

SIMPLE TALKS ON THE TABERNACLE

by

D. H. Dolman, M. A., D. D.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

“And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; the three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick.

“And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same . . . And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it” (Exodus 25:31-35, 37).

As we enter the sanctuary, it is but natural that our eyes are first directed towards the golden candlestick. Without its burning light the sanctuary would have been full of darkness and gloom. It was of pure gold; all the other furniture of the tabernacle, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, the ark, were made of acacia wood overlaid with gold.

The mercy seat and the golden candlestick were of pure gold. Its value must have been at least thirty thousand dollars.

We notice that the center shaft rises above the branches. It had four bowls in the shape of almonds with their knops and their flowers, whereas the branches have only three bowls with a knop and a flower in one branch.

The golden candlestick is a wonderful symbol of the union between Christ and His disciples. Our Lord is center shaft. We are His branches. More even than this, our Lord is not only the shaft, but He is the candlestick itself (Exodus 25:34).

“And in the candlestick were four bowls made like almonds, his knops, and his flowers” (Exodus 37:20).

As the branches are part of the tree, so are we joined to our Lord. The candlestick had flowers and knops. Our Lord used a similar type: when on His way to Gethsemane, pointing to a vine, He drew their attention to the close union between them. **“I am the vine, ye are the branches”** (John 15:5).

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ” (I Corinthians 12:12).

Branches and candlestick are one. Our Lord does not say: “I am the stem of the vine, ye are the branches.” He says: “I am the vine itself. Separated from the vine, the branch is valueless. The joiner has no use for it. It is no use even as a nail to hang something on. It is only good for firewood and little good for that (Ezekiel 15:3-4).

Six branches shall come out of the sides of it (Exodus 37:21). Is six a perfect number? No, it denotes incompleteness. It is only when the branches are joined to the shaft that we get the perfect number seven. Separated, apart from the shaft, they would not even be able to stand upright, in fact they would have no standing, no right to be in the sanctuary at all.

Am I sorry because I am entirely depending on my Saviour? On the contrary, there is no happier life than the branch-life. I need not try to find nourishment for myself; the vine is responsible for that. I need not even try to hold myself. The vine carries the branch. May I come to you, Master, not only for guidance in important decisions in my life and work; may I also come to you with the little troubles of my daily life? You say that everything which interests me also is of the greatest interest to you?

That you like me to come and talk over with you all that has happened to me through the day, just as the disciples did when they came back from their mission? (Mark 6:30). May I tell you everything? How can I ever thank you enough that you are prepared to play such an important part in my life? “Child, I am not only part of your life, I am your life. I am not the stem, I am the vine.”

Is it not right that the shaft should rise above the branches and have four bowls instead of three?

“God hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body” (Ephesians 1:22, 23). Yes, shaft and candlestick are one and each of its rays tells us: **“Apart from me ye can do nothing.”**

Each branch is not only joined to the shaft but also to the branch on the other side. The same gold that joined the branch on the left side of the shaft also unites the branch on the right side of it.

God's children are all members of Christ, but also joint-members of each other — many members, one body. **“The eye can not say unto the hand, I have no need of thee”** (I Corinthians 12:21).

My brother may have different opinions from mine on some points but I dare not forget that we are “**all one in Christ Jesus**” (Galatians 3:28). We agree on far more points than we differ. Let our conversation be on what unites us, not what separates us. Let Christ be the subject of our conversation. We shall then receive a burning heart, burning in love to Christ and to my brother. When we stand in a circle and Christ is in His right place in the center, the nearer each of us gets to Christ, the nearer we get to each other. The candle-stick was of pure gold. We have noticed that the metal chiefly used in the court was copper; in the sanctuary, gold. Gold speaks of glory. Christ was pure gold. Dean Law said, “I rejoice in my all-gold Saviour.”

Make the candlestick of pure gold of beaten work. The gold had to be on the anvil; it had to be hammered. “**Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?**” (Luke 24:26). Bethlehem cannot take the place of Golgotha. It is not through the incarnation that we become members of His body, but by His death and resurrection. “**He was wounded for our transgressions. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all**” (Isaiah 53:5, 6). The captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:10). “**Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered**” (Hebrews 5:8).

If we are to become Christ-like, we must go the same way the Saviour has gone.

Paul counted no price too dear that he might know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, and to be made conformable to His death (Philippians 3:10).

The shaft was of beaten gold; the branches, too have to be of beaten-gold. I heard a brother once give this testimony: “Christ bore His cross; I bear mine. We two belong together.”

You have to be on the anvil. It is the only way to become beaten gold.

When Moses was forty years old, he thought he could deliver his people. God could not use him then. He sent the man who was brought up in the king's palace, schooled in the wisdom of the Egyptians, into the lonely desert. There he was in God's school, forty years on the anvil.

God sent Samuel to anoint David king. He slew Goliath; he became the favorite of the people. Then God sent him into the cave of Adullam to be hammered on the anvil: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down to the image of King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel would worship only God. As a reward for their faithfulness they were put on the anvil, into the fiery furnace and the den of lions, but how they shone afterwards as branches of the candlestick.

Father takes His children in His own training school. He does this often through our surroundings. When the Lord took Jacob in His training school He sent him to his Uncle Laban.

He was a hard master. Those years with Laban were hard years. When Jacob had learned his lesson, God sent him back home.

It may be one of my readers has a Laban whom he finds trying. Even when you work in fellowship with other Christians for the Lord, whether at home or abroad, you may find one rather trying.

Do not forget then that you are on the anvil. You are in God's school. He is going to make something out of you. Jacob would never have become Israel without a Laban. Have you ever thanked God for your Laban? This would be according to Scripture: **“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Ephesians 5:20).

I know the heavy blows with the hammer are not always the most difficult to bear. For one thing, they are not of frequent occurrence and God gives special grace. The little, daily blows, the daily pin-pricks, may hurt even more.

I want to say two things for your comfort. I have been on the anvil myself. The hammer is all the time in Father's hands. He is the refiner who sits to test the silver, till it shows the silver look, till it reflects the Master's face.

Some of you may go through hard times just now. Blow after blow comes. Listen, every blow that falls on the branch also falls on the shaft.

“We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

~ end of chapter 18 ~

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