

Travelling to Daybreak

There are many times when I have hesitantly let the Office door close behind me. I was aware of entering into God's presence! I have never lost that shiver of apprehension, born of awe, unworthiness and expectation. He always knew, of course. Today we reminisced about an incident a long time ago.

I was on my way to conduct a worship service in a Dales country chapel. My outward journey was glorious, like a vestry prayer no chapel steward could have adequately offered. Early evening sunshine flooded the dale. From a pure azure sky pocked with a few mackerel cloud patches, vibrant, penetrating sunlight highlighted white boulders in the stone walls enfolding contented sheep in their verdant emerald pastures. Oak and alder leaves turned to gold at the touch of a million rays of light. God's *gracious* love was in every caress of sunshine. My heart echoed the psalmist's song of praise, *The heavens declare the glory of God*.

The return journey was so very different. Those same bright skies were fast disappearing now, captured by creeping darkness. A half-moon skipped between windswept clouds momentarily painting them with halos. Quickly now



the sky darkened. An army of little clouds merged to expunge the moon's light. As I drove up a steep hill from the village, facing the southern fells, a huge black mass of storm cloud rose ahead of me. A great power of darkness towered threateningly above me. The heavens enveloped me in an awesome, ominous passion

of fear. Beneath this alarming, dread shadow I had no option but to drive on towards the unknown mystery until at a junction in the road my way turned west toward a tinted fringe of horizon. Torrents of rain swept across the remainder of my journey. It was an Old Testament experience! Moses could have appeared in my headlights!

Reflecting on the experience I was convinced that the same skies, light and dark, were both expressing the glory of God. Both journeys made me aware of his presence and my need of him, the one causing my heart to sing with his pleasure, the other making me tremble before his majesty. A familiar picture came to our window. It recalled the day of gloom when darkness covered the environs of Jerusalem for hours while Jesus died on a Cross. The Divine Glory was hidden in a fearful gloom. A glow of resurrection was now on the western horizon. I imagined this to be akin to the dark night experience of John of the Cross and many other saints including Mother Teresa of Calcutta. The Lord has to be trusted and may be found in life's fearful darkness as truly as in the radiant, colourful glory times.

There were two more pictures that morning. I saw the scripture scene at the birth of our planet. Raging, Spirit-whipped seas under heavy lowering skies broken by a first single shaft of light. At God's command all the hopes and dreams of humankind were held in the glory of mingling darkness and light.

As I rose to leave his office, I saw the image of Moses again, leading God's people through barren deserts. I recalled how the days of their journey to freedom, like the days of creation, were described as travelling from sunset to sunrise – from darkness to light – cross to resurrection – death to life. I turned to him with a heartfelt request, *Lord, keep me looking at your skies where I may learn to love and fear your glory as I travel to the Daybreak.*

I knew I would have to return often to these images for myself and for others. He obviously had so much more to share with me and I to learn from his words. Once again I felt I was walking around the edge of a universe, gradually moving inward to fall into the great mystery of eternal love – God!

