

THE PRESENT TRUTH

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Walk in the Light

God's people dwell too much under a cloud. It is not the will of God for his people to live in unbelief. Jesus is light, and in him is no darkness at all. His children are the children of light. They are renewed in his image, and called out of darkness into his marvelous light. He is the light of the world, and they that follow him are the light of the world. They shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The more closely the people of God strive to imitate Christ, the more perseveringly will they be pursued by the enemy. But their nearness to Christ strengthens them to resist the efforts of our wily foe to draw them from Christ.

God requires his people to shine as lights in the world. It is not merely the ministers who are required to do this, but every disciple of Christ. Their conversation should be heavenly. And while they enjoy communion with God, they will wish to have intercourse with their fellow-men, in order to express by their words and acts the love of God which animates their hearts. In this way they will be lights in the world, and the light transmitted through them will not go out, or be taken away. It will indeed become darkness to those who will not walk in it; but it will shine with increasing brightness on the path of those who will obey and walk in the light.

The Spirit, wisdom, and goodness of God, revealed in his word, are to be exemplified through the disciples of Christ, and will condemn the world. God requires of his people according to the grace and truth given them. All his righteous demands must be fully met. Accountable beings must walk in the light that shines upon them. If they fail to do this, their light becomes darkness, and their darkness is great according to the degree that their light was abundant. Accumulated light has shone upon God's people. Many have neglected to follow the light, and for this reason are in a state of great spiritual weakness.

It is not for lack of knowledge that God's people are now perishing. They will not be condemned because they do not know the way, the truth, and the life. The truth that has reached their understanding, the light which has shone on the soul, that has not been cherished, and which they have neglected, or refused to be led by, will condemn them. Those who never had the light to reject, will not be in condemnation. What more could have been done for God's vineyard than has been done? Light, precious light, shines upon them; but the light will not save them, unless they consent to be saved by it, and fully live up to it, and transmit that light to others who are in darkness. God calls upon his people to act. It is an individual work of confessing and forsaking sins and returning unto the Lord which is needed. One cannot do this work for another. Religious knowledge has accumulated, which has increased corresponding obligations. Great light has been shining upon the church, and they are condemned by the light, because they refuse to walk in it. If they were blind, they would be without sin. But they have seen light, and have heard much truth; yet they are not wise and holy. Many have not advanced in knowledge and true holiness from what they were years ago. They are spiritual dwarfs. Instead of going forward to perfection, they are taking back tracks to the darkness and bondage of Egypt. Their minds are not exercised unto godliness and true holiness.

Will the Israel of God awake? Will all who profess godliness seek to put away from them every wrong, confess to God every secret sin, and afflict the soul before him? Will they with great humility investigate the motives of every action, and know that the eye of God reads all--searches out every hidden thing? Let the work be thorough, the consecration to God entire. He calls for a full surrender of all that we have and are. Ministers and people need a new conversion--a transformation of the mind, without which we are not savorers of life unto life, but of death unto death. Great privileges belong to the people of God. Great light has been given them, that they may attain to their high calling in Christ Jesus; yet they are not what God would have them to be, and what he designs they shall be.

There is too much comparing ourselves among ourselves, taking poor fallible mortals for a pattern when we have a sure, unerring Pattern. The people of God should not measure themselves by the world, nor by the opinions of men, nor by what they once were before embracing the truth. But their faith and position in the world, as they now are, must be compared with what they would have been if their course had been continually onward and upward since they professed to be followers of Christ. This is the only safe comparison that can be made. In every other, there will be self-deception. If the moral character and spiritual state of God's people do not correspond with the blessings, privileges, and light which have been conferred upon them, they are weighed in the balance and found wanting. Angels make their report, Wanting!

With some the knowledge of their true state seems to be hidden from them. They see the truth, but perceive not its importance or its claims. They hear the truth, but do not fully understand it, because they do not conform their lives to it, and therefore are not sanctified through obeying it; and yet they rest as unconcerned and well satisfied as though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, as

tokens of God's favor, went before them. They profess to know God, but in works deny him. They reckon themselves as his chosen, peculiar people; yet his presence and power to save to the uttermost are seldom manifested among them. How great is the darkness of such! yet they know it not. The light shines, but they do not comprehend it. No stronger delusion can deceive the human mind than that which makes them believe that they are right, and that God accepts their works, when they are sinning against him. They mistake the form of godliness for the spirit and power thereof. They suppose that they are rich, and have need of nothing, when they are poor, wretched, blind, and naked, and need all things.

There are some who profess to be Christ's followers, yet have no labor in spiritual things. In any worldly enterprise they put forth efforts, and manifest ambition to accomplish their object and bring about their desired end; but in the enterprise of everlasting life, where all is at stake, and their eternal happiness depends upon their success, they act as indifferent as though they were not moral agents, and another was playing the game of life for them, and they had nothing to do but wait the result. Oh, what folly! what madness! If all will only manifest that degree of ambition, zeal, and earnestness for everlasting life that they manifest in their worldly pursuits, they will be victorious overcomers. Everyone must obtain an experience for himself, act well and faithfully his part in the game of life. While Satan is watching his opportunity when the Christian is unguarded, to seize the precious graces, the Christian will have a severe conflict with the powers of darkness to retain them; or if through lack of watchfulness he has lost a heavenly grace, he will have a struggle to regain it.

But it is the privilege of Christians to obtain strength from God to hold every precious gift. Fervent and effectual prayer will be regarded in heaven. When the servants of Christ take the shield of faith for their defense, and the sword of the Spirit for war, there is danger in the enemy's camp, and something must be done. Persecution and reproach only wait for those who are indued with power from on high to call them into action. When the truth in its simplicity and strength prevails among believers, and is brought to bear against the spirit of the world, it will be evident that between Christ and Belial there is no concord. The disciples of Christ must be living examples of the life and spirit of their Master.

Young and old have a conflict and warfare before them. They should not sleep for a moment. A wily foe is constantly on the alert to lead them astray and overcome them. Believers in present truth must be as watchful as their enemy, and manifest wisdom in resisting Satan. Will they do this? Will they persevere in this warfare? Will they be careful to depart from all iniquity? Christ is denied in many ways. We may deny him in our words, by speaking contrary to truth, or by speaking evil of others, or by foolish talking or jesting, or by words that are idle. In these things we manifest but little shrewdness or wisdom. We make ourselves weak, and our efforts are feeble to resist our great enemy, and we are conquered. From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and through lack of watchfulness we confess that Christ is not in us. Those who will hesitate to devote themselves unreservedly to God, make poor work of following Christ. They follow him at such a distance that they do not really know half the time whether they are following his footprints, or the footsteps of their great enemy. Why are we so slow to give up our interest in the things of this world, and take Christ for our only portion? Why should we wish to keep the friendship of our Lord's enemies, and follow their customs, and be led by their opinions? There must be an entire, unreserved surrender to God, a forsaking and turning away from the love of the world and earthly things, or we cannot be his disciples.

The life and spirit of Christ are the only standard of excellence and perfection, and our only safe course is in following his example. In doing this, he will guide us by his counsel, and afterward receive us to glory. We must strive diligently, and be willing to suffer much, in order to walk in the footsteps of our Redeemer. God is willing to work for us, to give us of his free Spirit, if we will strive for it, live for it, believe for it; and then we can walk in the light as he is in the light. We can feast upon his love, and drink in of his rich fullness. {Review and Herald, August 31, 1886}