

## The Light That Is Shining in the Darkness

One of the historical sites to see on Saint Simons Island, Georgia is the Lighthouse which is located near the village. I have often walked by it while visiting there. The first lighthouse was built in 1810 and it was 75 feet tall. The second one that replaced the first one was erected in 1872 and was 104 feet tall. Not having the experience of a sea faring person, I have often wondered how much a lighthouse would mean to me if I was lost in a storm at sea and/or approaching land in the darkness of night. Surely the light beaming across the waters would be a lovely and thankful sight for the captain of a ship. And so this well known hymn came to mind:

LET THE LOWER LIGHTS BE BURNING Brightly beams our Father's mercy From His lighthouse evermore, But to us He gives the keeping Of the lights along the shore. Dark the night of sin has settled, Loud the angry billows roar; Eager eyes are watching, longing For the lights along the shore. Trying now to make the harbor, In the darkness may be lost. Let the lower lights be burning, Send a gleam across the wave! Some poor fainting, struggling seaman You may rescue, you may save. - Philip P. Bliss, 1871

The apostle John wrote in 1 John 1:5, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." James referred to God as being "the Father of lights" (1:17). John also wrote of Jesus, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (John 1:4-5). Jesus spoke of Himself in this manner, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). Therefore, that which is spoken of God the Father as being light is also applicable for Jesus the Son. In God there is perfect light. Darkness cannot penetrate the light. God is perfect in holiness. He is wholly righteous. Darkness depicts Satan's realm of sin and moral depravity. Souls that do not come to the Light sink in a sea of eternal sorrow and separation from God and all that is good.

In nautical terms there is a sure guide and compass that can lead a lost soul to salvation in Jesus Christ who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The Psalmist declared in chapter 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." Again in verse 130 of the same chapter appears, "The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple." The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:8-10, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." "The gospel of Christ" "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Romans 1:16). That is the reason the church should be sending the "blessed gospel light; Let it shine from shore to shore." and "forever more."

While Jesus was on earth, He taught His disciples the following, "You are the light of the world..." (Matthew 5:14-16). While we are not to shine our light, we are required to let our light (life) shine so that by our good works the Father will be glorified. When we walk in the light as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus continues to cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7). We are instructed to "walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8). Furthermore we are to "shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15). Eventually when this life on earth is finished, we will be ushered into "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:11) where "The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light" (Revelation 21:23). "There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:5). When tossed about by every wave of doubt and despair in a sea that is dark and dreary, let us never take our eyes off the Light that is truly guiding us to a safe landing on that eternal shore. There's a light 'long the pathway, it's guiding me home, Leading To that eternal day; And it beckons me on when the Pathway seems dark, there is a light that is shinning for me. When the way seems so heavy, the burdens to bear, There's a Light that is shinning for me; Then I think of my Savior on Calvary there, There's a light that is shinning for me. I am happy today and I'm nearer my home, There's a Light that is shinning for me; Just over the way is the Mansion above, There's a light that is shinning for me. There's a light guiding me thru the darkness of midnight, Till the morning I see there's a light guiding me. He is guiding me home, there the harbor I see, Till I'm safe in the fold, There's a light guiding me. - Alton H. Howard, 1973

*By Raymond Elliott*