**Back To The Bible**

**To Be, Or Not Be Seen!**

Did Jesus contradict himself in the Sermon on the Mount? He said, Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:14,16). But later he said, Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven (6:1-f.).

To be seen of men indicates a self-glorifying motive; doing things with no genuine desire to serve God or other men. This is labeled exactly what it is; i.e., hypocrisy. By such we deceive ourselves most often; perhaps a few others; but never fool God. Hypocrisy is not true **light** in the first place. It has no heavenly reward; only praise of deceived men.

Regarding the first verses, true light **will** shine — that is its nature. If we will concentrate on **being** true lights rather than on **being seen**, the light will make known its presence. It will not be hidden unless we follow a policy of obscuration. But why would anyone want to hide his light? A few years back it may have been fear of being called a square. Now it may be a desire to be thought free or uninhibited. But light-hiding usually means we are ashamed of the gospel of Christ, and fear the unpleasant consequences that may come to those who defend and live its principles.

Cowards can find plausible excuses for using the bushel. They show a brotherly deference to prejudice-- a condescending attitude, less than honest. They wish to gradually accustom men to their new idea. They are lovers of peace (where there is no peace). I remember one fellow saying that John lost his head because he lost his head — he failed to use tact and diplomacy. But Johns light shone, and continues to shine on us.

Let your light shine means we must live for Christ in open, unashamed fashion. We must reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. We must be primarily interested in pleasing the Lord, not in what men see or think of us.

Questions and/or comments concerning this article by Robert F. Turner are welcomed. Write us at P. O. Box 206, Dunlap, TN 37327 or call (423) 949-3286 or (423) 949-4339. Free Bible correspondence course sent upon request.

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