

Articles and Sermons :: Seek To Be A Light In The World by J.C. Ryle

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"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom. 13:12).

The Apostle Paul calls it "night." "The night," he says, "is far spent." I have no doubt that word seems strange to some people. They think it surprising that our present time should be called "night." They are living in days of learning, science, civilization, commerce, freedom, and knowledge. Nevertheless I say that in the things of God, the world is still in a state of "night." I believe that God looks down on this globe of ours as it rolls round the sun, and as He looks upon it, He pronounces it "very dark!" I believe that the angels go to and fro, and make report of all they see on our earth, and their constant report is, "very dark!" And I am sure that believers in the Lord Jesus in every land are of one mind on this subject. They cry and sigh because of the abominations they see around them. To them the world appears "very dark!"

Much of the world is in open rebellion against God and His Christ. Multitudes inhabiting the globe have no Bible, no Gospel, no knowledge, no faith, no hope!

There are many professing Christians on earth who are unsound in the faith. Their religion simply is not Scriptural. They have added to it many things which are not to be found in the Bible. They have left out of it many things which the Bible has plainly commanded. There are millions who know nothing of the Bible, and have not the slightest idea of the salvation contained in the Gospel. Surely that is night!

Cast Off the Works of Darkness

Practical duty is put before us in plain words, "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." How are you to "cast off the works of darkness"? You ought to lay aside everything in your life and habits, which will not bear the light of Christ's appearing. You ought to make it a principle of conscience, to do nothing you would not like to be found doing when Jesus comes again to gather His people together. Oh, for a daily readiness to judge ourselves that we be not judged of the Lord, and to condemn ourselves that we be not condemned at the last day!

I ask every reader to bring the light of the day of Christ to bear upon his inner man. Set your years, and months, and weeks, and days, and hours in the full blaze of that day – and whatever thing you find within which is akin to "darkness" – pluck it out and cast it away! Keep up no questionable habit. Make no compromise with doubtful practices. Break down every idol, whether great or small. Cling to nothing which would cost you a blush under the eye of Christ. Away with it at once, lest He come suddenly and put you to shame!

Reader, try all your employment of time by the test of Christ's Second Coming. Place in this balance your amusements, your books, your companions, your manner of conversation, your daily behavior in all the relations of life. Measure all by this measure, "The night is far spent and the day is at hand. Am I living as a child of the night – or as one who looks for the day?" Do this, and you will cast off the works of darkness.

Put On the Armor of Light

But how are you to put on the armor of light? You ought to aim at every grace and habit which befits a believer in Christ, and a child of God, and a citizen of a heavenly kingdom.

Let there be light in your heart continually: Christ dwelling there by faith – felt, known, and experienced by your soul.

Let there be light in your life continually: Christ reflected there, followed, imitated, and copied. Seek to be a light in the world and nothing less – a bright light, a clear light, a light that men can see afar off. Do this and you will put on the armor of light.

Live as if you thought that Christ might come at any time. Do everything, as if you did it for the last time. Say everything, as if you said it for the last time. Read every chapter in the Bible, as if you did not know whether you would be allowed to read it again. Pray every prayer, as if you felt it might be your last opportunity. Hear every sermon, as if you were hear

ing once and forever. This is the way to be found ready.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand." I ask you to live as if you believed the words we have been considering, and to show the world you think them true. The nearer you draw to home – the more wakeful you ought to be. The more you realize the second personal coming of the Lord Jesus – the more lively ought your Christianity to be.

Ah, reader, it is but too true, as Legh Richmond said on his deathbed, "We are but half awake! We are but half awake!" The best of us need to have our hearts stirred up by way of remembrance. Let us rub the sleepy eyes of our mind and look the speedy coming of our Master full in the face. Let the time past suffice us to have been drowsy and lazy servants! For the time to come, let us work like those who feel "The Master will soon be here!"