

## WANDERING INTO "OUTER DARKNESS"

IN the Scriptures the "outer darkness," the darkness of the world, is frequently mentioned in contrast with the inner light, the light of truth, as Divinely revealed. Thus our Lord said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." And the Apostle reminds us that we were translated out of darkness into God's marvelous light. The world in general is represented as lying in darkness, as being unable to see the light of Truth. Thus again we are told that the light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. Some of the world are asleep, and hence see not the light, while others are very much awake to worldly aims and worldly ambitions and schemes, but thoroughly blind to the Divine purposes.

To a certain class who have certain characteristics of mind, God is pleased to reveal the light, and to guide them by that light in the right pathway. Such as see and improve the opportunity and walk in the way are called "the children of the light," while others who go contrary are called the "children of darkness." Addressing some of these children of the light, our Lord said, To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to outsiders all of these things are spoken in parables and dark sayings, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. – Luke 8:10.

While it is true that this power to understand is "given," yet it is not given indiscriminately; it is given only to those of certain character. To these alone the light is profitable; to others it would be more or less injurious at the present time. We may well thank God, as Jesus did, that for the time being the Divine purposes are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed only to the "babes." For others to have the light would mean [R4445 : page

**231]** injury to themselves, if not a disordering of the Divine purposes and arrangements. As, for instance, St. Peter tells us that those who crucified the Lord did so in ignorance, in blindness, in darkness, "for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" even though their hearts might have been no better, they could have regulated their conduct by the greater knowledge and thus the Divine purpose, that Christ should be crucified by them, the just for the unjust, would have been defeated.

In Matthew 6:22,23, our Lord gives us a suggestion respecting the condition of heart and what it has to do with our ability to see or not to see Divine truths. He says, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be **[R4445 : page 232]** full of darkness." And then he adds, "If the light that is in thee be (become) darkness, how great is that darkness!" Evidently our Lord is using the natural eye and the natural body as an illustration to draw our attention to the higher eyes of understanding and their power to bless and to guide and to control the interests of the body.

A single eye would seem to signify singleness of purpose, or of heart intention toward God, because in the succeeding verse our Lord calls attention to the fact that there are but the two masters – good and evil, righteousness and sin, God and Satan. Those who are under the power of Satan completely are blinded; as St. Paul tells us, The god of this world hath blinded the minds of all those who believe not, lest the glorious light of Divine goodness should shine into their hearts. (2 Cor. 4:4.) The only ones who are not blinded are those who are the servants of God, and the degree of their clearness of vision depends upon the singleness of their eye, their singleness of heart, their singleness of purpose, their loyalty to the one Master, to the principles of his government, etc.

All who have seen the light of "present truth" have therefore reason to be specially congratulated on having passed from darkness to light, on having been delivered from the Kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God's dear Son, from the dominion of Satan as his servants to be disciples of Christ and servants of God. St. Peter speaks of our translation out of darkness into his marvelous light. St. Paul says, We are not of the night, nor of the darkness. St. John says, In him is no darkness at all. Again, Darkness is past, and the true light now shineth, but he that hateth his brother is in darkness.

### **THE SINGLE EYE OF LOVE**

The point we are establishing is, that as our natural bodies are edified by good eyesight, so as New Creatures we have clearness of spiritual vision in proportion as we have loyalty to the Lord and the enlightening influence of his spirit of holiness, the spirit of love.

The question arises, Is it possible for any of us, after passing from darkness into the Lord's marvelous light, to again get into the dark – to go out of the light? The Scriptures answer that it is possible. They tell us that in certain instances God will force people out of the light into the "outer darkness" common to the world in general; that disloyalty to the Lord and to the principles of his teaching tends in this direction.

We might suppose that those who should thus be cast into "outer darkness," either suddenly or gradually, would be greatly distressed, but, on the contrary, we have every reason to believe that the world in "outer darkness" is not greatly distressed by its darkness, but rather, as our Lord suggests, "loves darkness rather than light"; because it is in an evil condition; because it has not the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love. The inference, therefore, is plain that those who go out of the light into darkness will feel as contented as those who have never come into the light of

"present truth" – who even are boastful in respect to the darkness and very unkind in their criticisms of the light – hating the light.

In the Scripture quoted above, under the figure of a single eye, the Lord pictures the singleness of purpose and of heart which must characterize all who become his disciples indeed, or children of light. He even intimates that those who lose this singleness of heart, singleness of eye, singleness of purpose, and then go into darkness, are in some respects in a grosser darkness than are others who have never seen the light. He says, "If the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness!" Our experience fully corroborates this. Those who have once been in the light of the Lord's countenance, and in the light of the Divine Word, and who lose this, seem to be in a condition much more to be regretted than that of the world in general who have never had their eyes of understanding opened. None others in the world seem capable of such violations of the spirit of love, the spirit of truth, the spirit of righteousness, the spirit of justice. They seem to be capable of saying and doing and thinking more mean, uncharitable, wicked things, than before they were enlightened.

We have tried for years to see the philosophy of this fact which has been painfully manifest to us on various occasions, and we believe we have found the correct explanation of it as follows:

—

### **THE WORLD-STANDARD VS. NO STANDARD**

The natural man guides his conduct, words and thoughts considerably by the conduct and words of his fellowmen. The strongest appeal to the natural man is, What would Mr. Brown, or Mr. and Mrs. Jones, or Mr. and Mrs. Smith think of such words, or such conduct? This measuring of themselves with others of the same character and standing, and the gauging of conduct by that of others whom they respect, seem to be the only

standard by which the world walks. It sees not clearly the principles of righteousness, justice, truth and love.

But when true conversion to the Lord takes place, when the eyes of understanding become opened, new standards appear before the opened eyes of understanding. The Master's word is heard, saying, "Be ye like unto your Father which is in heaven," and "Be ye followers of me," and "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." Some see cross-eyed, endeavoring to serve two masters, and to walk according to two standards – to be pleasing to the Lord, and also to walk according to the earthly standards as formerly. But this is found to be a very unsatisfactory course; it has neither Divine approval nor the approval of worldly friends. Those of single eye, of single purpose, say within themselves to the contrary,

"To my Lord I must be true  
Who bought me with his blood."

These soon learn that the world is in darkness, and that to walk with the world, and according to worldly standards, would mean to fail to progress from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, and from glory to glory, under the leadings of the Master, who instructed us to walk in his steps. Hence these of the single eye cut loose entirely from the worldly standards which formerly were their guides, and they look to the Lord, and, so looking, have the very best of guidance, the very highest standard imaginable. Looking unto him, copying Jesus, they come more and more to appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of Divine love and justice, and seek more and more to be transformed in all their words and thoughts and doings into harmony with the glorious pattern which their single eye entitles and enables them to clearly see. How blessed is their condition! Instructed by the example of the Lord and by his word of grace and truth they are rising daily to newness of life in the character-

likeness of their Redeemer, and becoming fit for the heavenly Kingdom and for the glorious resurrection change.

## **THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE**

The Divine purpose is not only to call out the single-hearted, the single-eyed, and to instruct and guide them, but also to test and to prove them. Thus we read, The Lord your God doth prove you to know whether ye do love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 13:3.) The test of obedience is the divine law – supreme love for God and absolute justice to your neighbor – to love him as ourself. Additionally, the consecrated have the New Commandment to love one another as the Redeemer loved them – to the extent of sacrificing, laying down anything and everything on behalf of each other, for each other's welfare and assistance. If this test be faithfully endured, it means that the individual has not only reached the mark of perfect love, but has stood tests thereat and has demonstrated his worthiness of eternal life under Divine terms and conditions. But if these tests be not endured, it means the rejection of the individual from the light, and that he will go from the light, so that the things which were once light to him will appear dark, and the things of darkness will appear right, just, proper. **[R4445 : page 233]**

It is not for us to complain, therefore, of these trials and testings which the Lord declares to be necessary; it is not for us to insist that those whom we love must be maintained in the light and ultimately be accepted to the Kingdom. It is rather for us to show our obedience to the Lord, to demonstrate our love for him with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength by acquiescing in the Divine arrangements and judgments. The Lord is selecting the members of the Bride class. He has given us the privilege of being co-laborers with him in this work, but merely along the lines of his instruction. With him is the decision. If they

do not maintain the single eye, the singleness of heart, the singleness of purpose, loyalty to God, to the principles of righteousness, justice and love they cannot continue to be his disciples; they cannot continue in the light; they must go into "outer darkness."

If any fail to go on in the development of the spirit of love, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of God, they will surely retrograde, and the light that is in them will become darkness – great darkness. Instead of the spirit of love exemplified by our Lord, who laid down his life for us, [R4446 : page 233] a spirit of hatred, envy and malice will come in; a spirit of murder which, although hesitating to do outward violence and come under the ban of the law, will not hesitate to assassinate character and to say all manner of evil against those toward whom they become embittered. By such fruits ye shall know them. Such thorns do not grow on the grapevine, nor on the fig tree.

The philosophy of their course is this: When they lose the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of justice and of love, of kindness, and mercy, and truth, they lose the Lord's supervision, direction and control. And having previously discarded the rules and influences which control the world in general, they are without *any* guidance or restraint in respect to their course of life. Hence they not only act contrary to the Divine standards, but violate the principles of justice and decency, in word and conduct, that assist and guide the world in general. It is for this reason that those who once go out of the light of Present Truth can think, and say, and do, more mean and contemptible things than can the worldly who still retain helps to order and decency by having in mind what their fellows in life would think of their course, their words and conduct.

## **WALK AS CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT**

In conclusion, then, we urge that all who have been once enlightened, and made partakers of the holy Spirit, who have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come – we urge these to be zealous, to maintain the standing to which they have already attained. We urge that they be conformed to the character-likeness of God's dear Son; that they be perfected in love, that they put off all of these: anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife; for if any of these be retained, they will tend to blindness and "outer darkness." More than this, we urge that they put on all of these graces of the Lord's Spirit: meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness, love. These will strengthen and develop the character-likeness of the Redeemer which God has predestinated must be attained by every one who will be accepted as a member of the Bride of Christ. And then the Apostle suggests, If we do these things we shall never fail, but an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

