



For I will comfort them, turning their mourning into gladness, and their sorrow into joy. And to those who mourn in Zion I will give beauty for ashes, and a garment of praise for their spirit of heaviness. (Jeremiah 31:13; Isaiah 61:3) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (Gen 1:1-5)

There is a novelty in things that are new. From the days of our first remembrance, something that was 'brand new' was also special. As a matter of fact, the word 'novelty' comes from the Latin 'NOVUS' meaning new. New is not always better and, when it comes to truth and faith, it is something altogether undesirable. Why is this? It is because Truth is immutable. It has not changed one iota since the Creation of the World. The same Lord Jesus Christ that offers salvation to the elect of God is the same as that promised Savior told to Abraham and in whom Abraham placed his faith and trust. We are not living in some dispensational period in which God has changed His mind about His dealings with man. The Grace and Salvation of God, like the beauty of the unfolding of a rosebud, has been a gradual but steady revelation of Jesus Christ. Nothing has changed in our day. Abraham, being a Christian himself, looked forward to the promise of Christ; while we today look back to the accomplished fact. But in all time, it was forever the same Savior. *"This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us"* (Acts 7:38) There was no dispensation of law in which men could be saved by good works – it has forever been by the Grace of God through faith in His beloved Son, Jesus.

What we have learned from Holy Scripture is like unto the Ancient Lamp Light of God. He has given us His unchanging, immutable Word from ancient times and the Light can never be extinguished; but it CAN be hidden or distorted in the minds of men by evil men of our day. The false light given off in the peat bogs and swamps of the world, called **will-o'-the-wisps or jack-o'-lanterns**, are superficial lights of deception and danger. To follow those lights into the infested swamps where the alligator and

panther reside is pretty nearly suicide. In the spiritual sense, it is precisely that. Those imitation lights of unsteady place and dim appearance will draw you into danger – not away from it. They are manufactured by the airs and gases of the rotting tissue of the swamp, which tissue you will become if you are attracted to those lights. Unfortunately, it is the adventurous youth, at the peak of their enthusiasm and at the perigee of wisdom.

A story from One Thousand and One Nights, *Aladdin's Lamp*, is of a young man who discovers a lamp containing a Genie. The Genie provides every need for Aladdin at his stated wish. A wicked sorcerer is after the lamp and will resort to anything to get his hands on it. Leaving the lamp in the safe-keeping of his wife (who does not know its worth) Aladdin is away when the sorcerer comes hawking "New Lamps for Old – New Lamps for Old." Aladdin's wife, thinking that a new lamp will always be more worth than an old one, exchanges the magical lamp for a new, and nearly worthless, one. This is precisely what America has done today. We have traded the Ancient Lamp of the Gospel for new and worthless philosophies and fables that cannot benefit but, rather, lead to ruin in the swamp of sin.

The Light of Man is his indestructible spirit which points to his Maker. In reference to the "Virtuous Woman" Solomon says: "*her candle goeth not out by night.*" (Prov 31:18) The Bible uses 'candle,' 'light,' and 'lamp' interchangeably. The prophet Samuel says: "*thou quench not the light of Israel.*" (2 Sam 21:17) Of course, the CANDLE of the virtuous woman and the LIGHT of Israel is the Lord.

God's Word itself is a great Light that is described as a lamp: "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" (Psalms 119:105) What does this lamp-light of God's Word do for us? Like every true light, it scatters the darkness, it reveals dangers in the way, it points out the path of safety which we should tread, and it reveals the lovely lights of God's Creation to our eyes. It distinguishes the wrong way from the right way.

God's Commandment is a Lamp and a Light to us: "*For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*" (Prov 6:23) Even a tiny light will scatter a room full of darkness because darkness is only the absence of light. There is a darkness that pervades the landscape of America because the Light of God has been strangled and extinguished by our courts and lawmakers – but only temporarily because the darkness of man can never completely hide the Light of God. When the law of man becomes darkness, it is in opposition to that beautiful Light of Christ.

Salvation, too, is a Light from God. It does not emanate from our own hearts, but from the heart of God. God is the source of salvation through His mercy and grace. The soul that belongs to God has the 'reflected light' of the world as a testimony to all around. "*For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*" (Isaiah 62:1)

A lamp (knowledge) is of no value without the oil of the Holy Ghost to fuel it. This was illustrated in the Parable of the Ten Virgins by Jesus: "*But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*" (Matt 25:4) All of the knowledge in the world will benefit nothing without the Holy Ghost to give it light and meaning.

God will use His Light to search out sinful hearts. Nothing is hidden from the eyes of the Lord: "*And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem*

with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.” (Zeph 1:12)

There are flickering lights of the sky, and of the earth. There are lights whose nature is darkness. But there is one True Light that lights the hearts of men – Jesus Christ. *“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”* (John 1:9) Every man that cometh into the world applies to all – even those who CALL themselves atheists. But they suffocate the light and cover it with darkness. Every whisper of God is hated by those who wish to follow their own feeble lights. But the True Light is Constant, it is Absolute (even according to Mr. Einstein’s Special Theory), and it ALWAYS travels in a straight line. This reflects the Mind of God. Light cannot be seen by man, only the objects that it illuminates; and neither can God be seen by man – only in the hearts that His Love and Light illuminates.

Jesus tells us that we are the light of the world, and so we are if our hearts and countenances are bathed in the self-generating Light of the Sun of Righteousness. (Matthew 5:14) We reflect the Light of Christ (which is truly the Light of the World) if we have Him in our hearts to shine forth in deeds of love and righteousness. He is the great Light Source *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) It was this same Light to which Abraham looked in his generations, and all of the saved of Israel believed in faith; and all the saved of Israel believe today. We are moons, though apart from the world, reflect His Light upon it. Just as in the days of Abraham, many did not look to that Light. But the day would come when the Light would grow too resplendent and brilliant to ignore: *“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”* (Isaiah 9:2) The Light came to all the world – Jew, Gentile, Male & Female, Bond and free) alike. Have you seen that Light, friend, or have you chosen to close your eyes?