

FINDING THE GREATER LIGHT

FRANCIS HARPER JR.



“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,
that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not;
and it shall be given him.”

JAMES 1:5

Finding the Greater Light

by

Francis A. Harper Jr.

Cover photos Copyright © Adobe Stock Photos.

Published by:
Francis Harper

Send all inquiries to:
Francis A. Harper, Jr.
wbfrmsup@iowatelecom.net

Copyright © 2020 by Francis A. Harper, Jr.

Francis Harper has the exclusive rights to reproduce this work, to prepare derivative works from this work, to publicly distribute this work, to publicly perform this work and to publicly display this work.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Dedication

*This book is dedicated to
those who are following the counsel of Jesus to*

“ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU, SEEK, AND YE
SHALL FIND.”—MATTHEW 7

Contents

Dedication	iii
Contents	v
Preface	viii
The Greater Light.	2
The First Vision	5
An Angel Appears	9
Finding the Plates at Hill Cumorah	12
The Plates Obtained and the Persecution Begins.	14
The Aaronic Priesthood Restored <i>by</i> John the Baptist.	16
The Church is Organized April 6, 1830.	18
The Greater Light Is Preserved	21
The Greater Light Still Exists	24
Finding the Greater Light.	27
Sidney Rigdon	30
Samuel Hall	34
Joseph and Emma Burton	41
Nellie and Minnie Newman.	45
John J. Cornish.	49
William Clow.	54
Joseph Luff.	60
Sarah Moore <i>by</i> Great Granddaughter, Julie (Smith) McCormick	64
Fred and Anna Hartshorn <i>by</i> Elbert A. Smith	66

Preface

Jesus said: “I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness” (John 8:12). “He who loveth truth, cometh to the light . . . and he who obeyeth the truth, the works which he doeth they are of God” (John 3:21-22). The words light and truth can be used interchangeably. We must love the truth; embrace the truth; and obey the truth. Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Where can we find the unblemished light and truth of Jesus Christ being taught and lived today? Is the search for the greater light a hopeless quest? Jesus promised: “Ask of God; ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened” (Matthew 7:12-13 IV; 6:7-8 KJV). Those who diligently seek for the greater light and truth of God will be rewarded.

The late David Wilkerson, well known pastor of Times Square Church in New York City, stated: “There are 27,000 Pentecostal denominations in the world, and the Baptists are not far behind” (*World Challenge Pulpit Series*, June 12, 2006). In addition to the 50,000 Pentecostal and Baptist denominations, there are many more thousands of denominations, all claiming to represent the Church of Jesus Christ! It certainly was not the Lord’s intention that his church be so divided. Jesus prayed, “That they all may

be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21). Jesus said to his disciples, “I will build my church”; singular, not plural. (Matthew 16:19 IV; 16:18 KJV). He also said, “. . . in vain do they worship me, teaching the doctrines and the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:8 IV; 15:9 KJV).

Jesus asked his disciples: “Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:17 IV; 16:16 KJV). The Lord complimented Peter for his answer. He said, “Blessed art thou Simon . . . for flesh and blood [man] hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven . . . and upon this rock [communication from heaven] I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18-19 IV; 16:17-18 KJV). The gates of hell have prevailed against the Church of Jesus Christ almost from the beginning, because the leaders of the church have far too often neglected to rely upon divine revelation. They “trusted in themselves” (Luke 18:9).

Paul understood the vital importance of communication with God in the preservation of the Church of Jesus Christ. He wrote to the churches in Galatia: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ . . . But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel preached of me is not after man. For I neither received of

The First Vision

It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally. After I had retired into the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astounding influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak.

Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction, not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world who had such a marvelous power as I had never before felt in my being. [It is interesting that Joseph came under satanic attack before his first vision even as Satan appeared to Jesus at the beginning of his ministry].

Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun; which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon

An Angel Appears

I continued to pursue my common avocations in life until the twenty first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty three, all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious, because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision.

During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision, and the year eighteen hundred and twenty three, having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends, and to have treated me kindly and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me, I was left to all kinds of temptations, and mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors and displayed the weakness of youth and the corruption of human nature, which I am sorry to say led me into divers temptations, to the gratification of many appetites offensive in the sight of God.

In consequence of these things I often felt condemned for my weakness, and imperfections; when on the evening of the above mentioned twenty first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him: for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I had previously had one.

While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in the room which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside standing in the air for his feet did not touch the floor.

When I first looked upon him I was afraid, but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni. That God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil, among all nations, kindreds, and tongues; or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.

He said there was a book deposited written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants. Also that there were two stones in silver bows, and these stones fastened to a breastplate constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim, deposited with the plates, and the possession and use of these stones was what constituted seers in ancient or former times, and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

After this communication I saw the light in the room begin to gather immediately around the person of him who had been speaking to me, and it continued to do so until the room was again left dark except just around him, when instantly I saw as it were a conduit open right up into heaven, and he ascended up til he entirely disappeared and the room was left as it had been before this heavenly light had made its appearance. (Ibid., p. 8-13).

I Have Found the Glorious Gospel

by James L. Edwards

I have found the glorious gospel that was taught in former years,
With its gifts and blessings all so full and free;
And my soul is thrilled with gladness and banished are my fears,
Since the precious angel message came to me.
Then praise the Lord, O my soul!

Abundant mercy, oh, how free!
In Joyful song my spirit doth accord, Since the precious angel message
came to me.

I wandered long in darkness, yet sought the narrow way,
And my life was like the surging of the sea;
But now I am rejoicing in this the latter day,
Since the precious angel message came to me.
Then praise the Lord, O my soul!

Abundant mercy, oh, how free!
In Joyful song my spirit doth accord, Since the precious angel message
came to me.

My once blind eyes are open, my sins are washed away,
And the kingdom I can very plainly see;
No more do fears and doubting my trusting soul dismay,
Since the precious angel message came to me.
Then praise the Lord, O my soul!

Abundant mercy, oh, how free!

In Joyful song my spirit doth accord, Since the precious angel message
came to me.

Now for celestial glory in the presence of the Lord,

I will work and watch and humbly bow the knee;

No longer faith but knowledge in true and sweet accord

Has the precious angel message brought to me.

Then praise the Lord, O my soul!

Abundant mercy, oh, how free!

In Joyful song my spirit doth accord, Since the precious angel message
came to me.