

THE TABERNACLE.

THE LAMPSTAND.

"And thou shalt make a Lampstand of pure gold: of beaten work shall the lampstand 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 lampstand out of the one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side; three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and 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 lampstand....Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all of it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof; and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. And the tongs thereof and the snuff-dishes thereof shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it with all these vessels. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." Ex. 25:31-40.

Light has ever been symbolic of that which brings joy and gladness, while by common consent night and darkness have been put for ignorance and its accompanying misery. We find all about us in nature that light is the cause of the most beneficial results, so very early in the world's history among those who were in moral darkness, light, fire, the sun, moon, &c., became objects of worship and were adored either as symbols of a god or as gods in visible form. The natural man has ever been desirous of some visible manifestation; he seeks to walk by sight; only the just – the spiritual – walk by faith. Perhaps it was for this reason mainly, that Jehovah saw fit to give so many typical forms to the children of Israel. The nations around them all had their objects of sense which, placed where they could often see

them, satisfied the eye and gave them contentment. How often we have seen children, who, not satisfied with knowing that their mother was in the house, must follow her from room to room, refusing even to have a door shut between them. So we find even in this age those who must have crucifixes, pictures, relics, &c., to fill the eye, and satisfy an untutored conscience. We might come nearer home and speak of those who think there is neither life nor power without a mourners' bench and a great deal of noise and excitement, but we [R243 : page 4] remember that there are true children who are but children, and we would not offend the least. However, noise is not power, and as we are speaking of light, and of light as a symbol of God, it might be well to say that although it is one of the most powerful forces in nature, it is one of the most quiet. Bonar, who has written so much that is pure and true says:

"The light is ever silent;
It sparkles on morn's million gems of dew.
It flings itself into the shower of noon,
It weaves its gold into the cloud of sunset,
Yet not a sound is heard; it dashes full
On yon broad rock, yet not an echo answers.
It lights in myriad drops upon the flower,
Yet not a blossom stirs; it does not move
The slightest film of floating gossamer,
Which the faint touch of insect's wing wo'ld shiver
The light is ever pure,
No art of man can ever rob it of its beauty,
Nor stain its unpolluted heaven lines.
It is the fairest, purest thing in nature;
Fit type of that fair heaven where all is pure,
And into which no evil thing can enter;
Where darkness comes not, where no shadow falls;
Where night and sin can have no dwelling place."

The first recorded words of Deity are, "Let there be light." It seems to be a pre-requisite in the formation and development of the natural, and our hearts seeking spiritual light and growth, echo the cry: "Let there be light." Whither shall we go? as God is the source and fountain of all life and love, so is he the source of all light. To us he manifests himself through his Words. Not the written word alone, but its author Jesus, "The word of God." "This is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "In him was life and the life was the light of men."

The lampstand then primarily typifies Christ, and consequently in some sense every true member of the Christ body. Light is peculiarly expressive of the character of God and of his people. "God is light," says the beloved John. James calls him the "Father of lights with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Of his followers he says, "ye are the light of the world." The lampstand beautifully symbolizes Christ as the hope of our fallen race. It stood where there was no other light. Christ is the light of life. It had seven branches typifying perfection, or as seven is a symbol of that which is complete and entire, it represents Christ as the embodiment of light, not only the truth, but the whole truth, the fullness of God.

Light is composed of the seven primary colors, thus symbolizing Jesus as the one altogether lovely. The beautiful rainbow – the seal of promise – is but an individualizing of the pure white ray; so the hope of the world and the promise of its eternal preservation is in the manifestation of the various beauties, the ineffable glories of the immaculate one; that concentrated beam of heavenly light which piercing the dark clouds of despair, reflects even from the storm drops a vision of hope and a pledge of the covenant of mercy.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned,
Upon the Saviour's brow;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow.
No mortal can with him compare,
Among the sons of men;
Fairer is He than all the fair
Who fill the heavenly train.

"And he made the lampstand of pure gold; of beaten work made he the lampstand. His shaft, his branch, his bowls, his knops and his flowers, were of the same." Ex. 37:17. We feel almost discouraged sometimes at the rough handling we seem to receive – the knocks and the blows. We forget the branches must be like the shaft – all of beaten work. No machine made lords of the flock, no church ornaments cast wholesale in a mold, about this lampstand; as is the shaft so are the branches – all of beaten work. In its structure there was a knop and a flower in continuous succession, typifying the beautiful graces of a Christ-like spirit accompanying the solid fruit of a christian life: a sort of combination of faith and works. It would also represent a vigorous ever-developing plant, always blooming, continually fruit bearing; like the trees growing by the river of life, yielding their fruit every month.

The tabernacle as we have seen contained wondrous things, but as there were no windows in it, they would have been unseen, but for the lampstand. The well furnished table of shew bread with its typical spiritual food, ever fresh and fragrant, was unknown to natural light; hidden to those without. Here was the Altar of Incense and the way to God, but the world by wisdom (natural light) knew not God. As Paul said to the Athenians, groping in darkness "they seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each

one of us." In their blindness they erect an altar inscribed, "To the unknown God." In our day men still erect altars to baseless creeds and isms, and sacrifice themselves upon them. Thank God that we can say: "With Thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." Psa. 36:9.

The furniture of the Tabernacle was all made of wood, covered with gold, excepting this piece, which is frequently called the pure lampstand by way of pre-eminence. Like the Laver it was made of one material; like the Laver its dimensions are not given. They both evidently symbolized the illimitable truth of God. Pure and unalloyed, able to stand alone without help of human reasonings and imaginings. For long years men have been trying to excuse God's character, his dealings and his word. The truth requires no bolstering; keep it pure and you keep it safe. The poet has said:

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers."

To be eternal it must be pure; this is a universal law.

The Laver and lampstand being without dimensions would seem to typify the fact – O that creed worshipers might see it – that truth like its author is boundless. The various sectaries scattered along the stream of truth ever flowing from the throne, have built little mud dams in the sand and have fenced off a little of the stream; and claiming that they had secured it all, have covered it up carefully from the light and air, until what should have been to them a well of life, has become a veritable frog pond. Rev. 16:13; 18:2.

In this age the Word is the lamp (Psa. 119:105; Matt. 25:1) and the church is the lampstand; (Rev. 1:20) but we think it will not always be so. Jesus said to his followers, "ye are the light of the world," and he evidently intended that his light should **[R244 : page 4]** shine through and be reflected by us; but in a deeper sense will we be the

light of the world, when, made partakers of his glorious body, we shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. Matt. 13:43.

After the earthly Jerusalem has been restored, the heavenly Jerusalem will be its source of light and law and will shine through it (the earthly) upon the nations. Isaiah (2:23) tells us that after the kingdom has been set up – "out of Zion (the heavenly) shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," (the earthly). Before this takes place however, Jerusalem must first hear the cry, "Arise, shine! for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." (Isaiah 60.) This explains what John says of the new Jerusalem. The Lamb (Head and body) is the light thereof. (Also, Isa. 60:19,20.) It is evidently this heavenly company, the united and perfected body of Christ, that Malachi alludes to as the sun of righteousness that shall arise with healing in his wings to bless first the Jewish people and ultimately every man that cometh into the world. John 1:9.

The lampstand seems to have been modeled after the Almond tree with its knops, flowers and nut-like bowls. The Almond is remarkable for its early blossoming (sometimes even in January) the flowers appearing before the leaves. The Hebrew word for Almond is from a root which signifies "to hasten," being thus descriptive of the tree which hastened to put forth its blossoms in spring. Hence, it was regarded by the Jews as a harbinger of spring. The lampstand would thus symbolize the church of the first-born; and the appearance of this company arrayed in beauty, the surety that the winter is past, that the time of the singing of birds is come, that soon the voice of the dove will be heard in the land. The nations of course, will not see the church of the first-born until the eyes of their understanding are opened, which will be after the time of trouble has prepared them for the reception of the truth.

While Christ and His bride are clearly the light of the future, in this age we are dependent on the written word which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. (Ps. 119:105.) In one of the visions of Zachariah (ch. 4), he saw a golden lampstand between two olive trees from which through golden pipes flowed the needed oil. The Angel explained that these lamps did not burn by human wisdom or knowledge, "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit; saith the Lord of hosts." The prophet was further told that these are the two anointed ones, (Heb., sons of oil) that stand by the Lord of "the whole earth." This helps us to understand the symbol of the two witnesses in Rev. 11 for it is written "these are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth." Thus we perceive they are the Old and New Testaments; the sources of light from which the church, (the spiritual channel,) must draw her supply of oil. These witnesses were to be clothed in sackcloth (symbolic of mourning and probably of the clothing in a dead language, Latin) during 1260 years, while they testified for God. They were killed in the Babylonian city – Rome – and exposed in one of her ten streets – France – during three and one-half years (1793 and onward). Since then, they have been caught up to heavenly places in symbolic language – a position of honor and power, and translated into nearly every tongue have witnessed to all nations as Jesus foretold.

The lampstand was the only light available to those in the Tabernacle. This shows us plainly where we must go for all our light. What if none of the rulers or of the Pharisees have believed? Why should they? Very, very few of them have entered into the presence of the lampstand. The butterflies love the sunshine. Let us be followers of Him who walked in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. He was there to trim and furnish the light; let us rejoice and walk in it.

Walk in the light! thy path shall be
Peaceful, serene, and bright;

For God, by grace, shall dwell in thee,
And God, Himself, is light.

W. I. M.
