

# The Powers of Darkness and the Church

H.E. Phillips

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:12-14).

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

The verses we shall read from God's word will set forth three things:

1. The righteousness of God is in the gospel of Christ, which is His power unto salvation;
2. The evil of Satan, who is the god of this world, is the power of darkness that rules the masses of the people of earth;
3. There is no way the two powers can rule the same heart at the same time.

Most involved brethren today express their grave concern for the immorality that has permeated the church generally. There is a serious problem of indifference that has stymied the church in growth and has almost paralyzed the efforts to reach the lost. This condition exists in part because there are so many carnally minded members in the church, and nothing is done about it. In many places now the worship is heartless, ritualistic, apathetic and stagnant because of the gross indifference of most of the members. The apathy is appalling.

This real situation is largely due to the failure of parents to teach their children the way of the truth over the past twenty-five years. Occasionally some father or mother will complain about the difficulties they have in bringing up their children in the way of the Lord in these times. They find problems with lawless children in their own neighborhoods whose parents do not care. They find the school system a maze of ungodliness and atheistic humanism. Children drink alcohol, use drugs, engage in illicit sex, carry loaded guns, and commit violent crimes. These children are often hardened criminals and savages by the time they get into their teens, and then parents and teachers can do nothing about it. Not even the police are able to curb or prevent the crimes by children in grade school. Parents are largely responsible for this growing menace in society.

Moreover, the church is overpopulated by worldly minded men and women who appease their consciences and satisfy their religious obligations with three visits, or a portion thereof, to the assembly of saints each week. Their love for money and power far outreach their love for the Lord and the truth of the gospel. The souls of lost people mean virtually nothing to these carnally minded people. The masses are far more concerned about the cure and prevention of AIDS than in saving the souls of millions from hell. They place no value upon their own souls. Those who love the truth are concerned when their own children come home from the Bible classes and tell of the loose and liberal ideas taught by some teachers regarding some critical moral problems of the times.

It is easy to drift along with the tide of human thinking and behavior and slowly become like the world without realizing it. "Worldliness" is a term generally used to denote immoral thinking and conduct. Morality is defiled as: "1. relating to, dealing with, or capable of making the distinction between, right and wrong in conduct. 2. relating to, serving to teach, or in accordance with, the principles of character - often, specially, virtuous in sexual conduct; opposed to **immoral**." Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition.

There are some things, however, that are so obviously evil and are so plainly condemned by the word of God that I am amazed when anyone thinks he can practice such things and go to heaven. I am referring to such things as drunkenness, adultery, fornication, murder, stealing, lying, etc., which characterizes society today. I am even more amazed that some "conservative" brethren advocate and practice some of these things and then claim to be righteous before God. They follow that spirit that motivated Judah when God by the prophet said: "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?" (Jer. 7:8-10).

The behavior of right and wrong must be determined, not by society or the customs of a certain age, but by the word of the living God. The small degree to which lying, stealing, disobedience to proper law, and sinful sexual practices may be accepted by society does not in the least make those things acceptable to God. A little lie is as wrong in God's sight as a big one. No distinction can be made between a "little" lie and a "big" lie by Bible standard. Stealing a penny is as wrong as stealing a million dollars by God's judgment. Right conduct, true morality, must be determined by what the gospel of Christ teaches.

### **From Darkness to Light**

The scriptures teach that darkness and light define the contrast between the evils of this world and the righteousness of God in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17). The preaching of the gospel is to give light to those who are in darkness and ignorance and to deliver them from this "present evil world." Of course, one must believe and obey the truth in order to be delivered from darkness to light.

Jesus said to the Jews upon one occasion: "Ye are of your father the devil; and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). Jesus said the devil is a liar and does not abide in the truth. In fact, "there is no truth in him."

Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus (Paul) as he was nearing Damascus, intent on persecuting the church, and he fell to the ground blinded by the appearance of the Lord. Christ told him why he had appeared unto him: to make him a minister and to send him to the Gentiles "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they

may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

Christ is light, and those who hate light are of darkness. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:19-20).

Again, Satan is called the god of this world. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).

"Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35).

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14).

Darkness describes the kingdom of Satan and light defines the kingdom of Christ. Christ is the Light of the world, the light of men. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). He is the true light, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:21).

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4-6).

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8).

"But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. 5:13).

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14).

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (2 Cor. 6:14-15).

The word of truth shows us the clear line between right and wrong, righteousness and unrighteousness, worldliness and godliness. There is no way that both can rule the same heart.

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