

“Children of Light”

***“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”
—I Thessalonians 5:5***

DURING HIS MINISTRY, Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world,” and the Scriptures elsewhere record of him that he “was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (John 8:12; 1:9) The

light at that time was only seen by a few, for it shone in a “dark place.” To those who did see it, the Master said, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see.” —II Pet. 1:19; Matt. 13:16

All those who will ever have the right to life must have the light, divine Truth, and since it is God’s purpose that everyone, including those in the “prison house” of darkness and death, shall have an opportunity to accept life, the time must come when all will see the light of the Holy Word. (Isa. 24:22; 42:7; John 5:28,29) It is the will of God for “all men to be saved [from Adamic death, ignorance and blindness], and to come to an accurate knowledge of the Truth.” —I Tim. 2:3,4, *The Emphatic Diaglott*

The Scriptures reveal that before the world will have this light, or knowledge, a saintly class—the true church, the bride of Christ—must be instructed as “children of light” and be completed and glorified together with Jesus, their heavenly bridegroom. Concerning the true church during her earthly pilgrimage we read, “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” (Eph. 5:8) When classified as “darkness,” we were in ignorance and misunderstanding of God and his Holy Word and plan. Now, however, we are enjoying the light.

The children of light gauge their views and direct their thoughts, words, and deeds, not by what the majority of their neighbors think to be right, but by what the Word of God teaches. In harmony with their full consecration unto death, they say, “To my Lord I must be true.” Thus, they are led by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of love, which actuates them.—Rom. 8:14

Our Heavenly Father’s sacred Word is indeed a “lamp” unto our feet, and a “light” unto our path. (Ps. 119:105) Surely, we each can gladly testify as the poet has written:

*The light of the Word shines brighter and brighter,
As wider and wider God opens my eyes;
My trials and burdens seem lighter and lighter,
And fairer and fairer the heavenly prize.*

*The wealth of this world seems poorer and poorer.
And farther and farther it fades from my sight;
The prize of my calling seems surer and surer,
As straighter and straighter I walk in the light.*

My joy in my Savior is growing and growing,

*As stronger and stronger I trust in his Word;
My peace like a river is flowing and flowing,
As harder and harder I lean on the Lord.*

*My praise and thanksgiving are swelling and
swelling,
As broader and broader the promises prove
The wonderful story I'm telling and telling;
And more and more sweetly I rest in his love.*

WATCH

Paul wrote, "Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." (I Thess. 5:6) In the context of this verse we are exhorted to watch the signs of the times related to "the day of the Lord," even the dispensational change now close at hand. (vs. 2) While Satan, our Adversary, is ever active in his efforts to do harm to the Lord's great and glorious cause, he will be still more seductive in his evil influences, "with all power and signs and lying wonders," during the days in which we now live. (II Thess. 2:9) We must, therefore, be more and more alert in guarding every point of attack. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, ... be strong."—I Cor. 16:13

Our Father requires us to watch, and he will reward those who faithfully do so. He urges us to keep awake and with all the children of light to be learning more and more of his Holy Word and will. He further desires that we be more comprehensively informed concerning his wondrous "plan of the ages, which he formed for the Anointed Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:11, *Diaglott*) We are also to grow in grace and in knowledge as we watch.—II Pet. 3:18

The world in general is still a dark place, but God's people are granted special illumination. They

are children of light, and they love the light. “Watch in all things; suffer evil; do the work of one proclaiming good news; of thy ministration make full assurance.” (II Tim. 4:5, *Young’s Literal Translation*) Carefully watching the increasing signs of the times, we have the privilege of calling to the attention of others those wonderful fulfillments of divine prophecy, and how they are related to the long-promised kingdom soon to come.—Matt. 6:10

In addition to being watchful, we are to be sober in mind, not excited or heated with passion, but calm and well exercised in self-control. Some people easily become excitable and are carried about by “every wind of doctrine.” (Eph. 4:14) They cannot give the reason for what they accept. They do not appear to know that divine truths are intended for those who are seeking, waiting, watching, hungering and thirsting for righteousness.—Matt. 5:6

A part of our sober watchfulness is also specially with a view to the keeping of our “living sacrifice” upon the altar. (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15) In so doing, we must additionally be maintaining full dedication to God; growing in Christlikeness; faithfully witnessing to the Truth and assisting others to do the same.

WALK OF LIFE

The faithful followers of Jesus do not walk “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” (Eph. 2:2) They are the light of the world, and they “walk as children of light.” (Eph. 5:8) God’s Word is continually a lamp to guide and direct their pathway.

Human imaginations and ideas, or even consciences, are not sufficient to guide us aright. We need the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and its illumination of our mind in respect to what has been written in God's Word of Truth for our learning and instruction. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." "Because that God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine into our hearts for illuminating with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."—I Cor. 2:12; II Cor. 4:6, *Diaglott*

As children of light, we should lay particular stress upon honesty in our walk before the Lord. "Let us walk honestly, as in the day," Paul admonished. (Rom. 13:13) Every true child of God should see to it that he is honest, not only in financial matters, but in his treatment of his neighbors, his brethren in Christ, and above all, in his confessions respecting his faith. A test is being made along this line, and those who love the favor of men rather than the favor of God will sooner or later prove that they are unfit for the heavenly kingdom.

The apostle comments further on the progressive walk of the Christian: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith." "Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "Walk in newness of life." "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."—Col. 2:6,7; Rom. 8:1; 6:4; Gal. 5:16

In our walk of complete sanctification, we shall experience, even as Jesus did, that the darkness

hateth the light. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19) Nevertheless, we are to be zealous for the Truth. We are to grow and walk in Truth, faithfully proclaiming it, and at all times speaking it forth in love.

SHINE TOWARD OTHERS

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:14,16) Our lamps are to be cleaned, trimmed, and brightly burning, if our light is to shine out to the glory of our Father. Let us not be of those who might seem indifferent to the matter of trimming their lamps. As a result, their light does not shine brightly, for the vessel is darkened by error or perhaps a lack of the desire to serve and help others.

Others may have the light, but fail to let it have the proper place or effect upon their heart, mind and character. Thus, the light in them is very dim because of the absence of proper development within their being along the lines of righteousness. The admonition of the Scriptures should be kept in mind, "Light is sown for the righteous."—Ps. 97:11

The Apostle Paul has referred to our privilege and responsibility as light bearers. "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." (II Cor. 3:2; I Cor. 4:9) Being "known" by others and a "spectacle" to them can only take place if we are light bearers.

As far as we permit prejudice, pride, selfishness, self-esteem, strife, injustice, or unrighteousness to disrupt the freedom with which we receive and hold forth the light of Truth, in that same proportion will the light surely fade. Such a course, if persisted in, will ultimately lead such a one into a condition of darkness. Jesus warned his followers, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"—Matt. 6:23

A great exhortation for us is, "Quench not the Spirit." (I Thess. 5:19) It could be extinguished entirely, but by the Lord's help, we must keep this priceless treasure. It is an evidence that we are children of God. It is the "earnest"—the pledge or assurance—of our eternal inheritance.—Eph. 1:14

As children of light, "we are ambassadors for Christ." (II Cor. 5:20) While still living in the world, we are not of it, but have transferred our allegiance, and, therefore, "our citizenship is in heaven." (Phil. 3:20, *American Standard Version*) As representatives and ambassadors of Christ, surely we feel both the dignity and the honor of this position and the weighty responsibility, as, whatsoever we do in word or deed, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Col. 3:17) The desire of our heart is to "shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life."—Phil. 2:15,16

SEVERE TRIALS

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (I Pet. 4:12) We are to be ever prepared for severe tests, of which we read, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets,

and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”—Matt. 24:24

Not only will our knowledge of the Truth, and our faith, be tested, but so also will our Christian love. “Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [Greek: love], I am nothing.”—I Cor. 13:2

We can be sure that the Adversary will use every means to present to us darkness for light, and to turn us aside from the plainly stated rule of love. It should be remembered, too, that a loveless condition of heart, a hypercritical spirit, so foreign to our Master’s spirit, does not enter us suddenly, but develops gradually.

Hence, every day, each of us should have a searching of our hearts to see whether or not we can find there toward anybody—saint or sinner—any of the spirit of hypocrisy, malice or wickedness which the Lord figuratively represented as leaven, contaminating by its influence.—Matt. 16:6; Luke 12:1; I Cor. 5:8

“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (I Cor. 5:6) A little envy, a little anger, a little hatred, or strife, can quickly poison our heart, and in a comparatively short time turn the sweetness of our nature, the spirit of love, into caustic bitterness. Moreover, the leaven is not likely to be confined to one person, but may also to spread to others, and thus many may be defiled.

STEADFASTNESS

“Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error

of the wicked [*Diaglott*: deceit of the lawless], fall from your own steadfastness." (II Pet. 3:17) It will be seen from the context of this verse that the apostle's exhortation has special application to the Heavenly Father's consecrated people, the children of light, from the standpoint that they must maintain their position as light-bearers, and not fall victim to the many errors, temptations, and sophistries in the world today.

The apostle here is not exhorting us merely to be aware of recognized, notoriously wicked persons. Rather, we are to be watchful lest we be led away with any spirit of error, deceit, or instability of character such as is so rampant in today's world. The Greek word *athesmos*, in the foregoing verse translated "wicked," actually means unsettled, lawless.

There is danger that those once enlightened with the light of Truth might be thus led away, become unsettled, and wrest the Scriptures, using the Word of God deceitfully. The Apostle Paul admonishes us along this line: "Seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."—II Cor. 4:1,2

GRACES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The children of light are to cultivate more and more all the various graces of the Holy Spirit. Knowledge alone "puffs up, but love builds up." (I Cor. 8:1, *Diaglott*) There is one way only whereby

we may fully strengthen ourselves against falling into any of the delusions and traps of the Adversary.

Such fortification is not secured wholly by knowledge, although knowledge is vital and a very important element in it. Another component, and of paramount importance, is obedience to the righteous principles laid down in our Father's Word, and as illustrated in the life and character of our Lord Jesus. Therefore, if we aspire to be "children of light," able to show forth the goodness and glory of God to the world, we must "superadd" to our faith the graces of fortitude, knowledge, self-control, patience, piety, brotherly kindness, and love. If these be found abounding in us, they will not permit us to be "inactive nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."—II Pet. 1:5-11, *Diaglott* ■

