

In his book, "Tales of the Hasidim", the late Jewish scholar Martin Buber, tells the wonderful tale of an Eastern European rabbi of the eighteenth century, Moshe Loeb, a learned teacher of the Law of Moses whose superior wisdom and vast knowledge attracted a large following. One day one of his young disciples paid him an unexpected visit. He was in deep distress. Taking notice of the young man's sad demeanor, he said, "My son, you seem to be deeply troubled. What is bothering you?" In reply, his disciple said, "My friend seems to have lost his faith. He is convinced that God is absent, and nowhere to be found. What must be my response to the one who laments, 'There is no God!'" "What you must do as a man of faith is to act as if God did not exist, as if in the whole world only one person could help the man: you alone!" The sage of Israel makes a valid point. If God is absent in the world, than we must bring Him into it!

In our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, He makes a similar point to his disciples. In the darkness of unbelief, the disciples are called to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

In his reflections on today's gospel reading (Mt. 5: 13-16), William Barclay, a popular scripture scholar of the last century, makes the following observation: "It may be said that this is the greatest compliment that was ever paid to the individual Christian, for in it Jesus commanded his disciples to be what he himself claimed to be. Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the World" (Jn. 9:5)". When Jesus commanded his disciples to be nothing less than that they shall be like Himself".

There is a light that shines forth from a Christian's presence. By sharing in Jesus' mission the disciples will be a light for the entire world. Echoing Jesus, St. Paul speaks of Christians as "children of the Light".

We need not be surprised that one of the most popular hymns in Evangelical Christian circles is "This little light of mine". The words are simple but nevertheless profound in meaning:

This little heart of mine

I'm going to make it shine

Oh, this little light of mine

I'm going let it shine

Hide it under a bushel? No!

I'm going to let it shine

Hide it under a bushel? No!

I'm going to let it shine.

Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

As Christians, we can be effective instruments in drawing unbelievers to the faith and to God. After all, that is what Jesus said. “Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and give glory to your heavenly Father” (Mt. 5: 16). We must shine with the reflection of his light, a heavenly light. Our faith and our good works must be visible to all people. If we fail, Christians are as useless as a lamp whose light is concealed under a bushel basket.