

## REPROVE WORKS OF DARKNESS

– JUNE 30. – EPHESIANS 5:11-21. –

**Text:** – "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging." – Prov. 20:1.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS are used as figures and as synonyms for truth and untruth, righteousness and sin. Thus, "God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all." Thus also Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world." Thus also He said of His followers when He was leaving them, "Ye are the light of the world"; "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

On the contrary, Satan is styled the "Prince of Darkness"; and his rule of unrighteousness is styled "the kingdom of darkness"; and those subject to his influence are styled "the children of darkness." Evil works contrary to the Lord and righteousness are styled "works of darkness."

When our first parents sinned they forfeited fellowship with God, and because of disobedience became children of the Adversary; and Jesus said to such in his day, "Ye are of your father, the Devil, because his works ye do." (John 8:44.) Thus our entire race came under the influence of the darkness of sin. A night of sin, sorrow and death has followed for now six thousand years. We have the promise of a glorious morning when Messiah shall reign, when "Satan shall be bound for a thousand years," and when "the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams."

But this morning has not yet come; we have it merely by faith, by hope. God's promises respecting that glorious morning are figuratively called "light," and these constitute the Bible. So the Scriptures, after telling us that darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the heathen, tell us also that the Bible is a light to the path of God's people

in the midst of this darkness. "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a lantern to my footsteps." (Psa. 119:105.) St. Peter said, "We have a more sure Word of prophecy, to which we do well that we take heed, as unto **[R5038 : page 180]** a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn." – 2 Pet. 1:19.

## **LIGHT REPROVES DARKNESS**

In the present time, therefore, the masses of the world – deluded, enslaved and intoxicated by ignorance, superstition and the wiles of the Adversary – are generally sympathetic with the darkness wherein they are. They were born in it and are so accustomed to it that if brought immediately into the presence of the light they would be in distress. There are not many light-bearers in the world anyway. True, the census reports four hundred millions of Christians, but alas! the vast majority give no sign of ever having seen the true light, and many of those who did receive the light put it under a bushel, until it was extinguished.

Surely it is as true today as it was in Jesus' day that a very small number of humanity, comparatively, have the true light of the Gospel of God, the Holy Spirit illuminating their minds and hearts, and who set this light upon a candlestick that it may give light in the midst of darkness.

But although these are few in number, they are very precious to the Lord. He calls them His saints, His jewels, and tells us that at His second coming, prior to the setting up of His Kingdom to rule the world, these, as His jewel class, shall be gathered to Himself beyond the veil – changed by the power of the First Resurrection from human to the divine nature. These He tells us He will gather as His true "wheat," in the Harvest of this Age, into His heavenly garner – "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"; "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." – Matt. 13:43.

It is this latter class that the Apostle addresses in this lesson – the same class which the Savior addressed saying, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." (Luke 12:32.) When the Father shall give these the Kingdom, as joint-heirs with their Redeemer, everything will be changed. The Prince of Darkness will be bound for a thousand years. The Prince of Light will shine forth to scatter all the darkness and miasma of sin, sorrow, ignorance and superstition.

### **THE LIGHT-BEARERS' RESPONSIBILITY**

In today's lesson the Apostle is explaining the responsibility of these light-bearers. They represent God in this dark, benighted world; they represent the Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power of God. They are not able to let all of this glorious light so shine before men as to scatter the gross darkness of the present time, but they can do much to glorify their Father and can measurably scatter the thick darkness and bring in a sort of twilight at least to some. Obligation to do this is laid upon all of them.

These are not expected to convert the world, but merely to find a sufficient number of similar characters to themselves to complete the foreordained membership in the Church, the Bride class, the joint-heirs. Faithfulness and zeal in this service will determine whether or not they will be worthy of having a place in the Bride class, and, if worthy, how high a station of honor they may occupy. Let us give heed gladly to the Divine Word respecting our obligation.

We must "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." How searching, how positive – absolutely no fellowship with them! More than this, we must not be content with a negative opposition, but must reprove them. However wisely we may seek to fulfil these requirements, they are sure to bring to us the enmity, the disfavor and the disappointment of many whom we love, and whose good opinion we strongly desire. But as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ we must be loyal, we must be faithful.

He that is ashamed of the Master and His Word and the principles of righteousness for which He stands, of him will the Savior be ashamed when He comes to establish His Kingdom, when He comes to reckon with His servants.

Evidently the Apostle does not mean that we shall undertake to reprove everything that is out of accord with our high ideals of the Divine Law and the Divine will, because he here mentions the things to be reproved, saying, "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" – uncleanness, impure practices, the Apostle evidently had in mind. We must manifest our disapproval when we are in close contact with such things.

This does not mean that we shall leave the preaching of the Gospel to go "slumming," to do "muck-raking." It may not mean that we shall even publicly denounce the evil, but it surely does mean that our lives shall be so contrary to all sinful and impure practices that all may take knowledge that we have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him. This is evidently the Apostle's thought in verse 13. It is not necessary for us to suppose that the world is in full sympathy with all the darkness and sin prevalent. On the contrary, as the Apostle suggests (verse 14), some are asleep and do not, therefore, realize the distinction between light and darkness. Some of these, if thoroughly awake, might be glad to know of Christ and the true light.

### **WALK YE CIRCUMSPECTLY**

In view of these things, said the Apostle, the followers of Jesus should be careful, circumspect in the walk of life, not foolish, but wise, not squanderers of time, but redeeming the time, purchasing it back from worldly cares and pleasures, to have the more to use in the Master's service, realizing that the days are evil and that all our energies are needful if we would "fight a good fight" for the light as against the darkness of sin. To do this will require that we study and understand the will of the Lord.

If others are drunk with excessive use of wine, let us be filled with a different kind of wine – with the Holy Spirit. If others seek to find joy and solace in intoxicants, let us find ours in being filled with the mind of Christ. This spiritual refreshment will lead us to psalms and hymns, and to make merry in our hearts to the Lord, and to be thankful for God's favor in Christ.

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### **IT IS NOT THE DEED WE DO**

"It is not the deed we do,  
Though the deed be ever so fair,  
But the love that the dear Lord looketh for,  
Hidden with holy care  
In the heart of the deed so fair.

"The love is the priceless thing,  
The treasure our treasure must hold;  
Or ever the Lord will take the gift,  
Or tell the worth of the gold  
By the love that cannot be told."

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