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THE OASIS

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Light

BY REV. CHUCK MIZE

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. - 1 John 1:5
Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.
- Psalm 30:5

We were living in Green Bay and my mother, who lived 500 miles south of us in Wood River Illinois, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. So, the 1,000-mile trips began: to the hospital, to the rehab facility, to bring her home with us to live in Green Bay, for her funeral, and to sell the house where I grew up. Our home away from home was a discount motel six miles down the road. It wasn't elegant, but it was adequate...except for the lamps in the room. Likely to save money, they were all equipped with 40-watt bulbs. The only mood that that lighting created was one that amplified the gloom that was already heavy for us in that season of our lives. So, we added four 100-watt bulbs to our suitcase and substituted them for the dim bulbs during our stays. At least we could see, and the brightness lifted our spirits.

Yin and Yang teach us that we live in a world of opposite but interconnected forces. Cold and hot...happy and sad...old and young...war and peace...grief and glory. We can't understand plenty until we experience poverty. We can't rejoice in grace until we are redeemed from persecution. So it is with darkness and light. Until we've been trapped for days in an endless fog of gray, we can't thrill to the brilliant blue of a cloudless sky. That's why humanity holds on to and celebrates the light in this season of seemingly endless night. That's why we believe that our God is light that is not tainted by any shadow, no matter how faint. And that's why, through the tears of our nights, we are confident that joy shall come with the morning. (cont. p 2)

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Light cont.

'My Dad worked as an electrician at the Amoco refinery in Wood River.

That refinery's tallest fractionation tower was crowned with a cross covered with light bulbs. Each year, it was Dad's job to service that cross so that it set the night sky aglow for Christmas. That tower and its cross are history now, as is the refinery. But it still burns bright in my memory, and fills it with light.

In countless ways the gloom of darkness seeks to smother our spirits and quench our hope. Gloom is as global as our despair over the relentless destruction of our environment for the greed of short-term gain, and as personal as illness, depression, crises, and death. No people know the devastation of gloom today more desperately than do the persecuted citizens of Ukraine. And no people hold more tenaciously to the light than do they. They believe that ...the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will never overcome it. Believe it, too! Come to the light. And become a bright light for others...the light of God's love in Jesus, the light of the world. With that divine light, we will make even a 1,000 watt lamp look like a dim bulb in comparison. Let your light shine!



Light is Sufficient To Itself

By Emily Dickenson

Light is sufficient to itself--
If Others want to see
It can be had on Window Panes
Some Hour in the Day.

But not for Compensation--
It holds as large a Glow
To Squirrel in the Himmaleh
Precisely, as to you.

Darkness cannot
drive out
darkness; only
light can do that.
Hate cannot
drive out hate;
only love can do
that."

- Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr.





The Light Within

Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continually return. Eternity is at our hearts, pressing upon our time-torn lives, warming us with intimations of an astounding destiny, calling us home unto Itself. Yielding to these persuasions, gladly committing ourselves in body and soul, utterly and completely, to the Light Within, is the beginning of true life. It is a dynamic center, a creative Life that presses to birth within us. It is a Light Within that illumines the face of God and casts new shadows and new glories upon the human face. It is a seed stirring to life if we do not choke it. It is the Shekinah of the soul, the Presence in the midst. Here is the Slumbering Christ, stirring to be awakened, to become the soul we clothe in earthly form and action. And Christ is within us all.

You who read these words already know this inner Life and Light. For by this very Light within you is your recognition given. In this humanistic age we suppose we are the initiators and God is the responder. But the Living Christ within us is the initiator, and we are the responders. . . .

The basic response of the soul to the Light is internal adoration and joy, thanksgiving and worship, self-surrender and listening. The secret places of the heart cease to be our noisy workshop. They become a holy sanctuary of adoration and of self-oblation, where we are kept in perfect peace, if our minds be stayed on [God] who has found us in the inward springs of our life. . . . Powerfully are the springs of our will moved to an abandon of singing love toward God; powerfully are we moved to a new and overcoming love toward time-blinded human beings and all creation. In this Center of Creation all things are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Thomas R. Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion* (HarperSanFrancisco: 1992, ©1941, 9–10, 11)

A Hymn

SOMETIMES A LIGHT SURPRISES

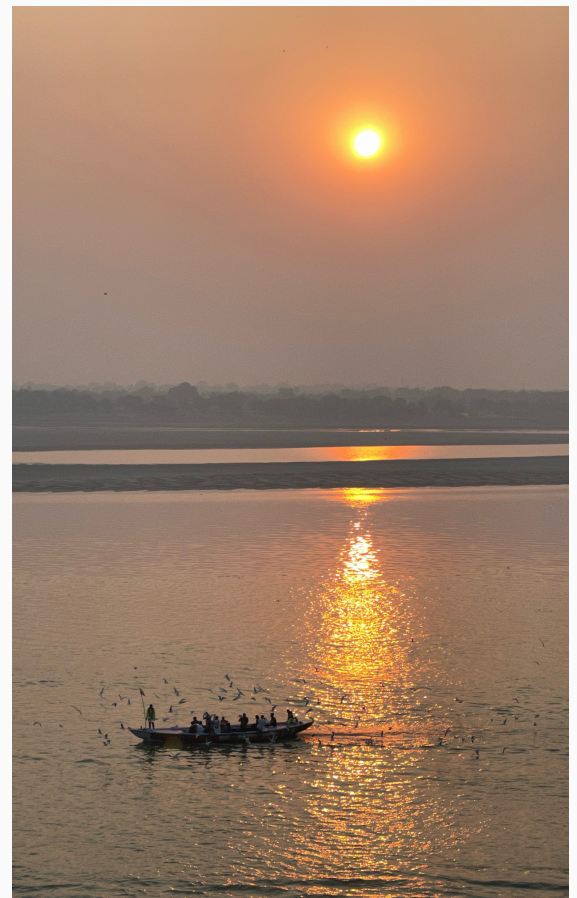
by William Cowper

Sometimes a light surprises the child of
God who sings;

the light of one who rises with gentle,
healing wings.

When comforts are declining, God
grants the soul again

a season of clear shining, to cheer it
after rain.



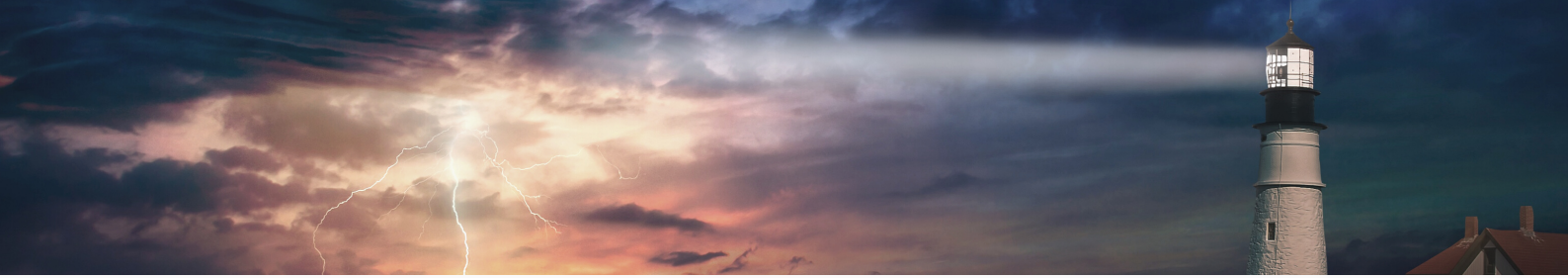
Children's Books

CHILDREN'S BOOKS:

"When God Made Light" by: Matthew
Paul Turner

"The Worried Wiseman" by Susan Eaddy
"Good News! God Loves You" by: Glenys
Nellist & illustrated by: Lizzie Walkley

"I Wonder: Exploring God's Grand Story:
an Illustrated Bible" by: Glenys Nellist &
illustrated by: Alessandra Fusi



A Prayer for Light

By Daniel Heath - Presbyterian Outlook, December 2022)

Sparkling and Shimmering God,
Thank you for calling us to walk in the light —
light that can brighten gloomy cities, light that can make planets glow, light
that can warm cold hearts.

Gleaming and Glistening God,
Thank you for calling us to be light —
light so bright that even when we try to hide among the shrubs, burning
bushes appear.

Twinkling God,
Thank you for calling us to share light —
light that stretches beyond distances of six feet. Light that breaches depths.

Help us hold up our light on lamp stands, participating in your work of
resisting all darkness in our world. Help us never to hold up our light for
notoriety, fame, attention or comparison. Allow every wave of light that
radiates from our being to illumine you, the source of all light.

We pray this prayer in the strong name of Jesus, the light of the world. Amen.



It Felt Love

How
Did the rose
Ever open its heart

And give to this world
All its
Beauty?

It felt the encouragement of light
Against its
Being,

Otherwise,
We all remain

Too
Frightened.

-Hafiz 14th Century Persian Sufi Poet

“In the same way,
let your light
shine before
others, that they
may see your
good deeds and
glorify your Father
in heaven.”

- Matthew 5:16

