

Sons of God

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”

—*Philippians 2:15*

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE

Apostle Paul is addressing those Christians who are being called sons of God during this present Gospel Age. He tells us that they are to be blameless, harmless and without rebuke in a godless and corrupt world. The Lord's people should be devoid of any disposition to do evil, and are not to be controlled by anger, malice, hatred or strife. Neither are they to seek for vainglory. The child of God should be harmless, not merely from God's standpoint, but so far as possible being harmless in the sight of the world before whom they are to reflect the Gospel light. As the Apostle Peter also encourages, “Beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”—II Pet. 3:14

OBEDIENCE REQUIRED

The Apostle Paul further speaks to the brethren at Philippi, saying, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only,

but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (vs. 12) He assures them, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings.” (vss. 13,14) Paul was blessed with a deep insight into all that is required to be a faithful Christian. He said to them, “Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain” (vs. 16), and for the express purpose of blessing others of like precious faith.

We should never compromise the Truth in order that we might please the world, nor should there be anything in our conduct or character which the world can point to as being evil. Our position should be like that of Daniel, of whom it was said by his enemies, “Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; for as much as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”—Dan. 6:4,5

A PURE HEART

To be blameless in the sight of God is to have our heart’s intentions always pure, just, loving, and kind. But this does not mean that the world will approve our course in life. We should expect to have opposition in our Christian walk. If we have the friendship and approval of the world, then we should seriously question our standing before the

Lord. Jesus did not please the world, but those of the world who were not prejudiced against him on account of his teaching found no fault with him. Even Pilate said, "I have found no cause of death in him."—Luke 23:22

Our concern should be that no just cause for blame be given through our wrongdoing. "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed." (II Cor. 6:3) Paul outlines the manner in which this can be done, saying, "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."—vss. 4-10

GIVING DILIGENCE

In our text (Phil. 2:15), Paul indicates that we are to hold forth the Word of life amidst a crooked and perverse people. This means that we should not refrain from bearing witness to the Truth simply because the majority of those with whom we may come in contact are not Christians. It will not injure us, nor mar the purity of the Truth to let it

shine in a wicked world. It has been well said that a ship is safe in the ocean as long as the ocean is not in the ship. So it is in our ministry of the Truth. We should keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and guard well the purity of the message we proclaim, making sure that it is not mixed with worldly philosophy. Each faithful follower of Jesus, who gives diligence to do this, will serve as a beacon of light in a very dark world filled with sin and sorrow.

We are not to expect that the world will be converted. It was not in Paul's day, and will not be until Christ's future kingdom is established. It was a perverse and crooked generation to which the apostle preached, and every generation since that time has been the same. Perverseness implies unwillingness to be guided by the Lord.

LET OUR LIGHT SHINE

Crookedness is not always a way of open wickedness but, like a crooked line which goes in various directions, it implies a doing of both right and wrong. Amidst these conditions, we are to let our light shine. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar [purchased, *Marginal Translation*] people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."—I Pet. 2:9

If the love of God fills our hearts, we can not help telling others about the Gospel message and the promises of a future kingdom of Truth and righteousness established here on a perfected earth. We who know the plan and love of God

should not be less zealous simply because we know that the world will not be converted until the next age. We are to let our light shine just the same, for out in the darkness there is one here and one there whom the Lord will reach with the message which we proclaim, and rich will be our blessing. ■

*Precious Jesus, how I love Thee!
And I know thy love is mine;
All my ransomed life I give Thee,
Use it, Lord, in ways of Thine,
Use my warmest, best affections;
Use my memory, mind and will;
Then with all Thy loving spirit
All my emptied nature fill.
All of earth and all of Heaven,
All I want I find in Thee;
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus,
Thou art all the world to me.*

*Lord, I touch thy precious garment,
Fearless stretch my eager hand;
Virtue, like a healing fountain,
Freely flows at love's command.
Lo! He turns and looks upon me
With those wonder-speaking eyes:
Vain my soul essays to answer,
I am lost in sweet surprise.
All of earth and all of Heaven,
All I want I find in Thee;
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus,
Thou art all the world to me.*

—Hymns of Dawn

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

QUESTION: Where does the Old Testament say that a day was ever more than twenty-four hours?

ANSWER: In Genesis 2:4, we read, “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.” Here, as will be noted, the word ‘day’ is used to describe the whole period of creation. Regardless of how long we insist each of the six creative days was, the day of this text was as long as all of them put together, therefore more than twenty-four hours in length.

We read, “To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.” (Ps. 95:7-10) Here the Lord clearly applies the word ‘day’ to the entire forty years of Israel’s wanderings in the wilderness.

Again, we read, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” (Ps. 110:3) This is a reference to the thousand-year day of Christ’s kingdom, when the “all power” (Matt. 28:18), which was given to him at the time of his resurrection will be used to govern and bless the nations.

Isaiah 2:17 reads, “The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.” Here again the ‘day’ refers to the time of the Lord’s kingdom in the earth, not a period of twenty-four hours. Verse 20 continues, “In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols

of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.” We would have to be very limited in our understanding of language to suppose this refers to a twenty-four-hour day.

In another prophecy concerning the blessing of health and life which will reach the people through the administration of Christ’s kingdom, we read, “It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”—Isa. 25:9; Titus 2:13

These few examples will, we think, suffice to indicate that the word ‘day’ is used over and over again in the Old Testament when the reference is to a period of time or era, rather than to twenty-four hours. Moses and Peter also call attention to a thousand years as being reckoned of God as a day.—Ps. 90:4; II Pet. 3:8

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