

SIMPLE TALKS ON THE TABERNACLE

by

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

SHINING FOR JESUS

“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. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my Lord? . . . Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:2-4, 6).

THERE was no natural light in the tabernacle. In the sanctuary was the golden candlestick shedding its light upon the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, the vail, and throwing it upwards to the many-colored ceiling. The Holy of holies was lit up by the Shekinah, the manifested glory of God.

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

The light of man, Christ, is the golden candlestick and sheds His light upon each member of His body. No child of God need grope in the dark. We are all the children of light (I Thessalonians 5:5). The pure olive oil beaten for the light causes the lamp to burn always (Exodus 27:20). That light never goes out and hence **“the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day”** (Proverbs 4:18). We are marching on to Zion, to the city of lights, where there is no need of sun or moon, because the Lamb is the light thereof.

We find the golden candlestick mentioned in the Bible when the tabernacle was built (Exodus 25:31-40), in Revelation 1:12, 20, and in Zechariah 4.

In our study of the tabernacle we have noticed that every type of Christ, the head of the body, must needs also to some extent be a type of the members of His body. So it is with the golden candlestick. Christ said not only, **“I am the light of the world,”** but also, **“Ye are the light of the world”** (Matthew 5:14).

When we meditate on the prophet's vision as a type of Christ and His church, we notice the large bowl upon the top containing the oil which was constantly supplied by the two olive trees on either side of the candlestick, and the seven pipes by which the oil reached the seven lamps.

I still remember the time when we had neither gas nor electricity in our home, but were depending on oil-lamps. They shed a comfortable homely light on the family gathered around the table. Most of my readers know little about lamps. I know something about them. For a burning lamp you need two things: first of all oil, and then a wick, that is dipped into the oil.

Oil in Scripture.

I hardly need remind my readers, that oil is an emblem of the Holy Ghost. Priests, prophets and kings were anointed in the Old Testament dispensation and the anointing of our king is one of the most touching features in the coronation. Our Lord in His sermon at Nazareth quoted: **“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings”** (Isaiah 61:11).

To the mourners in Zion, the oil of joy is given for mourning (Isaiah 61:3), and God anointed His Son with the oil of gladness (Hebrews 1:9).

The oil of the Holy Spirit.

How we need the Holy Spirit for our life and ministry! Many years ago Dr. Andrew Murray wrote, “It is the will of God that every child of God should be filled with the Holy Spirit. Without the fullness of the Holy Spirit, no member of the body, no child of God can come up to Father's ideal for his life and his service. Every child of God has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. It is, however, a different experience to be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Surely this is the explanation for the rapid growth of the early church.

I am only a wick.

How important it is to learn this lesson. With many of us it takes a long time before we have learned it. It is only when the wick is soaked with oil that it can burn. If it does not touch the oil, it produces soot and smoke. Sometimes the wick is screwed down too much. Many of God's children are satisfied to live on a low level. Sometimes the wick is too high and it emits nothing but soot. A room had to be redecorated; the wall-paper, the curtains were completely spoiled. If you wish for the fullness of the Holy Spirit in order that your church should be crowded and people flock to hear you, the Holy Spirit could not work through you. If people begin to talk about the wick, there is generally something wrong with the burning.

Now will you allow me to ask you a question, brother? Is your light burning brightly?

“*Lux lucet ex tenebris*” is the motto of the Waldensian Church. Does your light shine in darkness? Your colleagues in office and shop may not be Christians; they will watch your life, your words, and your actions. Are you shining for Jesus?

Keep me shining, Lord!
Keep me shining, Lord!
In all I say and do;
That the world may see
Christ lives in me
And wants to love Him too.

You cannot accumulate the oil.

We cannot live on our past experiences, however precious they have been. We need a fresh supply of oil each day. There is a constant supply from the two olive trees. There is no fear that the oil will be exhausted and the supply may give out, however long you may burn. It is true that **“I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me”** (Philippians 4:13).

John the Baptist was a shining and burning light. Shining is not the same as working. Living, being, is more important than doing. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not only for service, for special occasions.

In one of our conventions a dear child of God was filled with the Holy Spirit. She was asked some time afterwards if she had noticed any special results in her work for the Lord. She paused before answering the question and then said thoughtfully, “I cannot say that I have; only I have won the heart of my children!”

The lamp must shine where the Master has put it.

Many a worker believes he would shine better if the Lord would put him somewhere else. He feels a lack of fellowship and doubts whether his people pray for him. I cannot tell, brother, if you would do better for the Lord elsewhere. I was reading again this morning Isaiah 53, the evangel in the Old Testament. It is said of the Lord: **“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.”**

Our Lord could draw no nourishment from His surroundings. He lived in an atmosphere of doubt and misunderstanding. His own brothers did not believe in Him. He could not draw help from it, it was dry ground. Yet that tender plant grew. He drew His life from above, not from beneath. I have seen fir trees grow on rocks. Botany teaches there is an acid in the roots which penetrates the rock and makes room for the roots. They give before they take. Throughout our Lord's life He was always the giving one. When the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to the fact that we must give first, we cease to complain about our surroundings and it may be unconsciously we begin to shine and grow in dry ground.

Is your lamp burning brightly? It is very dark around us. No lamp can be spared. If your light is dim, you may cause someone to stumble. I had a fellow-student at college who was blind. When we dropped into his room after dinner, there were always two big candles burning. I asked him once if he did not consider this extravagance. He answered, “It is true I do not need them, but I do not want you fellows to stumble.”

You may not be a big light, but God may use your little candle to lighten a big light. Did you ever notice that when John mentions Andrew, he always adds “**the brother of Simon Peter.**” It seems to me always that John put this addition, thinking the reader may never have heard anything about Andrew, but everybody was sure to know Simon Peter. We know little of Andrew, only that he practiced individual work.

I can well imagine that when Andrew listened to that wonderful sermon at Pentecost, when three thousand were won for the Lord, he lifted up his heart in gratitude to the Lord that it was he who first found his brother Simon and led him to the Master. You may never be a Peter, but will you not be an Andrew?

You cannot accumulate oil; neither need you.

There is a constant supply of oil dropping from the two olive trees into the bowl. There is no fear of the supply giving out. Christ is the accumulator. All we need, we have in him. “**Apart from me, ye can do nothing**” (John 15:5). Keep on burning, the supply of oil will be commensurate to your burning. Shining and working are not the same.

Being is more important than doing.

The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not for special occasions only. We need to be constantly filled. You will not be when you seek your own honor. “Non nobis, non nobis” — All glory, laud, and honor to the Redeemer King. If our lamp burns, we owe it all to the shaft, and it will not burn any the brighter by putting other lamps into the shade.

What is the cause that many lamps do not burn brightly? Is our blessed Lord to blame? Is the Holy Spirit to blame? Is the supply of oil not sufficient? There may be three causes which keep the lamp from burning:

- (1) It may be that there is something wrong at the end of the wick; it does not reach into the oil;
- (2) It is also possible that rust may have gathered at the top, or
- (3) That there is a knot somewhere in the wick which hinders the oil from rising to the top.

The wick no longer reaches into the oil.

There is still some oil in the wick, but there is no fresh inflow. It may be the wick is not at once conscious of it; others may notice it first. Soon a disagreeable odor will draw people's attention to the wick. It always shows that there is something wrong when people talk about the wick. They never do when the lamp burns brightly. We are ambassadors for Christ. May Christ be glorified, not the ambassador. May we be effaced in our message. Does the wick no longer reach into the oil? Is there a lack of inflow?

Dr. Chapman once told how he had a talk with Dr. F. B. Meyer at Northfield. He told him of the number of meetings at which he had spoken: how he was constantly giving out. I wonder if you have ever felt like that, brother?

“Dr. Meyer laid his hand in a loving way on my shoulder and said to me,” said Dr. Chapman, “Brother, have you ever tried three times exhaling and once inhaling?”

Dr. Chapman said, “I felt a little annoyed. I fancied Dr. Meyer had misunderstood me altogether and was recommending me a new method of voice culture.

“However, to please the old man, I tried the experiment. I soon found out that it was impossible.”

You cannot exhale unless you have inhaled first. There must be inflow before there can be outflow.

May I be allowed a question? What about your quiet time with the Master? What about your prayer life? Has the Lord been speaking to you this morning through His word? I do not mean in your family worship. I mean in the prayer closet. The Holy Spirit was waiting to give you a private lesson this morning; why did you not come?

You say you have studied your Bible this morning. You had to prepare a Bible-reading. Again I say, I did not mean that. The trouble with us preachers is that we read the Bible for others instead of for ourselves. Your Bible-reading will only be blessed when through the Word you are reading the Holy Spirit can speak personally to you. He will give you what you need for the day. The wick must touch the oil. You must be in touch with the Holy Spirit.

Rust may have collected at the top of the wick by the very burning.

Is this possible? How often have I knelt down in my study after having preached or given a Bible-reading to ask the Lord to cover with His precious blood whatever was of self in the sermon I had just preached. Have you not felt the same? Our Father knows how weak the instruments are He is using, and in His mercy He provides snuffers and snuff-dishes and tongs of pure gold. So important did the Lord consider that the lamps should burn brightly; that He entrusted the golden snuffers only to the hands of the high priest. It is the husbandman Himself, our heavenly Father, who purgeth every branch that it may bear more fruit (John 15:2).

There may be a knot somewhere in the wick.

The oil cannot penetrate into the wick. This is a cause that so many prayers of God's children are not answered.

There was a knot in Samson's wick. Delilah had entered into his life. Samson, the Nazarite, the man under a vow, gave his love and his heart to an unclean woman. She dragged him down and surrendered him to the Philistines. Samson did not know that the Lord was departed from him (Judges 16:20).

“If I regard iniquity in my heart (if the motive of my prayer is not the Lord's glory but my own) **the Lord will not hear me”** (Psalm. 66:18).

It may be that someone amongst my readers is conscious that there is not the power in his ministry there used to be.

Be sure there is a knot somewhere in the wick and as long as the knot is there the oil cannot ascend.

Our blessed Lord is a master in unraveling knots. Go straight to Him. He will understand all about it. He knows all about your knot; He was concerned about it. He can, however, do nothing for you until you come to Him and ask Him to untie your knot. He has such tender hands; He is so patient. I know it. There is restoring grace for you.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9).

~ end of chapter 19 ~

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