

## EASTER 3

### THE COLLECT

**ALMIGHTY God, who showest to them that are in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; Grant unto all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Religion, that they may avoid those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**



1. What does God show to them that are in error?  
A. the \_\_\_\_\_ of His truth (Psalm 119:105)
2. For what purpose does He do this?  
A. To the intent that they may \_\_\_\_\_ into the way of righteousness (John 12:46)
3. What ought all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion to avoid?  
A. they ought to avoid those things that are \_\_\_\_\_ to their Christian profession. (I Peter 3:2)
4. What ought they to follow?  
A. All things as are \_\_\_\_\_ to their Christian profession. (2 Peter 1:5-7)

### INTRODUCTION.

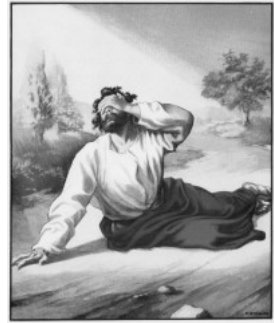
A man wandering on the moor sees a flickering, dancing light, but it is only what we call "Will-o-the-wisp," formed by gases rising from a bog. If he follows it he will be lost in the bog. Then he sees a steady lantern light and hears a voice. If he follows that he will find the right path and reach home.

The Collect speaks of them that be in error. What does God do for them? Shows them the light of His truth. What does He want them to do? Turn away from the false light and follow the true—turn into the way of righteousness. In the Old Testament we learn of a man who was shown the true light, but he did not follow it and so perished. In the New Testament we read of a man who was shown the true light and turned from his error. His end was salvation for himself and for thousands more through him.

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### I. BALAAM. (Read Numbers 22:1-35)

**Now we read in the Old Testament** about a man in error, thinking that he might curse God's people. How did God show him the truth? God said, "Thou shalt not go—thou shalt not curse;" and the angel stopped him in the narrow place. Did he return into the way of righteousness? No, he went on, he lost the glory and the gain he tried to get, and he perished.

### II. PAUL. (formerly Saul, read Acts 9:1-19)

**There was one, Saul, in the New Testament** who tried to injure God's people. And, like Balaam, just as he was close to the city to which he journeyed God stopped him too, and showed him the truth. What did he do? Turned away from his error and followed the truth. His end was salvation for himself and for thousands more through him.

### III. PAUL'S ERROR.

1. **Through unbelief.** He did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.
2. **Through ignorance.** He had overlooked one part of Old Testament teaching. He concentrated on all it said about the Messiah's glory and kingdom, but overlooked all which pretold that Christ should suffer (Isaiah 53). People often get to error in the same way. They read and remember the parts of the bible which teach what they like. They pass over and forget parts which teach what they don't like.
3. **Through prejudice.** He felt quite sure that he was right.

### IV. THE HARM OF ERROR.

**Error led Paul to hurt God's people**, and he found out that in hurting Christ's people he was hurting Christ. Error led those Christians who persecuted, killed, burnt—their fellow Christians who did not believe as they did, especially in the reign of Mary, but also in the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth.

### V. HOW PAUL WAS ENLIGHTENED.

1. **Through earnestness.** St. Paul was anxious to know and do what was right. He wanted to learn the truth. Not like Balaam, who only wanted to become great and to get gain. If we really want to believe and do what is right, God will teach us (St John 7:17, Acts 10:35).
2. **Through prayer.** St. Stephen prayed for Saul when he said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Our Lord prayed for those in error. Paul prayed for himself.
3. **Through the Holy Scriptures.**
4. **Through humility, honesty, and penitence.**



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