

Walk While You Have the Light

Excerpts from a sermon by the Rev. Norbert H. Rogers

Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going" (John 12:35).

To walk is to live; and to walk in the way of heaven is to live the life of regeneration. For this every person was born into the world, and for this, light from the Lord is essential. For life, both spiritual and natural, is active; it is never inert. It goes forward or backward, as it were; it ascends and is perfected, or it descends and deteriorates. In whatever direction it may take, the course of life is fraught with problems to be solved, pitfalls to be avoided, obstacles to be overcome, and choices to be made—all requiring the making of decisions and the exercise of judgment. For this knowledges are essential: knowledges to recognize what the problem, obstacle or choice is, and knowledges to know how to dispose of each one. To cope with the demands of natural life, natural knowledges in abundance are required; but for the judgments pertaining to spiritual life and to regeneration, the light of spiritual and Divine truth is needed.

The Lord is present with people in the Word—not in the Word outside a person, but in the Word in him; that is, in the truths of the Word in the person's mind, particularly those in the thoughts of his understanding and in the affections of his will. By these truths a person has spiritual light from the Lord; and in that light he can see the way of regeneration in which he should go. Through them a person is enabled to recognize the falsities and evils standing in his way and to know how to overcome them, and he is enabled to perceive the truths of faith and the goods of life that must be made his own in order to enter into a heavenly state. Without the light of truth from the Word a person is in spiritual darkness, and could not know his spiritual destination, nor the way to it; without the light of truth from the Word, a person could not shun the falsities and evils that beset him, nor appropriate the truths and goods which make the life of heaven. People thus are exhorted to walk while they have the light, for those who walk in darkness do not know where they are going.

Of this we read in the Heavenly Doctrines:

the person of the Church advances from morning to day, to the end that he may be reformed and regenerated by means of the light of reason, which is effected only by a life according to the precepts of the Lord in the Word. If this does not take place, his light becomes darkness, and the darkness thick darkness; that is, the truths of light with him are turned into falsities, and the falsities into unseen evils. It is otherwise with the person who suffers himself to be regenerated: night does not overtake him, for he walks in God, and hence is continually in the day; into which, also, he fully enters after death when he is associated with angels in heaven (Coronis 5.II.).