**Guestling Sermon Advent Sunday 2020**

There have been a number of reasons put forward why Jesus was not born at the time we celebrate. Shepherds would not have been abiding in the fields in those winter months, for example.

We also know of our forefathers’ practice of taking over pagan festivals and transforming them into Christian celebrations so as not to rob the people of their enjoyment.

However the date for Christmas was arrived at, it was an inspired choice as we think of the Light of Christ coming into our world to help us cast away the works of darkness, as we prayed in today’s Collect.

Today we enter the season of Advent. The penitential season when Christians must prepare themselves anew for that great event. Are you ready for Christ’s coming? When He was first announced many were praying for the Messiah’s coming but they weren’t ready. Their holy books told them what to expect, but somehow they had come to be waiting for a warrior Messiah.

We hear appeals for the betterment of mankind; poverty must be eradicated, suffering and disease has to be beaten, righteousness must reign, and prayers will be said, but the answer stares us in the face. Let in the light of the Gospel. If it is allowed, the light will flood into the souls of mankind, even of warlords, hardened terrorists and grasping racketeers. Why cannot so many see the light? I wish I knew.

“There’s none so blind as those who won’t see” goes the old saying. How true it is, for there are many whose minds and hearts have never admitted that light came into the world. Do you remember Holman Hunt’s painting? The door beside which our Lord as THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD is standing has no handle visible. It can only be opened to Christ, not by Him.

The light has penetrated down the ages, and those whose hearts the light has entered have been sufficient to bear witness to the power of the peace and joy which the Christ Light can bring. And yet there is so much malice, greed and selfishness on the earth that the light has a struggle. We know what poverty exists in our world, surrounded by wealth and wasted over-production, while whole regions starve. Poverty, disease, massacre of the innocents, and other shadows extend their terrifying darkness over the earth, and they could so easily be dispelled. The light of the Gospel of Christ shows us all the way if we allow it to.

During this Advent season nobody will come and compel anyone to open the shutters of the soul so that light and truth may enter, but we must daily allow the light to enter our lives so that we may see how we can prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord of Light.