

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

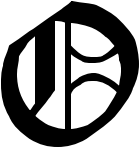
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An Old Hymn

Larry Baulch

 One song that long ago caught my fancy and isn't sung very often is a Phillip P. Bliss song entitled, “*Let the Lower Lights be Burning.*” I wondered who Phillip Bliss was, and how he came to write this wonderful old song. What was the intent...the meaning...the religious tone this hymn was meant to instill in us when written? What can we gain from the wording and the melody today...and how does this hymn apply to our busy lives now?

First, Phillip Bliss was born in Rome Pennsylvania, in 1838. As a young man he had little musical training, but had a true gift and moved to Chicago Illinois in 1864 and started to write and sing songs of worship. Unfortunately his life was cut short by a train wreck of note in 1876 where in a news article it is written he perished trying to save his wife as the train burned.

Second, the song was published in 1871 and was written after Phillip Bliss heard this story from his close friend D.L. Moody: “On a dark, stormy, night, when the waves rolled like mountains, and not a star was to be seen, a

boat, rocking and plunging, neared the Cleveland harbor. ‘Are you sure this is Cleveland?’ asked the captain, seeing only one light from the light-house. ‘Quite sure, sir,’ replied the pilot. ‘Where are the lower lights?’ asked the captain. ‘Gone out, sir’ said the pilot. ‘Can you make the harbor?’ the captain asked. ‘We must, or perish, sir!’ declared the pilot. And with a strong hand and a brave heart, the old pilot turned the wheel. But alas, in the darkness he missed the channel, and with a crash upon the rocks the boat was shivered, and many a life was lost in a watery grave. Mr. Moody’s closing words after this recitation were: The Master will take care of the great light-house: *let us keep the lower lights burning!*”

“**Brightly beams our Father’s mercy from His lighthouse evermore...**” Consider *Ephesians 2:4*: “*But God, being rich in mercy...made us alive together with Christ.*” As brightly as the sun itself, the Lord’s mercy beamson us when we seek the forgiveness of our sins.

“**But to us He gives the keeping of the lights along the shore...**” As stated in *Luke 12:35*, “*Let your loins be girded about,*

and your lamps burning.” the Lord wants us to be ready...to be prepared...to maintain the watch for those in need and who need our help.

“**Let the lower lights be burning! Send a gleam across the wave! Some poor fainting, struggling seaman, you may rescue, you may save...**” We find in *Matthew 5:15 -16*, “*Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under a bushel...Even so let your light shine before men; and they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*” Always remember who you are, and that you are the light...an example to those in the world, maybe the only light they have the opportunity to observe...to talk to...to listen to..to hear the gospel message...and be saved.

The next time we sing this song let us remember Phillip Bliss and D.L.Moody. Let us think about our singing, and along with the comfort and the feeling of well being we receive from hearing an old hymn, let us think about why and from whom we have been instructed to enter into our song service.