

BLAMELESS AND HARMLESS, WITHOUT REBUKE

"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, holding forth the Word of life."

– Phil. 2:15,16.

TO BE BLAMELESS is to be devoid of any disposition to do evil; not controlled by anger, malice, hatred, strife; but, on the contrary, to be disposed to do all the good possible to all with whom we have contact. We should be harmless, not merely so far as God would see, or so far as the brethren would see, but, so far as possible, harmless in the sight of the world, before whom we are to shine.

Blamelessness does not necessarily mean perfection. One might be blameless and yet imperfect on account of natural weaknesses. To be blameless in the sight of God is to live so that he may see one's intentions always to be just, loving, kind. The world will speak evil of us even as they spoke evil of our Lord, and will hate us; for the darkness always hates the light. If we have the friendship of the world, we are not in accord with God. The Apostle James asks, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.) But if we are friends of God, the world will seek to do us injury as evil-doers – "as deceivers, and yet true." While not "friends of the world," we must endeavor to be at peace with them, so far as lies in us.

We cannot, however, expect to please everybody. We are to be blameless in the sight of those of mankind who are recognized as having the best judgment amongst the people. Thus it was with our Lord. While the world blamed him, yet in their private councils they recognized the fact that he was harmless. Pilate, who put him to death, was honest enough to state, "What evil hath he done? I find no cause of death in

this man"; "I am innocent of the blood of this *just person*." – Luke 23:22; Matt. 27:24.

In the text under consideration the thought of the Apostle is that whatever charges may be made against us, our course of conduct before the world should be such that only the perverse of mind will think wrongly of us; that the better minds would think justly and note that the lives of the Lord's people are indeed blameless, not blameworthy.

The disciples were dwelling in the midst of a perverse generation, their own Jewish nation, among whom they were so to conduct themselves that their lives would be a light to their fellowmen. *Perverseness* implies unwillingness to be guided by the Lord; *crookedness* seems to apply to their course of life, not always a way of open wickedness, but a crookedness, doing both right and wrong. On the one hand was an evil heart of unbelief; on the other were forms and ceremonies.

For more than eighteen hundred years these conditions have followed the Lord's people. Everywhere there is a great deal of crookedness and self-will. Many things are done which are known to be contrary to the will of the Lord. Amidst these conditions the Lord's people are to shine as lights; they are to seek to walk in the Lord's ways, that they may "show forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light."

