

What Saith the Scripture?

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*presents*

LIFE AND WORKS  
OF REV. CHARLES H. SPURGEON

By  
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continued BOOK II.  
Sermons and Lectures by Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

**Lecture on Candles.**

CANDLES were far more familiar objects in my boyhood than in these days of gas and electricity. Now, fathers show their boys and girls how to make gas at the end of a tobacco pipe; but in my time the greatest of wonders was a lucifer-match. Our lights were so few that they justified the wit who declared that the word "luxury" was derived from lux, the Latin for light. Assuredly, a good light is a high form of luxury. I can never forget the rushlight, which dimly illuminated the sitting-room of the old house; nor the dips, which were pretty fair when there were not too many of them to the pound; nor the mould candles, which came out only when there was a party, or some special personage was expected. Short sixes were very respectable specimens of household lights. Composites have never seemed to me to be so good as the old sort, made of pure tallow; but I dare say I may be wrong. Nevertheless, I have no liking for composites in theology, but prefer the genuine article without compromise.

Once I thoughtlessly hung a pound of tallow candles on a clothes-horse. This construction was moved near the fire, and the result was a mass of fat on the floor, and the cottons of the candles almost divested of tallow: a lesson to us all not to expose certain things to a great heat, lest we dissolve them. I fear that many a man's good resolutions only need the ordinary fire of daily life to make them melt away. So, too, with fine professions, and the boastings of perfection which abound in this age of shams.

Joke on Youngsters.

In my early days it was a youthful joke to send a boy to the shop for a pound of cotton rushes. The grocer, if of an angry sort, was apt to make a rush at the lad, who thus appeared to mock him. It was in these times that we heard the story of the keeper of the chandler's shop, who told her customers that "candles was riz." "Riz?" said her neighbor, "everything is riz except my wages. But why have they riz?" "They tell me," said the other, "that tallow has gone up because of the war with Russia." "Well," replied the customer, "that is a queer story. Have they begun to fight by candle-light?" That woman had some inkling of the law of supply and demand. She may never have read "Adam Smith," but it is possible that she was a Smith herself.

Those were the days when a wit is represented as saying to his tradesman, "I hope these candles will be better than the last." "I am sure I don't know, sir; was anything the matter with those I sent you?" "Matter enough," replied the wit; "they burned very well till they were about half gone, and then they would burn no longer." The catch is that, of course, they burned shorter.

### The Candle Box.

I have here a case for candles, a casket for those jewels of light. Look well at this curiosity, ye dwellers in cities; for I do not suppose that any of you have such a piece of furniture in your houses. It is a candle-box, well-fashioned and neatly japanned. Here at the back are two plates with holes in them by which to hang up the box against the wall. It closes very neatly, opens very readily, and keeps its contents out of harm's way. I can assure you that I have within it a number of the very best candles, from the most notable makers. Wax, stearine, palmatine, and so forth: there could not be a handsomer assortment than I now exhibit to you. Let no one despise this display: here we have capacity, elegance, preparation, and plenty of each.

But suppose that we were in this room without the gas, and I were simply to exhibit the candle-box and its contents, and say, "Here is brilliance! You need no electric lighting: this box abundantly suffices for the enlightenment of this large assembly!" You would reply, "But we see none the better for your boasted illumination. The candles are shut up in their box, and yield no single beam of light." Herein detect a resemblance to many a church. We could readily find communities of Christian people, who are shut up to themselves, and are without the living fire of the Spirit of God. What is the good of them?

### Dying of Respectability.

This is a very respectable candle-box; is it not? it could hardly be more respectable. Even so, yonder is a highly respectable congregation! Very refined and select! The minister is a "man of high culture and advanced thought." He can confound a text of Scripture with any living man. He attracted at least five horses to his place of preaching last Sunday. They say it takes a great deal of ability to draw a horse to church! As for his hearers, they are all the cream of the cream. Don't you know that the doctor, and the brewer, and the lawyer, and the auctioneer all attend that most honored sanctuary? What with an M. D., and a D. D., and an F. R. S., two wealthy dowagers, a colonel, a county councilman, and a professor, it is worth while for a fellow to go to that church for the sake of the social distinction which it will bestow upon him.

The people are so very respectable that they do not know one another, and never think of shaking hands. They are all so very select, that they float about in distinguished isolation, like so many icebergs in the Atlantic. The families walk up the aisles with the most becoming dignity, and they walk, down the aisles with the most proper decorum. They can do without warmth, brotherly love, sympathy, and co-operation; for their eminent "respectability" suffices for every need. Of course, they can do nothing more; for it costs them all their time, talent, thought, and spare cash to maintain their superior respectability. Like the gentleman with his well-brushed hat; no wonder that they look so superior, for they give their whole minds to it.

#### Charming Variety.

I see before me quite an array of candles. Variety is charming, and number is cheering. The more the merrier, and especially of such reputable and notable light-givers as these. We may consider that we are having quite an illumination. With so many luminaries we need hardly regret the set of sun. But is it so? I, for one, am none the better for these promising lights; are you? I put on my spectacles. But there is no improvement. I can see nothing; and yet there are candles enough and to spare! There is no mystery about it-- the candles are not lighted; and until they are lighted they cannot remove our darkness. Grace is needed to make gifts available for the service of God.

Let us look more closely into our collection of lights. Here is one which I should suppose to be an archbishop at the least. This specimen is a Doctor of Divinity. These are gentry, and these are merchants, and those are "cultured" individuals; but without the light from on high they are all equally unserviceable.

#### A Grand Rushlight.

A poor converted lad in a workshop will be of more spiritual use than a parliament of unregenerate men. I introduce to you a lighted rushlight, and there is more to be seen by this ignoble luminary than by all the rest. Little ability, set on fire by the light of God may produce greater results than ten talents without the divine power. "A living dog is better than a dead lion:" a zealous but illiterate Christian may be worth twenty lifeless philosophers.

Herein is great encouragement, dear friends, that if you once get a light, it will spread from one to another without end. This one lighted candle would suffice to set a hundred candles shining. It may light a much finer candle than itself.

Fire is one of those things for which there is no accounting as to what may come of it. Its spread is not to be measured even by leagues when it once gets firm hold, and the wind drives it on. Piety in a cottage may enlighten a nation. If the church of God were reduced to one person, it might, within an incredibly short time, become a great multitude.

#### How One Light Kindles Another.

There is a true apostolical succession in the kingdom of grace. Office has the pretence of it, but grace gives the reality. At Mr. Jay's jubilee, Timothy East, of Birmingham, told how, by the youthful ministry of William Jay, a thoughtless youth was converted and became a minister. Under the preaching of that man, Timothy East himself was led to repentance; and then by a sermon from Timothy East, John Williams, who became the martyr of Erromanga and the apostle of the South Sea Islands, was savingly impressed. See how the light goes from Jay to another, from that other to East, from East to Williams, and from Williams to the savages of the Southern Seas! A family tree of an equally interesting character has been traced with regard to books as surely as with living witnesses for God. A Puritan tract, old and torn, was lent by a poor man to Baxter's father. It was called Bunny's Resolutions. Through reading this little book, Richard Baxter, afterwards the great preacher of Kidderminster, received a real change of heart.

#### Some Wonderful Books.

Baxter wrote *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, which was blessed to the conversion of Doddridge. He wrote *The Rise and Progress*, which was the means of the conversion of Legh Richmond, and he wrote his *Dairyman's Daughter*, which has been translated into more than fifty languages, and has led to the conversion of thousands of souls. How many of these converted ones have in their turn written books and tracts which have charmed others to Jesus, eternity alone will reveal. We can never see the issues of our acts. We may strike a match, and from that little flame a street may be lighted.

Give a light to your next door neighbor, and you may be taking the nearest way to instruct the twentieth century, or to send the gospel to Chinese Tartary, or to overthrow the popular science fetish of the hour. A spark from your kitchen candle may, in its natural progression from one to another, light the last generation of men; so the word of the hour may be the light of the age, by which men may come in multitudes to see their Saviour and Lord. Let thy light shine, and what will come of it thou shalt see hereafter.

#### "I Saw a Light."

Coming one Thursday in the late autumn from an engagement beyond Dulwich, my way lay up to the top of the Herne Hill ridge. I came along the level out of which rises the steep hill I had to ascend. While I was on the lower ground, riding in a cab, I saw a light before me, and when I came near the hill, I marked that light gradually go up the hill, leaving a train of stars behind it. This line of newborn stars remained in the form of one lamp, and then another, and another; It reached from the foot of the hill to its summit. I did not see the lamplighter. I do not know his name, nor his age, nor his residence; but I saw the lights which he had kindled, and these remained when he himself had gone his way. As I rode along I thought to myself, "How earnestly do I wish that my life may be spent in lighting one soul after another with the sacred flame of eternal life! I would myself be as much as possible unseen while at my work, and would vanish into the eternal brilliance above when my work is done."

The taper which I hold in my hand is in itself a poor thing as an illuminator, but it has created quite a splendor in the room by the light which it has communicated to others. Andrew was not a very great personage, but he called his brother Peter, and led him to Jesus, and Peter was a host in himself. Never

mind how small a taper you may be; burn on, shine at your best, and God bless you. You may lead on to grand results despite your feebleness.

#### Unknown Great Ones.

He that called Dr. John Owen is forgotten: I might almost say was never known: he was a small taper-- but what a candle he lighted! Those holy women who talked together as they sat in the sun at Bedford were a blessing to John Bunyan; but we know not the name of even one of them. Everywhere the hidden ones are used of the Lord as the means of lighting up those who shine as stars in the churches.

In the service of God we find the greatest expansion of our being. It makes the dead man speak, and it also makes a single living man spread himself over a province. Our forefathers were fond of riddles. I cannot say that they were very witty ones, but there was solidity in them. Here is one-- What is that of which twenty could be put into a tankard, and yet one would fill a barn? Twenty candles unlighted would scarce fill a jug; but one when it is lighted will beneficially fill a barn with light, or viciously fill it with fire and smoke. A man, what is he? A man of God, what is he not? Our influence may enlighten the world and shine far down the ages, if the Holy Spirit's fire shall kindle us.

#### The Wrong Candlestick.

Here is a candle which has never given any light yet and never will as it now is. Hear its reason for not giving light! It is so unfortunate that it cannot find a proper candlestick, in which to stand upright and fulfil the purpose for which it was made. Let us try to accommodate it. Here is a fine church candlestick, and we set our candle in the socket. Does it shine? No. Shall we try a lower place? It does not shine any better. We will put this candle in the most enviable position-- in this real silver candlestick, of the most elaborate workmanship. It does not shine one whit the more. Neither high nor low places will make a man what he is not.

I know persons who cannot get on anywhere; but, according to their own belief, the fault is not in themselves, but in their surroundings.

#### No Church Good Enough for Him.

I could sketch you a brother who is unable to do any good because all the churches are so faulty. He was once with us, but he came to know us too well, and grew disgusted with our dogmatism and want of taste. He went to the Independents, who have so much more culture, breadth, and liberality. He grew weary of what he called "cold dignity." He wanted more fire, and therefore favored the Methodists with his patronage. Alas! He did not find them the flaming zealots he had supposed them to be: he very soon outgrew both them and their doctrines, and joined our most excellent friends, the Presbyterians. These proved to be by far too high and dry for him, and he became rather sweet upon the Swedenborgians, and would have joined them had not his wife led him among the Episcopalians.

Here he might have even grown into a churchwarden; but he was not content; and before long I heard that he was an Exclusive Brother! There I leave him, hoping that he may be better in his new line than he has ever been in the old ones. "The course of nature could no further go:" if he has not fallen among a loving, united people now, where will he find them? Yet I expect, that as Adam left Paradise, so will he ultimately fall from his high estate.

#### A Rolling Stone.

He reminds me of a very good man who changed his religious views so often, that I once asked him, "What are you now?" he told me, and I went on my way; but when I met him next, and made the same inquiry, he was something else. At our next meeting my reverend brother was grieved because I said to him the third time, "What are you now?" He reproved me for it; but when I somewhat impenitently repeated the query, and pressed it home, I found that he really had entered another denomination since I had last seen him. What a pity that the churches should be so bad, that when a man has gone the complete round he finds none which quite comes up to his mark!

The same illustration suggests to me to ask you whether you know the young man who cannot serve God as an apprentice, but is going to do wonders when he is out of his time? Yes, he only wants to be put into another candlestick. So he thinks: but we know better. When he is out of his time, and has become a journeyman, he will postpone his grand plans of usefulness till he has started as a master on his own account. Alas! When he is a master, he will wait till he has made money and can retire from business. So, you see, the candle does not shine, but it imputes its failure to the candlesticks! The candlesticks are not to be blamed.

#### The Self-fitting Candle.

Poor Dick Miss-the-Mark believes that he ought to have been Oliver Cromwell; but as that character is hardly in season in this year of grace, Richard is unable to be Cromwell, and therefore he is not himself at all. That wart over the eye, and other Cromwellian distinctions, are a dead loss in his case. He cannot develop his genius for want of a King, Charles and a Prince Rupert. The proper candlestick is not forthcoming, and so this fine candle cannot shine.

Here is a very simple affair-- Field's Self-fitting Candle; but it is very handy. You see, owing to the shape of its lower end, the candle will fit into any candlestick, whether it be large or small. A man of this sort makes himself useful anywhere. In poverty he is content; in wealth he is humble. Put him in a village, and he instructs the ignorant; place him in a city, and he seeks the fallen. If he can preach, he will do so; and if that is beyond his capacity, he will teach in the Sabbath-school. Like the holy missionary Brainerd, if he cannot convert a tribe, he will, even on his dying bed, be willing to teach a poor child his letters. It is a great thing not only to be able to fit in to all kinds of work, but to cope with all sorts of people.

#### Riding any Kind of a Horse.

The power of adaptation to high and low, learned and ignorant, sad and frivolous, is no mean gift. If, like Nelson, we can lay our vessel side by side with the enemy, and come to close quarters without delay, we shall do considerable execution. Commend me to the man who can avail himself of any conversation, and any topic, to drive home saving truth upon the conscience and heart. He who can ride a welltrained horse, properly saddled, does well; but the fellow who can leap upon the wild horse of the prairie, and ride him bare-backed, is a genius indeed. "All things to all men," rightly interpreted, is a motto worthy of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and of all who, like him, would win souls for Jesus.

It is a pity when a man is too big for his position-- as some candles are too big to fit in certain candlesticks. Don't I know some Jacks-in-Office who are a world too great to be of the slightest use to anybody? Don't ask them a question unless you desire to be eaten up alive. On the other hand, it is not pretty to see a candle with paper round it to keep it in its place; nor is it nice to see a little man padded out to make him fill up an important office.

### Do Your Work Anywhere.

Some men in prominent positions are like the small boy on the high horse; they need a deal of holding on. Be fit for your office, or find one for which you are fit. It is not a very great invention to make a candle self-fitting, but the result is very pleasant. Though the expression, "the right man in the right place," is said to be a tautology, I like it, and I like best of all to see it in actual life. Try to fit yourself to whatever comes in your way.

Hearty service, rendered from pure motives, is acceptable to God, even when persons of education and taste have just cause to find fault with its imperfections. If we cannot bear witness for the gospel in grammatical language, we may be thankful that we can do it at all, and we may be encouraged by the unquestionable fact that God blesses the most unpolished utterances. When you go to do a bit of carpentering in the shed, and need a light, you are sometimes on the lookout for the means of setting up your bit of candle in a handy way. Here is the great invention in which your researches usually end.

### Curious Candlestick.

You see I have stuck a candle into a ginger-beer bottle, and the light which comes from it is quite as clear as if I had a fine-plated candlestick. Here is a popular implement, and it is both handy and cheap. Who would find any fault with it if he were in the dark, and wanted to find something in a hurry? If you have no fitter candlestick, a ginger-beer bottle does mightily well. How often our Lord has used men of scanty education, or of none at all! How useful he has made the things which are despised!

Yet, at the same time, if it were left to me to make my choice as to how I would have my candle set up, I should not object to have it in a more presentable stand. I would not quarrel even if the candle given to me to go to bed with were in a silver candlestick. For use I would sooner have a ginger-beer bottle with a bright candle in it than a plated candlestick with a dead candle in it, which I could not light. Who would object to be rid of the guttering and the hot dropping tallow, and to handle a concern

which would not dirty his hands? A thing of beauty and of brightness is a joy for ever.

#### That Fatal Extinguisher.

Have you ever heard of a person who, in real earnest, did the very foolish thing which I am attempting in pretence? I have a candle here, and I want to light it. What shall I do? Before me I see a candle burning very brightly, and I will take a light from it for this other candle. I have not succeeded. How is it that I have altogether failed? I am of a very persevering turn of mind; I will give it a fair trial. I cannot succeed in lighting my candle, and you are all laughing at me, and you whisper that I must be overmuch stupid to try to light a candle while an extinguisher is upon it. I subside. Do you not think that very many persons go with an extinguisher on to hear a minister preach? Listen to yonder young lady:-- "Well, I will go to hear him, Mary Anne, because you press me, but I am sure I shall not like him." Is she not very like a candle covered with an extinguisher? Why our nameless friend does not like the preacher she has not told us; but probably her prejudice will be the more intense in proportion as she is unable to give a reason for it. Prejudice is a blind and deaf judge, who decides a case before he has seen or heard the evidence. "Hang them first, and try them afterwards," is one of his sage observations. Remember the old lines about unreasonable dislikes:--

"I do not like you, Dr. Fell,  
The reason why I cannot tell;  
But this I know, and know full well,  
I do not like you, Dr. Fell."

Just so. That is a very effective extinguisher.

Our young lady friend showed the prejudice of ignorance, but there is such a thing as the prejudice of learning, and this is a very effectual extinguisher. Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, once said that he had read the Bible through-- I think it was ten times-- and he could not anywhere find the Deity of Christ in it. Honest John Newton observed, "Yes, and if I were to try ten times to light a candle with an extinguisher on it, I should not succeed." Once make up your mind to refuse a doctrine or a command, and you will not see it where God himself has written it as with a sunbeam. Kick against a truth, and the arguments for it will seem to have no existence. Let prejudice of any sort wholly cover the candle of your mind, and, whatever you do, there is no likelihood of your receiving the light. There are none so deaf as those who will not hear.

#### Wide-Awake Hearers.

The only case in which I am willing to bear with prejudice is when a dislike of me leads people to watch the more carefully what I have to say. If they will, during a sermon, be wide awake that they may find fault, I will forgive their object out of respect to their action. Of all devils, the worst is the devil of slumber. He haunts places of worship, and it is not easy to chase him away, especially in warm weather. I greatly fear lest my people should become so used to me, that, like the miller, they can go to sleep all the easier for the grinding of the wheels-- I mean, all the quicker for the sound of my voice.

Butchers, it seems, are accustomed to do their work with a candle fastened upon their foreheads in this fashion. As I am not one of those gentlemen "who kills his own," you will excuse me if I have not managed the affair in an orthodox manner. There is an old story of one who had lost his candle, and travelled all round his premises searching for it by its own light. It is told as a jest, and it must have been a mirthful incident where it happened. I remember an old gentleman who could see very little without spectacles, but went up and down the house searching for his glasses, looking through them all the time.

#### The Candle on the Forehead.

The parable is this: a person full of doubts and fears about his personal condition before God is searching for grace within, by the light of that very grace for which he is looking. He is fearfully anxious because he can see no trace of gracious anxiety in his mind. He feels sad because he cannot feel sad. He repents because he cannot repent. He has the candle on his forehead, and is seeing by the light of it, and yet he is searching for that very light, without which he could not search at all. Many a time a man laments that he does not feel, and all the while he is overwhelmed with pain through the impression that he does not feel pain as he should.

Some seem to have a great capacity for denying light to their fellows. I have known persons almost glory in their reticence with their own children. "I never spoke to him about religion," was the complacent confession of an old professor as to his son. Some of these hide away in the dark: themselves, lest they should be called upon to work. A prospectus of a Burial Club began, "Whereas many persons find it difficult to bury themselves." Alas! to my knowledge many persons bury themselves most easily, and one of my constant labors is to fetch them out of the sepulchre of their indolence. I wish they would respond to my call, and not lie in their coffins and grumble at my disturbing them. Again, dark lantern, I must turn you on!

Here is a candle which is in a lantern of a tolerably respectable sort: at least, it was respectable long ago, and you might not now have noticed its forlorn condition if it had not been for the candle within.

#### Faults Show Themselves.

So soon as you place a light within, the imperfections of the lantern are shown up; and it is the same with human characters. Many a man would have seemed a decent sort of fellow if he had not professed to be a Christian; but his open confession of religion fixed many eyes upon him, and his imperfections were at once observed of all observers. He who unites with a church, and takes upon himself the name of Christ, claims a higher character than others; and if he is not true to his profession, his inconsistency is marked; and very justly so. How often do we see that an unconverted man may steal a horse, but a Christian must not look over the hedge at it! That which is winked at in a man of the world, is a grave fault in a Christian. It is no more than natural and just that great professors should be expected to be better than others. It is inevitable that the very light they have should reveal their faults and flaws.

Brethren, let us not exhibit our candle in a dirty lantern, nor our religion in a doubtful character. I have heard of a minister who was a capital preacher, but he bought a wig of one of his hearers and forgot to pay for it. A bad habit that. Not to pay at all is worst of all; but even to be long-winded is objectionable. When the barber came home from the meeting he said, "That was a beautiful discourse; but his wig spoiled it. I like his deep expositions, but, oh, that wig! Will he ever pay for that wig?" A friend who heard me tell this story remarked that "the wig stuck in the man's throat."

#### Jewel of Consistency.

Let us pay for our wigs if we wear such inventions, and let us see to it that there is nothing else about our person or character which may bring the gospel into discredit. We have heard of a wonderful preacher, of whom they said that he preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit they thought he ought never to come out of it; but when he was out of the pulpit they changed their minds, and sorrowfully concluded that he ought never to go into it again.

In the case of this other lantern, little or no light would come from it if it were not for its cracks and rents. The light passes through the broken places. Do you not think that the sicknesses and infirmities of many godly people have been the making of them, and that the light divine has gleamed through the rifts in their tenements of clay? Do not light-givers sometimes shine the better for sickness? Some ministers preach the better for being afflicted. Do not wish your minister to be ill or to be tried; but I cannot doubt the fact that the trials of ministers are the best part of their education. One who was rather a critic in sermons used to ask, "Has the doctor been ill within the last six months? For he is not worth hearing else."

#### An Old Scotch Woman's Saying.

An old Scotch woman found that when her minister lost his sight he could not read his dry old manuscripts, and was therefore forced to preach extemporaneously.

Perhaps she was a little cruel when she said, "Praise be to God. It Would have been well if he had lost his sight twenty years ago." To her mind the sermons were so much better when they came forth from his heart than when he read them from the sapless manuscript, that to her the good man 's loss of sight was a gain. If, in any way, you are able to tell out a sweeter experience, and so afford greater comfort to others through your body being like a broken lantern, be thankful for it. Happy are we if our losses are the gains of others. So long as our soul shines out with holier radiance we will glory in infirmities.

Honored among women be the memory of Florence Nightingale! Her name and fame gave an impetus to the movement for trained nurses, which has been so fraught with comfort to thousands. Our young ladies who devote themselves to this sacred service deserve all the encouragement we can give them. God bless you, gentle night-lights!

Our night-light is set in water to make it quite safe. We do well to guard ourselves against the personal dangers of our position: even when doing good we must be on our watch lest we fall into temptation.

### Night-Lights.

Night-lights are marked to burn just so many hours, and no more; and so are we. Long may you each one shine and yield comfort to those around you; but, whether your hours be few or many, may you burn steadily to the end! If we may but fulfil our mission it will be enough. May none of us take fire in a wrong way, blaze into a shameful notoriety, fill the air with an ill savor, and then go out in darkness ere half our work is done!

There is room for fresh forms of candle still, and we should not wonder if the article once more became the subject of advertising, as soap is at present. In other lands, as, for instance, on the northwest coast of America, candles have a singular originality about them: for there they burn a fish, a species of smelt, which grows nearly a foot long and is full of fat. We should rather think the smelt smelleth, when they put a rush or a piece of bark down the centre of him, and make a natural candle of him. The light must be rather fishy; but so is everything else in that region, and therefore it does not matter much.

### Fire-flies and Glow-worms.

There is, in China and the East Indies, a candle fly; but though it bears the name, we do not suppose that it serves the purpose of a candle. We have heard of reading by the light of glow-worms in our hedges, but we doubt whether ordinary type could thus be deciphered. Glow-worms remind us of most expositors, of whom Young says,

"The commentators each dark passage shun,  
And hold their failing candles to the sun."

Fire-flies might serve our turn better, for they are like living lamps. They had a great charm for us when we saw them for the first time by the Italian lakes. The night-light is a sober night-comforter: may it be long before any of you learn its value in long hours of suffering!

In the next similitude you have a simpler reminder of the imperfections to which men are liable. A candle needs snuffers, and men need chastisements, for they are both of them subject to infirmity. In the temple of Solomon there were snuffers and snuffdishes; but they were all of gold.

### Snuffers of Gold.

God's rebukes are in love, and so should ours be; holy reproofs in the spirit of affection are snuffers of gold. Never use any other, and use even these with discretion, lest you put out the flame which it is your aim to improve. Never reprove in anger. Do not deal with a small fault as if it were a great crime. If you see a fly on your boy's forehead don't try to kill it with a sledge-hammer, or you may kill the boy also. Do the needful but very difficult work of reproof in the kindest and wisest style, so that the good you aim at may be attained.

It was a shocking habit of bad boys to snuff the candle, and then open the snuffers and let the smoke

and the smell escape. The snuffers are made on purpose to remove the snuff, or consumed wick, and then to quench it by pressure, and prevent any offensive smoke; but young, urchins of a mischievous sort would set the snuffers wide, and let the filthy smoke fill the room with its detestable odor. So do some who hear of a brother's faults, make them known, and seem to take pleasure in filling society with unsavory reports. I pray you, do not so. If the candle has something wrong with it, touch it carefully, snuff it with discretion, and shut up the obnoxious matter very carefully.

#### Strange that the Secret Got Out.

Let us be silent about things which are a discredit to Christian character. Keep an ill report secret; and do not be like the young lady who called in a dozen friends to help her keep a secret, and yet, strange to say, it got out. Remember, you may yourself deserve rebuke one of these days; and as you would like this to be done gently and privately, so keep your remarks upon others within the happy circle of tender love. To rebuke in gentle love is difficult, but we must aim at it till we grow proficient. GOLDEN snuffers, remember; only golden snuffers. Put away those old rusty things-- those unkind sarcastic remarks. They will do more harm than good, and they are not fit things to be handled by servants of the Lord Jesus.

See how precious material runs to waste if the light is not trimmed! There is a thief in the candle, and so it takes to guttering and running away, instead of yielding up its substance to be used for the light. It is sad when a Christian man has some ill habit, or sinister aim.

#### Wasted Lives.

We have seen fine lives wasted through a love of wine. It never came to actual drunkenness, but it lowered the man and spoiled his influence. So it is with a hasty temper, or a proud manner, or a tendency to find fault. How many would be grandly useful but for some wretched impediment! Worldliness runs away with many a man's energies; love of amusement makes great gutters in his time; or fondness for feasts and gilded society robs him of his space for service. With some, political heat runs away with the zeal which should have been spent upon religion, and in other cases sheer folly and extravagance cause a terrible waste of energy which belonged to the Lord. You see there is fire, and there is light; but something extraneous and mischievous is at work, and it needs to be removed. If this is your case, you may well desire the Lord to snuff you, however painful the operation may be. Depend upon it, we have no life-force to spare, and everything which lessens our consecrated energy is a robbery of God.

#### “Take a Light.”

Certain persons are like harbors of refuge, to which every vessel will run in distress. When you want to ask your way in the street, you instinctively shun the stuck-up gentleman of importance; and you most readily put the question to the man with the smiling face and the open countenance. In our church we have friends who seem to say to everybody, TAKE A LIGHT; may their number be greatly multiplied!

It should be a joy to hold a candle to another. It will not waste our own light to impart it.

#### Wasting the Tallow.

Men who are not upright waste all of their influence. To such we might apply the old and almost obsolete word-- candle-waster. It is a pity to lose life in harmful or unprofitable ways.

Here is a very important-looking candle. Its dimensions are aldermanic. You expect great things from so portly an illuminator. Look at the size of it. But when I light it, the illuminating power is very small. Can you see any light coming from it? It is a star of the smallest magnitude. We have here the maximum of tallow and the minimum of light. The fact is, that only a little of the fat just near the centre ever gets melted. This makes a little well of hot grease, but the rest is as hard and cold as if there were no burning wick in the middle. Thus it is with men of more talent than heart: the chief part of them is never used.

Many a great and learned minister, with any quantity of Latin and Greek tallow, is but very little useful because his ability is not touched by his heart. He remains cold as to the bulk of him. Many a great, rich man, with any amount of the fat of wealth, never gets warmed through: he is melted to the extent of a shilling or two, but his thousands are unaffected. What is wanted is "grace more abundant," to fuse the whole man, and make every part and parcel of him subservient to God's great design of light- giving.

#### A Son of Thunder.

The main business is to have plenty of heart. I have noticed that speakers produce an effect upon their audiences rather in proportion to their hearts than their heads. I was present at a meeting where a truly solid and instructive speaker succeeded in mesmerizing us all, so that in another half minute we should all have been asleep. His talk was as good as gold, and as heavy. He was followed by a gentleman who was "all there," what there was of him. He was so energetic that he broke a chair, and made us all draw in our feet, for fear he should come down upon our corns. How the folks woke up! The galleries cheered him to the echo. I do not know what it was all about, and did not know at the time: but it was very wonderful. An express at sixty miles an hour is nothing to that orator. He swept past us like-- well, like nothing at all. He meant it, and we felt that he deserved to be cheered for such zealous intentions. He was all ablaze, and we were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

#### Powder Needs Shot.

I do not hold him up as an example, for in warfare we need shot as well as powder; but I could not help seeing that a warm heart and an energetic manner will carry the day, where a cold ponderosity affects nothing. My friend was like the cobbler's candle with two wicks. His blaze was very large in proportion to the material which sustained it.

In our labor to do good we must not let our learning remain cold and useless. Dr. Manton was one of the best of preachers, being both instructive and simple. On one occasion, however, he preached before an assembly of the great, and he very naturally used a more learned style than was his wont. He felt greatly rebuked when a poor man plucked him by the gown, and lamented that, whereas he had often been fed under his ministry, there had been nothing for him on that occasion. The fire had not been so fierce as the tallow had been cold. It is a dreadful thing when hearers have more use for a dictionary than for a Bible under a sermon. A preacher may pile books on his head and heart till neither of them can work. Give me rather the enthusiastic Salvationist bearing a burning testimony, than your cultured philosopher prosing with chill propriety.

#### A Long-winded Brother.

A witty preacher, having on one occasion only reached to "Eighteenthly" when the hourglass had run out; and having thirty heads to dilate upon, turned the machine over and cried, "Brethren, let us have another glass." When you hear of the length of time that your ancestors gave to hearing discourses, be ashamed at the grumbling about long sermons, and do try to take in every scrap of the poor pennyworth which we are allowed to give you in three poor quarters of an hour. Whether we preach, or hear, time is hastening on. Our sands of life will soon run out. Just as we are being borne along irresistibly every moment as the earth speeds in her orbit, so are we being carried away by the resistless course of time. How it flies to a man of middle age! How exceedingly fast to the aged! We may say of the hours, as of the cherubim, "each one had six wings." If everything is made secure by faith in the Lord Jesus, we need not wish it to be otherwise; for the faster time passes, the sooner shall we be at home with our Father and our God.

We feel, as we watch the decreasing candle and the falling sand, that we, at least, have no time which needs killing. What we have is all too little for our high and holy purposes. We want not cards, and dice, and scenic displays for a pastime: our time passes all too rapidly without such aids. Those who kill time will soon find that time kills them, and they would gladly give worlds, if they had them, to win back a single hour. Remember the story of Queen Elizabeth's last moments, and take care to spend each hour as carefully as if you had no other hour to follow it.

#### Burning the Candle at Both Ends.

The next illustration is a warning, and not an example. You have often heard it said of such and such a person "he is burning the candle at both ends." Spendthrifts waste both capital and interest; and by both neglecting business and wasting their substance on expensive pleasures, they burn the candle at both ends. The vicious not only exhaust their daily strength, but they draw upon the future of their constitutions, so that when a few years have gone they are old men before their time. Beware of burning the candle at both ends. It will go fast enough if you burn it only at one end; for your stock of strength and life is very limited.

If there is any one here who is sinning on the right hand and on the left, let him forbear, and not be in such fearful haste to endless ruin. Let this candle cast a light upon the folly of prodigality, and may the prodigal hasten home before his candle is burned out. Did you ever see a candle used in that way?

You do not live with folks so mad; but if you look abroad in the wide world, you may see how thousands are squandered and lives are cut short by burning the candle at both ends.

Some good people are unreasonable towards ministers and evangelists, and want them to be worked to death. Many a valuable man of God has been lost to the church by his burning his candle at both ends.

#### Candle Meteors.

This candle has fallen upon evil time. I have a bottle here full of a black material, which is to fall upon the flame of this candle. When I tell you that this bottle contains a quantity of steel-filings, you will at once prophesy that the light will be put out.

Let us see what will happen! Why, well, instead of putting the candle out, I am making it disport itself as candle never did before! Here we have fireworks, which, if they do not quite rival those of the Crystal Palace, have a splendor of their own. Do you not think that often when Satan tries to throw dust upon a Christian by slander, he only makes him shine the brighter? He was bright before, but now he coruscates, and sends forth a glory and a beauty which we could not have expected from him, for it never could have come from him if it had not been for the temptations, trials and spiritual difficulties with which he has been assailed. God grant that it may be so with us in all time of our tribulation! May we turn the filings of steel into flashes of light!

#### United Splendor.

We will conclude as they do at open-air entertainments-- with the greatest display of our fireworks.

Here are many candles uniting their brilliance; they all hang upon one support, and shine by the same light. May they not represent the church of Christ in its multiplicity, variety and unity? These candles are all supported upon one stem, they are all giving forth the same light, and yet they are of all manner of sorts, sizes and colors. A great way off they would seem to be but one light. They are many, and yet but one. I happened one evening to say that nobody could tell which was the "U. P.," and which was the Free Church, or which was the Wesleyan, or the Primitive, or the Salvation Army, or the Baptists, and so on; but one strong old Baptist assured me that the "Dips" gave the best light.

Another said the Presbyterians were, on the whole, cast in the best mould; and a third thought the English Church was made of the truest wax. I told them that some of the Baptists would be the better if they had another Baptism. The Free Churches might be none the worse for being more established in the faith; and even the Methodists might improve their methods. The main question is possession of the one light and fire of God, the flame of divine truth. Those who shine by divine grace are all one in Christ Jesus.

What a glory will there be in the one church when all her members shine, and all are one. May such a day come quickly! Amen.

Have I not proved that a world of illustration may be found in a candle?

BOOK II. SERMONS AND LECTURES: Short Sermons on Practical Subjects.  
COMING SOON