

PRECURSOR
OF THE
WORD

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*PRECURSOR OF THE WORD

Because Advent is a clearing-away season, our lesson for **today concentrates on clearing away from the mind all that is not truth. This clearing process is under the dispensation of John the Baptist, whose burden of teaching was repentance: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And it must be emphasized that we do not clear away impediments just for the sake of clearing away, but that the clean place may be occupied by something more desirable.

It is said in the Kabbalah that, in order to have a creation, God carved out of Himself a place into which He might flow; and when He carved out that place, He did not leave it vacant but occupied it Himself. We are told by innumerable saints that God made creation for Himself alone, and that we, His creatures, can never rest until we rest in Him. We are made

*(Class lecture, December 7, 1952)

**Second Sunday of Advent



with this insatiable hunger for we know not what, that we may not settle for any substitutes; we will not stop short of God Himself.

Bede Frost says of Saint John of the Cross:

*All his doctrine of renunciation is but a means of denuding the soul of that which hinders and destroys its natural capacity to be "filled with the fulness of God."

The soul's natural capacity! Our perfection lies in our capacity to receive without hindrance Him Whom God has sent—His Son.

Today we have John the Baptist, the person assigned in the Scriptures to the cleansing by water baptism. My father, Mr. Burnell, has defined baptism as

** . . . the conveyance to a human being of a signature, a seal that enables him, by the very impression of his presence, to become efficient in proportion to what he is by virtue of birth from God.

And hand in hand with this theological function, we have the parallel philosophical function of cleansing the mind of its prepossessions

*Saint John of the Cross, by Bede Frost, page 9

**Sacred Affluence 44, by George Edwin Burnell, page 16

by means of our constant, axiomatic exercises in rationality.

The Sacrament of Penance is a clearing-away process, and we have everything to gain by it and nothing to lose—we need not shy away from it like a reluctant schoolboy confronted with a bathtub!

The work of John the Baptist is to prepare the way for the Word Who is coming to be the renewal of creation even though He was the Creator, the beginning of it, too. In the beginning was the Word, in the middle was the Word, and in the end was the Word. He said, I am Alpha and Omega. In absolute truth the Word is all there is—ever! Creation added to God has not added anything to God. For

*The mystery of the dispensation of the Advent is that the truth advances from being that which is, to being also that which is not.

We humans have evolved strange and grotesque imaginations about this creation that was looked at by God and pronounced good.

*Chronicle of Reality 328, by George Edwin Burnell, page 25

And we know of nothing more important to the candidate in truth than to recognize that the work of creation and regeneration is by the Word of God and nothing else.

Most of you have seen the article, "The Earth is Born," in Life Magazine. It is announced that this is one of a series of articles scheduled to appear, regarding what science has discovered about creation; and it is significant as presenting the viewpoint of scientific thought regarding creation, in this year 1952. It is really a confession of the limitations of scientific observation which can carry the mind only to the point of realizing its inadequacies.

As true today as when he acknowledged its limitations, Haeckel summed it up when he said, We scientists have derived nothing from the multiplication of our evidence; we have only a conclusion of rational function.

One short paragraph I am going to read to you, because it pertains to this action of Advent in which we clear away from the mind the ideas of some other action, some other power, something other than God.

*PART I. The Earth is Born

How was the earth created? When did it come into being? What is its fate?

The concept of a random universe, existing without origin or destiny, is meaningless to a human animal who lives in a dimension of time. There have been many theories about the beginning of creation, that it is a random element, that it is an act of chance, that it is a kind of spontaneous bursting forth of something without any rhyme or reason.

The author of this article testifies to a creation. He says, Here is a creation, all right. How do we account for it? Is it something that has broken forth as a random element, or is there some meaning beyond it?

A rational human being demands a reason. He would not be rational if he did not demand a reason; it is because he is rational that he demands an intelligence—some purpose, some reason for being, some explanation. But he cannot find the answer in creation itself, only in the Creator. So long as he seeks his answers

*Cf. Life Magazine, December 8, 1952, "The Earth is Born."

in created things, he is doomed to frustration and failure. Saint Augustine discovered this; he "sampled" everything he could find in creation, and at the end of his search he said, I have found that while God was with me all the time, alas, I was not with Him! He was focusing his attention on the creatures rather than on the Creator; and how could he find satisfaction?

This article sets forth the current scientific view of creation and offers little inspiration for present or future good. For that we must turn our attention away from the creation to the Creator, and this turning we call "religion." People think that science and religion have strayed so far apart that it is impossible to bring them together. However, the truth is that truth is not divisible, and is truth no matter where it is found—or whether it is found or not. This is rationality. This is an axiom. Truth is not divisible. If you have any truth in science it has to be the same truth that is in religion. You are not going to succeed in dividing any-

thing, for division is not in the truth. Truth is all and indivisible.

Nothing is broken up by division, but things appear fractional because viewed from a dimensional point of view that refracts or breaks up the images. It is said that viewing things from a given dimension is like trying to see eternity from time—we see eternity only as an edge. On the circumference of a circle you seem very far from the place across the diameter of the circle, but when you stand in the center, there is no separation in the circle; places come together; the radii of the circumference meet in the center.

In Genesis we are given a very different view of creation. Genesis speaks with universal accents in its mighty opening phrase:

*In the beginning God created . . .

Here are no wavering words of doubt about a random element. Immediately we know who and what!

*Genesis I:I

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

In its assault upon these uttermost questions, the modern science of the cosmos impinges upon edges. In the ancient realm of religion, they come together; whenever you begin to talk of universal things, they come together. The striking fact is that today the stories of science and the stories of religion seem increasingly to converge when the viewpoint is universal. Every mystery that science resolves points to a larger mystery beyond; religion also points always beyond.

The renewal of creation is accomplished by the selfsame Word by which creation was made in the beginning. We are not bringing forward other things as there are no "other"; instead, in everything we bring to your attention the truth and the action of truth, the power of truth, the Word of God.

At this season of Advent we are introducing that action, that work of the Word called the

"renewal of creation"; but it is the same Word that created in the beginning—out of nothing!

Viewpoints based on imaginations have to be stripped off so that we get back to a preception of the Word Itself. In the beginning and in the end the same Word pervades everything—that Word which rushes through the universe, unknown to you perhaps, certainly unknown to the world at large, but nevertheless the subsistence of the world. There could be no world, there could be no man, without this Word.

Yet the mind has built up all sorts of ideas about the creation of the universe, all of these ideas proposing duality: that there is something other than God to be taken into account in creation; that there is something other than God—besides Whom there is nothing!

The Epicureans deny that there is any mind at all behind the universe. They imagine an irrational universe without any intelligence behind it. Of course they ran up against all kinds of problems which they could not explain. They deny anything they can not see or otherwise sense. They deny that there is any mind behind

the universe, but they can never substantiate their misconceptions because they are not based on truth. Rationality reveals that the distinctions of things argue, not spontaneous generation, but a prevenient cause; and from that prevenient cause we can apprehend God, the Designer and Maker. The governance of things! One of the arguments given by Saint Thomas Aquinas for the existence of God is the intelligent governance of things, which goes on unknown to the world.

Our universe seems to be projecting a great deal of irrationality. But if you can see through the surface and see that there is behind everything an intelligence, you are going to be able to bring back your creation as the revelation of intelligence. If you do not recognize that intelligence has had a hand in creation, you are going to follow paths that have no end, for you are following only a mental wandering. You will never be able to proceed to an end, but will simply tie yourself up in the labyrinth of your own thoughts and ideas.

Why do we propose this wholesale cleansing

at this particular time, the second Sunday of Advent? Because we wish to clear away from the mind all ideas that there is anything at all but God, and to establish as a new tenant in our minds the perception that there is nothing at all but God. This is the preparation that is made in you by the forerunner, the Baptist, who came to preach the denial of everything that is not truth.

The people who clung to their worldliness he called vipers, because they were so stupid as to think that they could find their happiness and their contentment and their riches and their wealth in a world apart from God.

He came to preach penance. "Do penance," he said, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He ran interference for the Word, clearing away all the misconceptions of the mind, all the delusions and deceptions.

Plato, that mental giant among the Greeks, said that God made all things out of pre-existent and uncreated matter, just as a carpenter makes things out of wood that already exists. But this argument falls of its own irrationality;

for such a view would make God not the Creator but simply a craftsman, making over pre-existent material and subject to all the limitations of dependence on matter.

We have, among the aphorisms of reason, one in which we consider the errors of causation and the limitations that are imposed upon the mind because of this dependence upon pre-existent material. And the reason we clear up this mistaken idea is because the mind says, Well, how can I do anything? I haven't the proper material—can I make bricks without straw?

We are proposing that there is only one creative action. It is a divine action, and no limitation at all can be imposed upon it. No imperfection can be produced in the creation because of any defect in the material, for it is all created out of pure, unadulterated nothing. And nothing is nothing! Nothing is not a pre-existent substance made over into something. It is just exactly what it says—nothing at all.

What do you do when you present yourself with a dream at night? Do you make that

dream out of some pre-existent material—your thoughts or ideas perhaps? But you do not have anything material and physical that you are fashioning as a craftsman would. The houses and mountains, the valleys and lakes that you have in your dream, are simply imaginations created out of nothing at all and not limited by previous or pre-existing ideas. You are not making anything over.

God created the world, without any limitations imposed, out of nothing—out of nothing! And yet, when He came into the world and assumed human nature, He did not create Himself out of nothing. He could not be created, even by Himself, for He was eternal and uncreate. He assumed human nature which he had already created. He did not despise His handiwork as unworthy of Him, but took it to Himself. Why do you think He did this? Because creation had fallen away from its Creator, and its vitality was cut off. He came to re-establish the connection, and in this renewal He wished it to be seen clearly and unmistakably that it was the same creation, that perfect creation

which He had brought forth out of nothing. By His coming into it He healed and renewed it.

We are approaching that wonderful moment when this Word took flesh, when He took human nature from the stock of Adam. In order, however, to have flesh as it was originally created, He fashioned a Mother, pure, undefiled; yet she was from the stock of Adam. He came into this world, taking on the limitations that seem to develop in a creation, but without the ignorance that contracts those limitations. He did not contract sins; He assumed the sins men had already contracted. He did not catch the infection from any experience, any pre-existent experience; He assumed them to heal. If our Lord had used pre-existent material, He would not be the Creator, but only a craftsman.

Another fallacious theory is projected by the agnostics who invented for themselves a craftsman. They presume a duality—God and an enemy of God; good and evil. They presume that spiritual things come from God, material

things from this craftsman called the counter-mind.

What we do on this day is under the dispensation of the Baptist, who is the purifier of the mind. He represents the purification of the mind, that action which clears away whatever is fallacious and brings us face to face with nothing. He himself went out into the desert—which is a symbol of nothingness—and he lived without the benefits of civilization. He went into the desert literally as well as symbolically to show his acceptance of nothingness.

The march into the wilderness by the children of Israel was to educate, to draw out of their consciousness the awareness of where they were to look for their freedom from civilization, where to look for the miracles—in the desert, in the nothing; in the love of the nothing which is the playground of the miraculous.

Creation does not originate in itself. Nor was it made from pre-existent matter. It was made out of non-existence, absolute and utter non-existence. God brought it into being through the Word, and this Word is the life of

all men and the light of all men. This Word is the light of Mind; and that Mind is spelled with a capital M, meaning the divine Mind. There is Mind behind the universe; there is intelligence behind the universe; there is rationality behind the universe. From Him, the fountainhead, flows all goodness to man. He does not hold back the light and the goodness; He pours it all out to you, for, as we are told, He has placed this world's riches at your disposal.

We are urged today to repent, to turn around, to go back to the Mind of the Creator. All things are from the Mind of the Creator—all healing, all riches, all happiness. How like the Prodigal we are if we turn away from all this superabundance of good and look for satisfaction in the finite, instead of seeking it in this infinite Creator. No wonder people are so disillusioned, so disappointed, so embittered and poisoned with defeat and failure that they are, even as the Baptist said, like vipers. When we seek for material gains and goods, we are like people snatching at shadows that have no substance in themselves. The good of a shadow

is in its inevitable revelation of the presence of substance. We cannot have a shadow without substance to cast a shadow. Positive substance is required to cast a negative shadow.

So these shadows, which we call the "good things of life," have a wonderful function if they are looked upon as indicating the presence of substance rather than being sought for themselves. It is wonderful counsel we are given when we are told to seek first the kingdom of heaven and then all these things shall be given; for all these worldly goods are but shadows of heavenly good. If they are snatched at for themselves, they prove wholly disappointing and frustrating, for they are nothing in themselves; but if they are the accompaniment to your dwelling in the kingdom of heaven, they are constant, joyous reminders of God's substantial goodness. Just as John the Baptist points out and proclaims the presence of the Lord, so the shadows called the good things of life point out and proclaim the presence of the Lord in all things. Cardinal Newman reminds

us of this when he says that the only good in anything is God's presence in it.

For the revelation of this presence of good, John the Baptist clears the way. For the clear mind, the pure mind, clears away the deceptions of the world; it frees one from the dizziness of human thinking, from confusion that thinks it is going to find satisfaction in the worldly things themselves.

We are talking about *you*. John the Baptist represents a characteristic in you as a candidate for truth. The John-the-Baptist you represents a place where you turn, where you turn away from the patterns of thought and the expectations that your mind has set up regarding what you want and what you think the kingdom of heaven is; you turn away from the world, through the wilderness, through the perception of nothingness, to the Creator.

In the lesson for today we have an example of the reversal of time prevailing in spiritual things. For today, the second Sunday in Advent, we have the account of John the Baptist in prison when Jesus gives testimony of him. Next

week our lesson will consist in the revelation of the Baptist when he proclaimed Jesus the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world. On that day John gives testimony of Jesus; to-day Jesus confirms the authority of John as the Precursor—a reverse action, because spiritual things are always in what the mind calls a reversal. Time moves backward in the act of penance; it reverses itself, returns to the Creator, and rests in eternity. Penance—the reversal—means going back to the Creator for your riches and your happiness, back to the Mind of the Creator, the Source of all. And John the Baptist prepares the way.

Liguori emphasizes a point often overlooked—that it is in chains that Saint John the Baptist comes to the full realization of the works of Jesus Christ. In his chains the works of Jesus Christ are made evident to John! And John himself receives his divine sanction as the “angel who goes before the Lord.”

But remember, for your own personal instruction, that when we speak about John the Baptist, we speak of characteristics within your-

self. If you are going to derive benefit from these wonderful Scriptures instead of letting them remain abstractions, you must bring them home to yourself, noting your own characteristics and applying the examples to your own life. We objectify characteristics in persons, but to find the application we bring the examples home to ourselves. We objectify them in order to view them, but to make use of them we bring them home to ourselves.

It was in his chains that Saint John came to the knowledge of the wonderful works of Jesus Christ. And what do you think this means mystically? It means that when your mind is caught and held in the ebony chains of reason, you really begin to know the miracles of the supernatural life.

When your mind is running away with you, when it is in the capacity of the unjust steward who manipulates your goods for his own ends, you are not master in your own house and can know nothing of truth. In chains! The mind is caught in its tracks, and bound in chains of

reason so that it cannot indulge its irrational creativeness.

The Baptist represents the law and the prophets; he brings to a head the past; the conservativeness, the thoughts and ideas of the expectation of the Messiah—what He would be like and how He would conduct Himself as an all-powerful King.

In your individual person he collects at one point the ideas you have built up in your own mind of what you expect life to be like when you have everything you want—your Messiah. You may expect this renewal of life to consist only in having some of your particular burdens lifted. You have all kinds of ideas in your own mind of what the coming of the Messiah means, and those erroneous ideas must be imprisoned because they always constitute limitations—less than the totality you are offered. You say, "Well, this is what I want from the Word made flesh; this is what I want from the Messiah. I want happiness!" But what do you know about happiness? "I want prosperity!" What do you mean by prosperity? "I want

peace!" But do you have even a glimmer of what real peace is? Always the mind sets up boundaries and limitations. Like the unjust steward, it withholds from you the inheritance of good which is really yours as a child of God.

Now the Baptist is in chains, and the old dispensation of the law and the prophets which was never able to perfect anything, is about to be taken over by the new law, the Gospel, the New Testament; and grace without any limitations is in the ascendent. The work of the Baptist is concluded; he knows that his dispensation is at an end. He has preached repentance; he has baptized with purification; the sins of man have been exposed by the application of the law. He said:

*I indeed baptize you in water unto penance, but he that shall come after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire.

Today this work is being taken over by the Word of God, Who comes to the soul which is cleansed by baptism, occupying it with the per-

*Matthew 3:11, Douay version

fection of grace—not destroying nature, but glorifying and perfecting it. This is the renewal of a creation, of a nature created in the beginning by God.

During his dispensation, the Baptist has attracted disciples, and now he sends these disciples to Jesus to ask:

*Art thou he that art to come,
or look we for another?

Many conjectures have been advanced to explain this questioning of the Baptist, usually in the presumption that the Baptist asked from ignorance and wanted to be informed. But spiritual questions are not put from ignorance; they are asked by rationality and intelligence, in order to draw out intelligence, to manifest intelligence. A question arising from ignorance usually cannot be answered at all, for the questioner is ignorant and cannot receive the answer. We do not need to deal with these. What we want to find out is what this question of the Baptist really meant. He was drawing out an answer for the world to see, that there might be a wit-

*Matthew 11:3, Douay version

ness, even in his disciples, to the Messiah. He could have told them the answer, but this kind of instruction is very slippery to the mind and they might have passed it by heedlessly. He wanted the answer to function the intelligence in their own minds.

Do you see here a correspondence to the action of the axioms of reason? Questions asked in the axioms are not asked from ignorance; they are asked from intelligence to draw out intelligence. The mind is caught and held in the limitations that are called self-evident principles, axioms. They are to the mind seeming limitations. While you are free to choose, you really have no choice but to answer according to self-evidence. Reason acts as a gyroscope holding immovably to the steady course. It is in that imprisonment of the mind—the inability of the mind to conceive of an opposite, to exercise its own creativeness to think up suitable answers—that the intelligence of truth comes through to heal the mind of its slime of ignorance.

Art thou he that art to come,
or look we for another?

Here was the drawing question, the leading question.

And Jesus making answer said to them:
Go and relate to John what you have
heard and seen.

The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers
are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise
again, the poor have the gospel preached
to them.

And blessed is he that shall not be
scandalized in me.

Our Lord knew very well what the stumbling block was to be. There was to come that time of His own Crucifixion; and the minds of the people would stumble over such failure of their expectations, and they would be scandalized and say, We do not want a Messiah Who can be crucified. The expectations they had were of a material kingdom, a revolution, a political upheaval. They had very fixed, material ideas about this kingdom. Even when He told them, "My kingdom is not of this world; it is not at all what you expect," still they clung

to their preconceptions. Even His own disciples could not expand their minds to encompass the completeness of His domain and the nature of His rulership. The mother of two of them even pleaded that when He came into His kingdom, her sons might sit, one on the right side and the other on the left side of His throne, little guessing that if her wish had been granted, her sons would have been crucified with him. How merciful and kind and gracious is the Lord Who winks at the times of our ignorance and does not let us destroy ourselves with our foolish prayers!

It is not that you are going to have your expectations destroyed or reduced, but it is that your expectations cannot possibly expand to the perfection of this kingdom as long as they are limited by an undisciplined mind. The mind will always tell you that your problems are different: they are too big; this is a special case, and you must do something about this yourself; you can not expect to handle this by prayer.

As I told the class last week, I had this very

temptation to face, and the answer came as a wonderful revelation. A problem of prayer was put to me, and my mind began a harangue of doubts and questions which I thought had long ago been forever silenced by the overwhelming number of miraculous healings I had been privileged to witness. But up it bounced again, with the temptation to wonder because the doctors had pronounced it a hopeless case. All right, I said to myself, let's settle this once and forever. Do I believe that my prayers are going to be effectual in a hopeless case? And it was as though the answer came, What difference does it make what you think or what you believe? It is not your belief; it is the action of truth. You do not have to believe it. You cannot by thinking change truth. Needless to say, the man is now perfectly well—a miracle, the doctors say, has taken place.

Never again will my mind taunt me with doubt, and no case will ever again be hopeless after that experience. What difference does it make whether my own mind thinks that I can or cannot pray out a solution? Truth is not de-

pendent on my own mind and my thinking. Truth is the freedom of ultimate being. When one is bound by the limitation of his own thinking instrument, healing is believed to be either possible or impossible. But the fact remains that all things are possible to God, and your mind need only believe this to participate in the omnipotence of the Absolute. But suppose your mind cannot believe that all things are possible to God—has your doubt hopelessly severed you from the effectuality of divine power? Not at all. All is still well because God is still God. Your believing or not believing in Him can not change the eternal fact of His reality. It is the action of truth, not your belief in truth, that lays hold of the situation; it is not because you have to do anything. If you think you have to do something with your prayers, you are letting your mind run away with you and lead you into a trap of belief in something other than God. You do not have to do anything about anything, but you do need to have your mind bound with the ebony chains of reason, so that it is out of the way. That is all

that prayer is, anyway—putting yourself and your mind out of the way.

Then the signs are revealed. For this same power is in all—not another power, but the same power. What are your expectations of it? Do you have your own limited viewpoint of what you think this power is going to do for you; or are you able to put aside these limitations of your mind, to let the whole universe be filled with the glory of God?

Therefore the Baptist preached repentance, to rid the mind of the limitations of thoughts and the preconceived ideas of what you think you want, what you think you ought to have, and what you think is to be your miracle. So today we clear the mind, clear the paths, clear the way. The Baptist is the forerunner. He leads us to nature, to the nothingness which is the threshold of illumination. The law and the prophets terminate in him. The Gospel and grace become the revelation at this point. The Baptist is the turntable from the limitations of the mind, from its restrictions, from the laws of the mind, to the revelations of Spirit.

And now we come to Jesus' testimony regarding the Baptist.

*And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind?

Did you think that this purification of your mind was going to leave you dizzy and shaky? No, it is rather to strengthen and stabilize you. As Isaiah says, The cup of staggering has been removed, never again to be taken up.

These are the characteristics that need to be revealed in the candidate who is on his way to truth: steadfastness, certainty—not the wavering mind that vacillates with human thoughts, with human opinions, but that steadfast mind that has had the cup of staggering removed from it. And this is what is next represented to us in the Baptist. Jesus said:

** . . . What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind?

But what went you out to see? a man

*St. Matthew 11:7, Douay version

**Ibid., 7-10

clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments, are in the houses of kings.

But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea I tell you, and more than a prophet.

For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

The way of negation is prepared, not with soft garments, not with the luxuries. When the Lord came into the world—The Lord Who is the riches of God, the superabundance of truth, Who needs nothing because He is all—He came in the cave of Bethlehem and was laid in a manger. There was no room in the inn for Him. He Who is the riches of God assumed poverty that He might bring us riches. He even went through death that He might bring us life, a reversal; and that is what the mind has to be taught.

Under the auspices of the Baptist we do penance, to do away with these things that the mind has set up as though they were the important objects to achieve: the riches of the world, the soft garments, the luxuries, the

worldliness; all this has to be seen through, for we look through poverty to find riches. "Blessed," we are told, "are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," which is not found in the accumulation of material things, but in the ability to see through and discover the Creator, the Mind of the Creator behind everything. If you are diverted by the things of the world, you never reach the Mind of the Creator. Why do you think the religious assume the vow of poverty? Not to be poor! Why do you think one of the beatitudes proclaims the spirit of poverty as blessed? Not for poverty's sake, but that we will be able to see through and find riches, the subsistent riches.

This is the second Sunday of Advent; it is the Sunday of subsistence. And substance is not found by aggressiveness in the world, but by seeing through the world to Him Who is its substance; by seeing that He who renews the world is the One Who creates it. He is eternally the same—in the beginning, all through, and in the end; all there is, is this Word. The vanity of vanities in the world is the attempt

to intrigue and delude and lead us astray. But let us instead go out into the wilderness, even as the Baptist did, and stand there on that threshold of nothingness, awaiting our Lord. The nothingness is the way prepared for the revelation of the riches of Christ.

He came even into the darkness of the shadow of death that He might bring us life, so that we would not think that our life was of this world. He came in poverty so that we would not think that our riches were of the world, but that we would be able to go through the nothing, the desert experience, the dawn experience, and discover the Creator, the intelligence, this law of source which is the Mind of the Creator, that is all and all in all to creation.

And we need not question, but can confidently assert:

*Thou art he, O Lord, that was to come!
We look for no other. We were blind,
thou hast enlightened us; we were lame,
thou hast made us walk; the leprosy of sin
disfigured us, thou hast cleansed us; we were . . .
dead in sin, thou hast given us life again;
we were poor and had none to care for us,
thou hast come to us with every aid and
consolation. . . .

Such are the blessings which our Lord's visit
has wrought in the past, and He said: Lo, I
am with you always. So we are led to hope
and expect for these and even more blessings
in the future. He comes in silence, with power
not recognized by the senses but felt by the
faithful soul.

Come to us, O Lord, visit us in our [desert]
poverty. Let not thy condescension and [thy
gracious] familiarity be a stumbling-block to
us. Because we believe thou hast created us
[for thyself] we believe also thou hast power
to heal us and sanctify our souls.

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*Liturgical Year, by Dom Gueranger, Advent,
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