

The King's House. The Golden Candlestick

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THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

In the outer apartment of the sanctuary we have been learning about, there were seven golden candlesticks, or rather, one large candlestick with seven branches. At the end of each branch was a lamp, filled with oil, and this was kept always burning to light up the house. The lights were many times reflected from the beautiful golden walls of the holy place and made it most glorious within.

We know that everything in this tabernacle was to teach us something about ourselves; for we are the true temples of God, and this one was only a figure. What then may we learn from these candlesticks, with their golden lamps filled with oil, always burning?

Jesus told John what the candlesticks represent. John had a vision in which he saw Jesus standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and he was told, "The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

The number seven in the Bible stands for completeness, fulness. So this shows us that God's candlestick on this earth is His whole church, and that Jesus, the Light of the world, is in the midst of His people. But you know that the church is made up of many members, and so each member is to be a candlestick in God's house, with Jesus in the midst, in the heart.

What is a candlestick for? It is not itself a light, but it is to be a light-bearer. Perhaps you remember Jesus said that when men light a candle they do not hide it under a bushel, but they put it on a candlestick, so that it may give light to all that are in the house. A candlestick is to hold up the light so that it may be seen and give light all around. So every one of you, dear children, God wants to be His little light-bearers.

But a candlestick is no use without light. Where does the light come from that God's candlesticks are to hold up? This too we see very plainly told in

God's Word. For John saw also "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

Think again what seven stands for, and you will see that God wants His Holy Spirit to be poured out in its fulness into His people on earth, and that is what will make them the light of the world. For the candlesticks were to hold up and show forth the lamps, and these lamps represent the Spirit of God. The lamps were filled with oil for the light, and oil is used in the Bible as the symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Do you want to be God's light-bearer? Then you must have His Holy Spirit in your heart to light the lamp, and a fresh supply of His holy oil to keep it ever burning. Do you remember the parable by which Jesus taught this?

There were five foolish virgins who took their lamps, but no oil with them when they went out to meet the Bridegroom. So their lamps went out, for they could not borrow the oil from any of the others, and they were shut out from the marriage feast. We must have oil if we are to be burning and shining lights, and this oil is the Holy Spirit of God.

And now, how are we to get a constant supply of the precious oil to keep our light burning clear? Have you read the "Pilgrim's Progress"? If so you have been with Christian to the house of Mr. Interpreter, and will remember the illustration that he used to teach him about this.

Then I saw in my dream that the Interpreter took Christian by the hand, and led him into a place where was a Fire burning against the wall, and one standing by it, always casting much water upon it to quench it; but did the Fire burn higher and hotter.

Then said Christian, "What means this?"

The Interpreter answered, "This Fire is the work of Grace which is wrought in the heart; he that casts water upon it, to extinguish and put it out, is the Devil; but in that thou seest the Fire notwithstanding burn higher and hotter, thou shalt also see the reason of that." So he led him about to the backside of the wall, where he saw a man with a Vessel of Oil in his hand, of the which he did also continually cast (but secretly) into the Fire.

Then said Christian, "What means this?" The Interpreter answered, "This is Christ who continually, with the Oil of His Grace, maintains the work already begun in the heart; by the means of which, notwithstanding what the Devil

can do, the souls of His people prove gracious still. And in that thou sawest that the man stood before the wall to maintain the Fire, that is to teach thee that it is hard for the tempted to see how this work of Grace is maintained in the soul."

Again we must go to God's Word to see how He does this work of pouring the oil of His Spirit into His candlesticks to keep their light burning. For God showed it all to the prophet Zechariah by a beautiful figure, that he might write it out for us to read.

"And the angel that talked with me came again and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold, a candlestick all of gold with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps which are upon the top thereof; and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl and the other upon the left side thereof. . . And I said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the oil out of themselves?. . . Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, which stand by the Lord of the whole earth."
[Zech. 4:2-3, 11-14]

It you recall our last week's talk you will remember the ark covered with the mercy seat, which was a figure of the throne of God. On each end of the mercy seat was the figure of an angel, representing the two anointed ones that stand in the presence of God. From what was shown to Zechariah, we learn that it is through these heavenly beings that the golden oil of God's Holy Spirit is made to flow from Him to us.

God says of His angels that they are all "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Jacob in a dream saw the angels coming and going between heaven and earth. The way to the throne of God is ever open, and these heavenly messengers are the channel through which God pours the golden oil of love and grace into His people. It is through these precious Words has been given to man; for He sent them the prophets the things that they wrote to enlighten the world.

This Holy Word is as the golden pipes through which the oil was emptied from these anointed ones into the candlesticks. So if we would have always a fresh supply of oil, if we would burn brightly for the glory of God and the good of others, we must study God's Holy Word, that through this channel His own Spirit may be poured into our hearts. Then we shall "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life."

God wants His people to be full of the wisdom of His Holy Spirit, so that they may teach and enlighten the whole world. This will be done when each little light burns bright and clear just where He has put it. He wants by His golden candlestick in this earth, to give light to all that are in His house. You know that the Father's house is a very large place,—much larger than this earth,—for it takes in the whole universe.

Does it seem to you that you are so hidden, and your light is so small that no one will get any good from it? Then here is something for you to think about: "We are a spectacle unto the angels," "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." That means that even the high and holy angels may learn more of the riches of God's grace, and of His wisdom and power, by seeing what He is able to do in the hearts and lives of His people in this world.

Is it not marvellous and inspiring to think that you are always being thus watched? So let nothing put out your light, for nothing can if the golden oil of the Spirit is allowed to flow freely into your heart. All the efforts of Satan to quench it will only make it "burn higher and hotter."

When he finds that he cannot quench the light that God's light-bearers are shedding over the world, Satan tries to get rid of the candlestick by persecuting and killing those who are holding up the light. But all that this does is to spread the light into the hearts of many more, who also become light bearers.

You may have heard of the words of old Bishop Latimer to Ridley, when together they suffered death by burning for the sake of the Word of God. "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, for we shall this day light such a candle in England as by God's grace shall never be put out."