour, had witnessed the joy of the Lord over it, and the blessing of the Lord on it. — Israel, who sang their resurrection-song on the banks of the Red Sea, became a captive in the dungeons of Babylon, and the land of the glory was left wasted And desolate under the foot of uncircumcised oppressors. — The Sun that in the morning of Bethlehem rose on the world as the light of it, and on Israel as the pledge of a renewed day, set in the night of Calvary — for man was a sinner, and rejected Him. — The same blessed Jesus who rose a second time upon the world and upon Israel as life from the dead, bringing light and life for eternity to us with Him, now has to see the waning, fading, evening shades of Christendom, which are soon to close in the midnight of Apocalyptic judgments. — The kingdom which is to break forth as the light of "a morning without clouds," is to close in the great apostasy of Gog and Magog, in the judgment of death and hell, and all not written in the book of life, and in the fleeing away of the heavens and the earth from the face of Him who sits on the great white throne. — The morning, however, of the new heaven and the new earth, God will maintain in its first beauty and freshness for ever. There will be no evening shades of man's corruption and revolt, no night of judgment in the story of it. It shall be maintained as the one eternal day, the sun of which shall never go down.

What sights are these which pass in vision before us! The blessed God begins again and again to lay His foundations, as in the freshness of morning, and man again and again turns His morning into the shadow of death. But God cannot dwell in darkness. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living — and, therefore, though man may not join Him in maintaining the light, but plunge the whole scene in darkness again and again, He Himself will make good His own glory and secure His own joy, and having at the beginning called forth light from darkness in the morning-hour of the first creation, will hold in eternal beauty the morning of the second creation.

The Mornings of Scripture

J. G. Bellett

The soul is the dwelling-place of the truth of God. The ear and the mind are but the gate and the avenue; the soul is its home or dwelling-place.

The *beauty* and the *joy* of the truth may have unduly occupied the out-posts, filled the avenues, and crowded the gates — but it is only in the soul that its *reality* can be known. And it is by *meditation* that the truth takes its journey from the gate along the avenue to its proper dwelling-place.

The Mornings of Scripture

In the progress of Scripture, we have several infant-seasons, as I may express myself, or mornings.

Creation was one — but that of course. That was the birth-day of the works of God — the morning of time. And when the foundations, in that season, were laid, "the morning-stars sang together," as we read in the Book of Job.

The Exodus was another of these mornings. Israel, as a nation, was then born, or in its early infancy. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt," the Lord says by the Prophet Hosea. The year started afresh then, as though it were new-born. The month of the Exodus was made the beginning of months. Life from the dead, a resurrection morning, was celebrated in the song of Moses and the congregation on the banks of the Red Sea.

The birth of the Lord Jesus was another. That event rose upon the world like the light of morning. A very long and dreary night had preceded it. Israel was a captive, and in the dust. There were no signs. The voice of the last of the Prophets had been silent for centuries. No Urim or Thummin, no ephod of the priest, was delivering oracles, or answers from God. No glory filled the Temple. Nothing distinguished the city of peace, the favoured seat of God on the earth, save now and again the angel-stirring of the waters of Bethesda, when little *expected and* scarcely welcomed. But the birth of the Lord Jesus, like the morning, awakened the creation; and the lights of many other days broke forth together, to tell that the long, dark night had at length given place to a

very bright and cheerful morning. Heaven rejoiced, like the sons of God at the creation. Angels, once so well known in Israel, re-appeared. The grace that had acted in infant, patriarchal days, again displayed itself. Promises to Abraham and to David, which anticipated the new birth of the people and of the kingdom, are cited and rehearsed. All this is seen on this great occasion, this fresh morning-hour in the progress of the ways of God. And the child born in Bethlehem is welcomed by the Seer of God as "the day-spring from on high," the sunrise or the morning. (See Luke 1, 2)

The resurrection of the Lord was another of these mornings. It came after the gloomiest night that ever brooded on the face of creation. But it was light, and light indeed. It was the pledge, the harbinger of an eternal day. It was the turning of the shadow of death into the morning. "It began to dawn towards the first day of the week," when this great mystery disclosed itself — as we read in Matthew 28.

The Kingdom will be another of these mornings. It will be day after night, Christ's day after the night of sin and death, Christ's world after man's world. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." This is written of this coming kingdom. (2 Sam. 23)

The new heaven and the new earth will be another. It will be creation at its *second birth*. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth," says the prophet: "for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." It is called the dwelling-place of righteousness, the scene where "God will be all in all."

Sweet it is to see morning after morning thus rising, as we pass down the ages which Scripture measures.

But we have another sight to see to. Man has been again and again turning God's morning into the shadow of death. Creation, which came forth from God so fair and full of joy, quickly was turned into a wilderness of thorns and thistles. The ground was cursed which, at its