



"I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they do shine."
—Charles H. Spurgeon

04-Mar-16

This Little Light of Mine

How far the little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world!

—William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Upon pondering this quotation, I remembered a song that many children in various churches sing. The song is called "This Little Light of Mine," and those who sing it sing, "I'm going to let it shine." Based on [Matthew 5:16](#), it speaks about a light shining out into a dark world. Jesus' words command us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven."

Our savior wants us to live out our beliefs in [the world](#) so that our good actions will be seen, and in turn, they will lead people to honor [God](#). If we have no other way of doing good—if we are poor, weak, unlearned, and unknown—we can still do good by our Christian lives. No sincere and humble Christian lives in vain. Even the feeblest light at midnight is of use.

How brightly has our light shined this past year? Have we achieved those spiritual goals we set out to achieve, or have we succumbed to this world's influences, made incorrect choices, and allowed our light to contract to a dimmer state?

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Growing up in California, my siblings and I would occasionally go camping with our parents. On one such outing, we traveled up to Sequoia National Forest, a long drive from Los Angeles. We found the campground an exciting place. Deer walked through the campground, and squirrels skittered everywhere. Majestic, beautiful redwood trees—taller than any trees I had ever seen—rose into the sky everywhere we looked. It was shady beneath them because the sunlight could not filter through the dense canopy.

We enjoyed a couple of days there, then drove down Kings Canyon—sheer cliffs on either side of the road and a raging river below. Less than an hour later, we parked the car and began walking a winding trail up the side of the mountain to our next destination: Crystal Cave.

When we arrived there, a large iron gate shaped like a spider's web covered the entrance. It was quite eerie. Soon, the rest of the tour group joined us, the gate was opened, and we all walked down into the cave. In the dim incandescent light, we could see strange but beautiful formations like stone curtains, stalagmites and stalactites, "pearls" in water, and the like.

Finally, we all entered a large area in the cavern called the Great Room. Suddenly, the lights went out! I had never been in such darkness; it was pitch black! Some began to panic, but the guide kept speaking, telling everyone to be calm and stand still despite their not being able to see their hands in front of their faces. Some people said that they could see their hands, but the guide explained that it was a deception of the mind, their eyes struggling for light.

After a short while, he finally lit one match. That one match gave enough light to see everyone in the room and parts of the cavern walls. What an experience! It seemed incredible that such a small amount of light could illuminate that great cavern.

I remembered this incident when I came across the Shakespeare quotation, recalling how much that darkness impressed me: It was as if I could *feel* the darkness. But it also brought to mind how that one little match lit the whole cave.

This world loves darkness. Many people believe that they can do anything in the dark—lie, cheat, steal, rape, murder, fornicate, hate, and gossip—and no one will see or find out. Jesus agrees in [John 3:20](#), "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed." Not wanting to be exposed, people like to hide in the darkness. However, the light of God is much brighter and more penetrating than even the sun in our solar system, revealing secrets so that

nothing is hidden to Him ([Hebrews 4:13](#)). The light of the truth illuminates and exposes the sinful deeds of men.

We have been given God's truth, allowing us to understand spiritual principles, to light up our lives so we will not live in darkness. Jesus told us that He is the true light, the light of the world, and if we believe and follow Him, we will not be in the dark ([John 12:46](#)). He teaches in [John 3:21](#), "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

So what must we do? We are to continue our preparations as firstfruits of His Kingdom. Where God reveals our shortcomings by His light and truth, we must take the time to examine, evaluate, [repent](#), and make changes. In His Word, God provides guidance to perform the deeds of love and [kindness](#) that will help and support others, the "good works" that will benefit all.

[Matthew 5:14-16](#) is the complete passage of Jesus' command about letting our light shine:

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

We are to be living in a way that honors Him and the Father. He charges us to let our godly actions be seen in the world, so people can make the connection between the works, us, and God. So, how well have we kept His commandments? Are we doing good works? Are we overcoming? Are we growing in grace and knowledge? Are we bearing spiritual fruit? Are we letting God's light shine from us?

Every one of us is being carefully watched, even scrutinized, by those in this world who would love to tear us down. Their orders come from the spirit of darkness, the god of this present age. They are looking for any faults, sins, or weaknesses in our spiritual armor, so they can accuse us, asking, "Are these the actions of a true Christian?"

Our example—our words and deeds and attitudes—should bear the message to this deceived world that we are Christians, followers of Christ, Christ-like. Christ's light, His truth, His character, should be reflected in everything we do. As the apostle John writes in [1 John 1:5-7](#):

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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. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of [Jesus Christ](#) His Son cleanses us from all [sin](#).

May God help each of us to evaluate ourselves properly ([II Corinthians 13:5](#)). We are to walk our path in the fullness of His light and to practice those things that please Him. If we do, our "little light" will shine brightly in this increasingly darkening world.

- Gary Montgomery

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Christians in the Spotlight](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Richard Ritenbaugh contends that, like our Elder Brother Jesus Christ (the source of our illumination), we need to serve as lights, walking in the light, and reflecting this light to this dark and confused world. While this light begins as reflected light, it must eventually emanate from the inside as self-contained, righteous behavior, as we grow in grace and righteousness. The church as a whole should serve as a luminous city on a hill or an elevated lampstand in a house. At the Feast of Tabernacles, we need to especially let our lights shine by our temperance, moderation, self-control, child rearing, attitude, and behavior, realizing that we are reflecting the characteristics of God Almighty.

From the Archives: Featured Article

['You Are My Witnesses...'](#)

by Martin G. Collins

What is a witness? Martin Collins shows how the term was used in both Old and New Testaments. He also briefly covers the Two Witnesses and the everyday witness of a Christian.

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