



The
William Booth
Collection

Chapter I

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Comrades and Friends, - One of the most beautiful and expressive passages in the whole Bible forms the foundation of my Message this morning. It is full of invaluable truth. I fail to see how it would be possible to crowd more important Salvation doctrine into the same amount of space. You will find it in 1 John i. 7, and it reads as follows: 'If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

I. — First, we will inquire, What does 'walking in the light' mean?

Well, it is an illustration. Can I explain the figure? Imagine for a moment that you unexpectedly found yourselves in a trackless forest, in black darkness, with wild beasts raging round you, and serpents crawling and hissing about you at every step you took, with pitfalls before and on every side of you. While darkness prevented your seeing the gloomy precipice that was only a little way ahead.

And then suppose that just as you were falling over the precipice I came along, with a lighted lantern in my hand, knowing the way full well, and throwing the light on the path in the direction in which you were to tread, said, 'If you will walk in that light you will escape danger, and safely reach your journey's end' – what would you do? I think you would gladly and gratefully accept my advice by walking in the light, and so reach the desired destination.

Now, this is just what the Blessed Lord is saying to you who are here this morning: 'You are in a world crowded with peril to your body, mind, and soul; peril to your family, friends, and circumstances. Devils and wicked men wait to destroy you; death and destruction are on your track. One false step may carry you over the precipice into damnation. You cannot by your own skill discover a path that will lead you out of these dangers and lead you to your destination. I come to be your Guide. I will show you the way which will lead you to righteousness, usefulness, and Heaven. But all My efforts will be of no avail unless you travel in the way I point out. You must walk in the light.'



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'Walking in the light' means neither more nor less than constant obedience to the revealed will of God. In other words, it is doing what you know to be your duty.

II.— The light in which you are to walk has several features, some of which I will notice.

1. It must be your own light.

That is to say, it must be the light God gives to you; what you yourself see to be the will of God concerning you. Are you walking in that light?

2. This light will come to you in various ways.

(a) It will come through your own conscience; that voice in your own innermost soul which tells you what you ought to do. That light has already come to you. Are you walking in it?

(b) This light will come through the inward guidance of the Holy Spirit. This, as John tells us, is the 'light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' That light has come to you. Are you walking in it?

(c) This light will come to you through the Bible. Do you read and obey its teachings? If so, that is walking in the light.

(d) This light may have come to you through the lips of a precious mother, a praying father, a dear brother or sister, or it may be, through the example of a son or daughter. Are you walking in it?

(e) Then more light has come to your heart through Officers and Soldiers. Are you walking in it?

(f) Light has been thrown on your path, as you know very well, from a hundred other sources. Oh, are you obeying? Are you living up to the level of your sense of duty? Are you walking in the light? If so, then, according to the teaching of the Bible –

3. You will receive more light.

The sure way to get a clear revelation of Divine things is to be faithful to the light already given; that is, to use the light you already possess. You remember that the Saviour said, 'For he that hath,' – that is, that uses light he has – 'to him shall be given; and he that hath not,' – that is, does not walk in the light already supplied to him – 'from him shall be taken away, even that which he hath.'

Perhaps the reason you know so little about God and eternal things arises from the fact that you make so little use of the light you possess.



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On another occasion the Saviour said: 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness.' You know that if a man could closely follow the sun on his journey round the world, he would have the light of the sun shining on him all the time. The man who follows Jesus throughout the journey of life will have the light of the Sun of Righteousness shining on him all the time.

4. If you walk in the light; if you do God's will, so far as you know it, He will be a Father unto you, and make you His sons and daughters.

You will remember that Peter said: 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.' That is it. If you will fear and obey God, as far as God has been revealed to you; and work righteousness, so far as you have been made to see what is right; and avoid wrong, He will put His arms around you and bless you, all the way through life and forever after.

5. If you will walk in the light – that is, if you will obey God in putting away your sin, live in daily consecration to His will, fully and continually trust Him for a Full Salvation – you shall realize to the uttermost the cleansing virtue of the blessed sacrifice, and prove for yourself the truth of those wonderful words: 'The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

What are you doing, my Comrades, with the light God has already given you? Surely, you are not shutting your eyes to it, and acting in opposition to its claims? I hope not!

Perhaps there is a backslider here this morning: some one who has refused to walk in the light, until God has been provoked to withdraw it. Some unfaithful wanderer, with whom the light, once enjoyed, has become darkness, and who in that darkness is groping his way down to the world of despair! If this should be so, let me entreat that poor darkened soul to come again to that Saviour, who is still the Light of the World and who will not only reveal to him the evil of his backsliding, but will take him to His bosom and guide him safely to the Land of Light and Glory, where he shall bathe his soul in the full rays of the Sun of Righteousness for ever and ever.

Your affectionate General,

William Booth