

LIFE, LOVE and LIGHT

The Gospel of John and First Epistle of John

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CHAPTER SEVEN

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (I John 1:7)

Every privileged relationship of life carries with it a correspondent responsibility of opportunity.

Yet our Christian privilege is such as to minister an abounding grace of power for the discharge of every Christian duty. As no warrior wars at his own charges, neither does the Christian walk in reliance upon his own resources. He is but putting the Abiding Life into practice. He is bringing to expression the secret resources of a redeemed soul. He is demonstrating what it means to be brought out of darkness into His marvelous light. He is qualified for being and doing what is incumbent upon all believers. **"For,"** says Paul, **"ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light"** (Ephesians 5:8).

I

Light at Its Source

To know light, and therefore what it means to be in fellowship with light, we must trace it back to its source. As the swift-winged sunbeam that kisses our cheek, when passed through the spectrum, yields up the qualities of the energizing sun from which it emanated, just so is all spiritual light. **"God is Light."** And again, **"In Thy light shall we see light."** In GOD is light in the absolute, such light as, coming from GOD, makes known to men His being and nature.

1. **LIGHT IS PURE.** It suffers no admixture of anything foreign to it. It is incapable of adulteration or contamination. Nothing extraneous can by any possibility attach itself to it. What a picture of our Lord JESUS CHRIST manifesting the purity of Deity in His walk among men. Touching the unclean, He was not defiled. Passing through the haunts of sin and iniquity, in sympathetic contact with the shame and sorrow of human life, He emerged sinless and stainless. What a portrayal, as well, of the purity that must ever attach to and characterize the life that

partakes of the divine nature.

2. **LIGHT IS PERVASIVE.** It enters the least opening accessible to it. It searches out the recesses that otherwise would remain dark, dank and dismal. It penetrates the gloom, leaving it no alternative but to flee before its presence. Science long since disclosed the value of this pervasive quality of light in laying hold of every lurking germ of disease, whether in the homes of men or in the human system. Such is the ministry of Him who came as the world's Light. So far from sin fastening upon Him, it could not even stand in His presence. How often men found themselves confronted with the penetration of His searching insight, only to yield up the sinful unworthiness of their thoughts and actions.

3. **LIGHT IS POWERFUL,** with a power that is peculiarly its own. No agency known to man travels so swiftly or so far, yet does its work so silently and unobtrusively. From the farthest stellar spaces it reaches to us, revealing yonder worlds upon worlds. From our sun it bears upon its beams a multiform ministry for the sustaining of life and the maintaining of industry. The power put forth in a single day is wholly beyond compute. Yet all is done noiselessly - there is no sound; and gently - there is no jar, but a quiet persistent putting forth of its powers to heal and help.

All of this, and so much more, is our wonderful Light, in whom is "**no darkness at all,**" and with whom He has brought us into fellowship, to a privileged sharing of these qualities with Himself.

II Light in Us

He who said, "**I am the Light of the world,**" turned to His followers with a declaration startling in its directness: "**Ye are the light of the world.**" For this inescapable commission to lighten a benighted world we shall qualify only as we "**walk in the light,**" that is, in abiding union with the Light, permitting Him to impart His qualities to us. Doing its wonted work in us:

1. **LIGHT REVEALS.** It is the Psalmist who says, "**In Thy light shall we see light.**" Our darkness is doubly caused: absence of light and loss of sight. This latter lack is made up to us, restored in the New Birth. The former is remedied by the Abiding Life, the continual communicating presence of the Spirit, linking us with the source of all light, even with Him in whom is no darkness. Is it strange that such an association should bring to light a foul brood, hiding in the heart, whose presence we had failed to suspect hitherto? It required the Light to reveal them. But a continued disavowal of their presence, in a claiming of sinlessness in either nature or action (I John 1:8, 10) belies the reality of the relationship we profess. On the other hand, sensitiveness to sin is the sign of His illuminating, self-revealing presence. Hence it is that some of the most godly saints, walking daily in a closeness of fellowship with Him, have been characterized by a confessed consciousness of sin beyond their fellows. They were living in the Light that made evident the contrast between themselves and Himself.

This experience finds divine interpretation in the spiritual autobiography of the prophet Isaiah. It was when he "**saw the Lord**" in the pure, white light of His holiness that he discovered, and at once decried, a personal uncleanness: "**Woe is me; I am undone; I am unclean.**" And that confession brought the full relief of a further revelation of the Lord as the GOD of cleansing.

2. **LIGHT CLEANSSES.** Twice the Apostle uses this word (I John 1:7, 9) to assure us that our so great salvation not only reveals sin to us but relieves us from it. Calvary's cross that gave us "**the blood of God**" as the full and sufficient ground for sin's pardon also provided just as fully for sin's pollution. And as the need is continuous, so also the cleansing: "**The blood of Jesus Christ His Son keeps cleansing us from all sin.**" That the blood should prove continuously efficacious as sin's double cure, cleansing from both its guilt and power, two conditions are to be met.

Note the double "if" of cleansing: "**If we walk in the light**" (vs. 7), that is, "*keep ourselves clear to the light*" (a word Paul uses in writing to the Philippians), harboring nothing that savors of darkness, concealing nothing that Light longs to search out and put away; and again, "**If we confess our sins**" (vs. 9), the times and ways in which we have defiled ourselves by failure to walk in Light's perfect day.

As we meet this latter condition He is "**faithful and righteous**" to "**forgive and cleanse**" - these benefits, claimed on the ground of Calvary's blood, are not a matter of mercy but rather of righteousness on GOD's part in carrying out the principles and provisions of the cross. Why walk in darkness, child of GOD's grace, when such a Heaven-lit path is your privilege all the way to glory!

3. **LIGHT TRANSFORMS.** Cleansing is in itself a negative process. It takes from rather than adds to. It prepares for something better. The Abiding Life is far more than a house swept and freed from dirt, yet empty and unbeautified. The Heavenly Guest, the indwelling Presence, having revealed the uncleanness of the heart, having responded to our cry of confession with His cleansing work, now proceeds to make over the home of our hearts in conformity to His holy tastes and desires. Is there hatred there in hiding? It is His delight to displace it with love - His love.

- Does He find a fondness for the world? He will turn our eyes to our blessed Lord and His loveliness.

- Does He sense in us a growing carelessness toward His commandments? He will foster in us a new faithfulness.

- Are we in danger of being deceived by the doubts and denials, the cults and the isms of the "**last time**"?

He is within to set us right with a divine insight and understanding. (All these are listed in chapter two of our Epistle.)

III **Light through Us**

We must ever remember that the ministry of Light does not terminate in us. Light bestows its blessing upon us and works its work in us that it may accomplish its mission in the world through us.

1. **LIGHT REFLECTS ITS SOURCE.** Every sunbeam calls attention to that mighty source of exhaustless energy from whose bosom it springs. In each moment of its shining the sun is

magnified. In every place that it penetrates the glories of the sun are celebrated. So our Lord, calling Himself "**the Light of the world**," calls us to a life in Him that we in turn may minister light to others. These are His words, defining our responsibility: "**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**" (Matthew 5:14, 16).

In electricity we are familiar with the function of the transformer. By it the voltage of the high tension wire - too high for man's use - is transformed, stepped down and passed on at a voltage that is safe and serviceable. Every Christian is called to be a transformer. The human eye cannot look with safety upon the sun; even at so great a distance its glory is forbidding. So also is GOD. But His glory was manifested, stepped down to us, in human flesh. And when we beheld that glory He "**shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ**" - this, that we in turn might pass on the light, translated into terms of daily living.

Since GOD is love, one simple, practical test of our walking in the light is our reflecting of love in the daily relationship of life: "**He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes**" (I John 2:9-11).

2. **LIGHT OPPOSES DARKNESS.** It cannot do otherwise. It does so by its very nature. Light and darkness can never make a truce. When we are called "**light in the Lord**" and bidden to "**walk as children of light**," the further exhortation is inescapable: "**For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light; . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them**" (Ephesians 5:8, 11).

John, with our Lord JESUS, sees the world as a system essentially opposed to GOD, out of which we were bought, from which we were dissociated that we might be united to Him. He views the world as darkness, dominated by "**the wicked one**." To walk in the light we must not bring ourselves under its sway, but rather reprove it. Therefore: "**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever**" (John 2:15-17).

3. **LIGHT RADIATES BOUNDLESS BLESSINGS.** Actuated by limitless energy, with ceaseless activity the ray of light performs a ministry of blessing and benefaction beyond compute. Enfolded in its bosom are the essential qualities of its source, borne afar for the quickening and restoring of life. As we write, the latest discovered use of the light beam is to carry the mind of men in music or spoken word, much as he has formerly depended upon the electrified wire or the wireless radio. Surely the child of GOD has yet to realize the manifold ministry our blessed Lord waits to perform through His light in the soul of His people.

Living the Radiant Life

It should be evident that to walk in the light, as the Apostle portrays it, must result in a radiant life; a life that is marked not so much by effort to bless as by the instinctive outgoing of blessing. Such a life results from being continually energized at the Source. It is a life lived in the light of His countenance, only to let that light leap to our countenance.

Two instances grace the pages of the Old Testament, the one illustrative of the other. They occur in Psalm 34 and Exodus 34.

The Psalmist tells the experience of certain of GOD's people: "**They looked unto Him, and were lightened.**" Yes, they were - lightened with His light. But more is the meaning of the word! which is, "*and were radiant.*" The light leaped to their faces, to be reflected back with a divine radiancy. It was an experience of GOD, plus its expression in blessing to others. Then Moses. He went up into the mount and let GOD talk to him. When he came down everyone knew where he had been. His face showed it. It shone. Separated from the world unto GOD he walked in the light until the light talked through him.

Thank GOD for radiant Christians, bespeaking the quiet and contentment of a divinely satisfied soul, seeing whom the world believes anew in GOD and hungers afresh after Him!

Recently a dear friend, well up in the business world, told the writer of the remark of a mutual acquaintance. Having watched, through the years, the consistent yet joyous life of this friend, he was constrained to remark: "If -- were to go wrong I would lose my faith in GOD and all the Christianity I possess." To him our business friend speaks of GOD. And why? That life, as the writer learns, is fed at the Source. Our friend loves to steal away for hours of quiet fellowship with Him. He is walking in the Light; and the life is radiant.

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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