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 local. Only a few saw it, for it shone in a dark place, and to those who did see it, the Master said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see."—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 death, shall have an opportunity to accept life, the time must come when all will see the light of Truth. 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, *Wilson's 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 enlightened as 'children of light,' and must be completed

and glorified together with Jesus beyond the veil. 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 will. But now 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.

Our Heavenly Father's sacred Word is indeed a "lamp" unto our feet, and a "light" unto our path (Ps. 119:105), and we each can gladly testify:

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

"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" (I Thess. 5:2), even the dispensational change, now close at hand. 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" (II Thess. 2:9), during the days in which we now live. 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 do this watching, and he will reward the faithful ones. 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; to be more comprehensively informed concerning his wondrous "Plan of the Ages, which he formed for the Anointed Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:11, *WED*)

We are to grow in grace and in knowledge as we watch.

The world is still a dark place. But God's people are granted a special light; they are children of light, and they love the light. "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist [one who announces good tidings], fulfil thy ministry." (II Tim. 4:5, *Marginal Translation*] Carefully watching the increasing signs of the times, we, as faithful watchmen, always on the alert, call the attention of others to those wonderful fulfillments of Divine prophecy, and how they are related to the long-promised kingdom.

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. 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.

A part of our sober watchfulness is also specially with a view to the keeping of our sacrifice upon the altar; maintaining full consecration to God; growing in Christlikeness; faithfully witnessing to the Truth, and assisting others to do the same.

WALK

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 their feet.

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 that spirit which is from God, that we may know the things graciously given to us by 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, *WED*

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." (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 the ecclesia, 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 be given an opportunity to prove that they are unfit for the kingdom, no matter what else they may be fit for.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him [make progress]: 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: growing and walking in Truth; faithfully proclaiming it; never compromising with error, and at all times speaking forth the Truth in love.

SHINE

"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 brightly to the glory of our Father. It would appear that some of the LORD's dear children seem very indifferent to the matter of trimming their lamps and letting their light shine. They get some Truth and some error, and hold them both together. As a result their light does not shine brightly, for the vessel is darkened by the error.

Others may have the light, but fail to let the Truth have the proper place or effect upon their character; and so the light in them is very dim because of the uncleanness of the medium through which it passes. 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, . . . 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

As far as we permit prejudice, pride, selfishness, self-esteem, strife, injustice, or unrighteousness to interrupt the freedom with which we receive and hold forth the light of Truth, in that same proportion will the light rapidly decline; and such a course persisted in will ultimately lead such a one into utter darkness. If that light within us should go out, we would be in greater darkness than we were before, "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—pledge, or assurance—of our eternal inheritance.

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 citizenship to the heavenly kingdom. As representatives and ambassadors, surely we feel both the dignity and the honor of the position, and the weighty responsibility, as, whatsoever we do in word or deed, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. The desire of our heart is to "shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life."—Phil. 2:15,16

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, today, are to be 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 [love], I am nothing."—I Cor. 13:2

We can be quite 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 that a loveless condition of heart, a hypocritical spirit, so foreign to our Master's spirit, does not enter us suddenly, but develops gradually.

Hence, every day, each of the Lord's people should have a searching of his heart to see whether or not he can find there toward anybody—saint or sinner—any of the spirit of malice, hypocrisy, or error which the Lord figuratively represented as leaven, contaminating in its influence.—Matt. 16:6

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

STEADFASTNESS

"Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked [*WED*, deceit of the lawless], fall from your own stedfastness." (II Pet. 3:17) It will be seen from the context of this verse that the apostle's exhortation has special application to the LORD's consecrated people, the children of light, living today, during our Lord's presence, when the present social order shall be dissolved.

The apostle here is not exhorting us merely to be aware of the recognized, notoriously wicked persons, but rather that we be watchful lest we be led away with the error of the unstable, or unsettled. The Greek word *athesmos*, here translated 'wicked,' actually means unsettled, lawless.

There is danger that those once enlightened in the Truth might be so led away, become unsettled, and wrest the Scriptures, handling the Word of God deceitfully. Thus they become unstable, lawless, in the sense that they would set aside the Word or Law of God, and take instead a twisted interpretation that would the better suit some theory of their own.

Such a wrong course, the apostle points out, would surely unsettle them and eventually mean the destruction of their spiritual interest. Thus they would go into outer darkness in respect to present Truth.

The implication is that the unsettled ones would first be shaken out, and that subsequently there would come still more insidious trials that would test even those who are steadfast. Such trials are, indeed, now upon the LORD's true people. We must be on guard. "To the law and to the testimony: if

they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—Isa. 8:20

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, *WED*) There is one way only whereby we may insure ourselves against falling into any of the delusions and traps of the Adversary. This insurance is not secured wholly by knowledge, although knowledge is vital, a very important ele-ment in it. Another element, of paramount impor-tance, is obedience to the principles laid down in our Father's Word, and illustrated in the life and character of our Lord Jesus. We are to "superadd" to our faith: fortitude, knowledge, self-control, pa-tience, piety, brotherly kindness, and love.—II Pet. 1:5-11, *WED* ■