

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE CANDLE.

A Sermon

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“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matthew v. 15, 16.

OUR Saviour was speaking of the influence of his disciples upon their fellows, and he first of all mentioned that secret but powerful influence which he describes under the figure of salt: “Ye are the salt of the earth.” No sooner is a man born unto God than he begins to affect his fellow-men with an influence which is rather felt than seen. The very existence of a believer operates upon unbelievers. He is like a handful of salt cast upon flesh; he has a savour in himself, and this begins to penetrate those who are in contact with him. The unobserved, and almost unconscious influence of a holy life is most effectual to the conserving of society and the prevention of moral putrefaction. May there be salt in every one of us, for “salt is good.” Have salt in yourselves, and then you will become a blessing to all around you.

But there is about every true Christian a manifest and visible influence which he is bound to exercise, and this our Lord sets forth under the figure of light: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.” In any case the genuine Christian will exercise the silent and unseen salting influence upon those who come into immediate contact with him; but let him also labour to possess the second, or illuminating influence, which covers a far larger area, and deals more with real life; for salt is for dead flesh, and light for living men. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Saltiness and light are the power of a Christian. I do not believe that any man will give forth light if he has not first received salt; and yet some have a measure of salt who are none too liberal with their light. May God grant us grace to balance the inward and the outward. May we have the conserving salt and the diffusive light. Our thoughts will now run towards light-giving, and I pray that I may be helped to move the more retiring and less active among us to exert their influence upon others to a greater

extent; to crown the silent testimonies of their humble faith by an outspoken witness-bearing for their Lord and Saviour. All who have salt will now be urged to show their light.

The figure which our Saviour uses is a homely one, borrowed from the eastern tent and house. He speaks of a candle, or, more accurately, of a lamp. We should read the passage—"Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but on the lampstand, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." I shall use the figure both in its eastern and in its western dress, and sometimes we will make a lamp of it and sometimes a candle. Perhaps we shall see all the better with both a lamp and a candle; and, though we may confuse the metaphor, we shall not confuse anybody's mind upon the important truth which it sets forth.

Three things are in the text. The first is *the lighting*, the second is *the placing*, and the third is *the shining*. The first two are both intended to produce the third. May he who alone can create light illuminate our minds while dwelling on his word.

I. First let us consider **THE LIGHTING**. "Neither do men light a candle." What is this lighting up of the souls of men? They are without light by nature, "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them." What, then, is this lighting?

It is, first of all, *a divine work*. God began his creating work of old by saying, "Let there be light," and there was light. And as in the old creation so in the new, the first thing that God worketh in the heart of man is light: "the entrance of thy word giveth light." Well said David, "The Lord is my light and my salvation." The Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding, so that the man perceives the desperateness of his own condition, and his inability to win salvation by his own works. The Lord pours light into the soul, so that Christ is seen by faith, and at the sight of him the heart catches fire, and light takes hold upon the inner man, so that he not only sees light but has light. The light not only shines upon the heart but from the heart. "Ye were sometime darkness,"—not only in the dark, but darkness,—"*but now are ye light in the Lord*": not only have ye light from the Lord, but ye *are* light, your souls having caught the flame. The Holy Spirit alone can accomplish this work. No human being will ever have light within himself till God who spoke the fiat at creation shall by the selfsame word create light in the soul. The apostle Paul says of all the saints, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

This lighting is *a separating work*. When this light comes it separates a man from those around him who are as the darkness. It does not take him away from his surroundings, it does not shut him up in a monastery, but the separation is complete; for to set a division between a candle and the darkness all that is wanted is to light it. The tiniest spark will by its very existence be distinguished from the darkness. There is no need to label light to prevent its being confounded with the darkness, and there is no need for it to sound a trumpet before itself, saying, "Here am I." What fellowship hath light with darkness? No sooner cometh the light into a man's heart than he is separate from

those who are round about him, called by the grace of God by a vocation which at once sets a difference between the called ones and the rest of the sons of men. The darkness could not have created the light, for it does not even comprehend it, "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Those that are round about the Christian man cannot make him out, for his life is hid with Christ in God. At his conversion they perceive that a strange alteration had come over him; and, as Dr. Watts says, they "gaze and admire, and hate the change"; but they know no more about it than owls do of the sun. At first they set the change down to melancholy, until the man's experience flashes into delight, and then they call it fanaticism or a kind of madness, a sort of twist of the mind. Oh, blessed twist! Would God that those who know it not could be twisted after the same fashion! It is the kindling of the candle, so that where all was darkness before there may now be the heavenly light.

The darkness, though it does not understand or love the light, is nevertheless compelled to yield to it; for the battle between light and darkness is short and decisive. Up to the measure of the light is the measure of its conquest. Though only a few beams should irradiate the eastern sky, yet so far the arrows of the sun have pierced the heart of the night; and as that light shall glow into high noon all trace of darkness must fly before it. Beloved, if God has given light to us, he has put within us a principle that shall go forth conquering and to conquer. Let the darkness be as dense as that which plagued the Egyptians, yet must it yield to light. A conflict is to be expected, but a conquest is guaranteed. We must not dream that the darkness will put forth its black arms to embrace our light; nor may we imagine that it will come cowering at the foot of our candlestick and ask to make a league with us. Light cannot dwell side by side with the darkness, making covenant therewith, for it is written, "God divided the light from the darkness, and God called the light day, and the darkness he called night," thus giving to each its own distinguishing name, that none might confound them. No man shall ever be able to mingle the two: they are and must be for ever distinct. To the end of time there shall be two seeds, the heirs of light and the children of darkness, and these two cannot be one. The light shall war with the darkness till the eternal light hath fully risen and reached its zenith, and then the earth shall be filled with the light of the glory of God. Till then, ye children of light, see to it that ye have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. This lighting up of the candle takes place at regeneration, and you perceive it in enlightenment, conviction, conversion. The question is, have you ever been lit, dear friend? Have you ever received that divine light? Have you ever felt the touch of the heavenly torch of the word by which light has come to you, and now dwells within you, so that you yourself have become a light, and are shining to the glory of God?

Furthermore, this light giving is a *personal work to every man* who is the subject of it. The text says, "Let *your* light so shine before men." When a man lights a candle the light does not belong to the candle originally; but when once the candle has accepted the flame the light becomes the candle's own light, and the candle begins to shine by its own

light. So, beloved, the grace of God, the light from heaven, must come to each one of us individually from the divine hand, and we must personally receive it. Light is not inherent in any one of us, and therefore it must be bestowed. Its bestowal necessitates a personal acceptance. It is not bestowed upon us as part of a nation or family. In its enlightening operations grace does not deal with men in the gross, but with each man by himself. Sin is personal, and so must grace be. We are individually in the darkness, and must be individually kindled into light. One by one each man must accept the light, permitting it, as it were, to kindle upon him, so that the very wick of his being, that innermost life which goes through the very centre of his nature, shall embrace the flame and begin to burn with it. There must be an individual appropriation of the light, so that to each one of you it becomes your own. "Let *your* light so shine before men." Do not deceive yourselves with the notion of national Christianity or hereditary Christianity; the only true religion is personal godliness. We cannot light these candles by the pound at a time, nor heap up lamps in a pile and light them in a mass. We have nowadays wonderful lights, which can be all lit in an instant by a single touch of electricity; but even then each one of the lights has to receive a flame for itself, which becomes all its own. There is no way by which individuality can be destroyed and men saved *en masse*.

In each man the light is peculiar and distinct. The light that burns in one true minister of Christ is the same which shines forth from another, and yet one star differeth from another star in glory: Peter is not John, Paul is not James, Whitefield is not Wesley. You shall examine the whole range of God's lamps and candlesticks and you shall not find two exactly alike. Many artists exhaust themselves and then repeat themselves; but God is inexhaustibly original; no two touches of his pencil are the same. Light is one, and its glory is one, and yet there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. There is a difference in the lights of various oils and gases, and so there is in your light, my brother, and my light. It is very possible that you would like to put my candle in order; you may do so if you can, but do not snuff me out. Your own light is, however, your main concern, and you had better ask for special grace that it may not fail. Your light is distinct from mine, as distinct as your life is from mine, though in another sense it is true that your spiritual light is one with all the light that ever shone in this world. There is in the lighting a personal appropriation of the divine flame, and afterwards a personal and distinct sending forth of the sacred light in the individual's own way. Look ye well to this, lest ye be mistaken, and suppose yourselves to be lighted from heaven when you are the mere will-o'-the-wisps of delusion.

I like our translators reading the word candle—"Neither do men light a candle," for nowadays a candle is the smallest of all lights. We almost despise a candle in these days of the electric light; yet small lights are useful, and tiny lamps have their sphere. God has many small lights; in his great house he has candles as well as stars, and he would not have even a small light wasted. Even the most twinkling ray of light is of God's kindling: think of that, you who cannot do more than talk to a child or give away a tract for love of his dear name.

You are a little light, but if the Lord has given you even a spark of the sacred fire he means that you should shine. In this world there are many lights, but none too many. We could not spare the sun, and it would be a calamity if the smallest star were quenched. We cannot spare those modern inventions which so cheer us by turning our city's night into day; but I wot we should miss even the glowworm from its dewy haunt in the quiet lane. We cannot afford to lose a ray of light in this misty, foggy, all-beclouded sky of ours. The church and the world need all the light that has been vouchsafed, and much more. I, therefore, would press upon all my brethren and sisters here who may happen to have but one talent the necessity of their putting it out to interest. Your light, my friend, may be but a farthing rushlight, but you must not hide it, for all lights are of God, and are sent with a kind and gracious purpose by the great Father of lights.

Note further, that lighting is a work which needs sustaining. Whilst lighting is a process performed in a moment, it is also, as a matter of fact, prolonged; for the lamp needs to be trimmed, and it would be ill to light a lamp and leave it to itself. The lamp must have fresh oil from time to time, since by shining it consumes its fuel. Do not any of you, therefore, think if you can fix upon a certain time and say, "I was converted then," that you may live as you like afterwards. God forbid! The saints prove their conversion by their perseverance, and that perseverance comes from a continual supply of divine grace to their souls. Judge ye, then, yourselves by this, not so much whether on a certain special occasion you were turned from darkness to light, but are you still "light in the Lord"? Have you oil in your vessels with your lamps? Are you looking unto Jesus? It was well that you looked; but are you looking? for that is the great thing. Remember, it is a present business—looking. It is well that you came to Jesus, but that is merely the beginning; it is "to whom coming," coming continually, as unto a living stone. Our lungs must have, as we all know, fresh supplies of air. It will avail me nothing that I breathed yesterday; I am dead, unless I breathe to-day. We must have constant food: you ate yesterday; but could you without hunger and weakness go without to-day? We continually need to be built up as to our bodies, and it is just the same with our souls, and if we neglect this, if we fancy that something done twenty years ago is all that is wanted, we shall make a great mistake. There must be the frequent trimming of the lamp, which is, in effect, a continuation of the lighting.

Once again, let me say that this work of lighting is a work which when it is done upon a man consecrates him entirely to the service of light giving. A candle once lit, if it continues alight will be all consumed in giving light. It is what it was made for, not to be laid by in a glass case and looked at, but to be burned away. Blessed is the man who can say, "My zeal hath consumed me." You will say that in the case of the lamp the lamp itself is not consumed. No, but it is consecrated to the one purpose of lighting the house, and it contains the supply of oil by which the flame is fed. The whole of the lamp, whether it be of gold or silver or clay, or whatever it may be, is dedicated to the one purpose of giving light: and if God ever comes and lights you, my dear brother, you are henceforth separated from all

other purposes, and appointed to the one calling. You may be a great many other things according to your human calling, but these must be subordinate. I wish that some men kept earthly things much more subordinate than they do. The first thing in a Christian is his Christianity. The chief business of one whom God has called is that he should live as the elect of God. Look at Christ Jesus, he was a carpenter, but I confess I seldom think of him as such: it is as the Saviour of men, and the servant of God that he comes before my mind. Even thus a Christian man ought so to live if he be a carpenter that the Christian swallows up the carpenter; and if he be a business man, or a man of letters, or an orator, he ought so to live that the most conspicuous fact about him is that he is a Christian. He is a lamp, and his one business is to shine. You may use a candle for many purposes; I saw a man grease a saw with one the other day, and another made his boots fit for walking in the snow in like manner; but still these are not the objects for which a candle is designed: it has missed the object of its existence if it does not give light. I suppose on occasions you might use a lamp for a weight, or for some other purposes; but it would not be the fit instrument for any purpose except that of giving light. Every thing is best when fulfilling its proper purpose. Have you ever seen a swan out of water? How ungainly is his walk! What an unwieldy bird he seems! But see him on the water. What a fine model for a ship! What grace! What beauty! So is it with the Christian, his beauty is best seen in his proper element; give him any other aim and he is awkward and uncomely. When seeking to instruct and save his fellow man, he is where God would have him, and then all the lines of creating wisdom, and all the beauties of divine grace are manifested in him. Let us take care then about this lighting, that it be lighting from above, that it be a lighting such as makes the light our own, and that it be a lighting which takes possession of us, and consecrates us entirely, and is perpetually sustained by the visitation of the Spirit of God. So much on that first point.

II. We will now, in the second place, consider THE PLACING. "No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel." It is a great point this placing of a man—it may hide his light or send it further afield. The chief matter is the lighting him, and getting him to have light to give; but the next most important thing is where to put him when he is alight. For some men when they first find Christ are in the wrong place altogether. How can a lamp shine if it be dropped into a river? After the conversion of certain persons their removal becomes necessary. It is significant that when God called Abraham he did not let him stop in Ur of the Chaldees: the place for Abraham to shine was not even in Haran; but he must get into the chosen country and wander as a shepherd prince, for only there and in that character could Abraham shine to the glory of God. Most men will be wise to stay where they are and shine; but others must undergo a great change of position before they will be able to scatter their light to the extent which the Lord intends for them. That may account, my friend, for your having more trouble since you were converted than you ever had before. You have been left to lie still till now, but you are wanted, and so you are fetched out from your hiding. It did not matter where you were when you

gave no light, you were just as well behind a box or in a closet as anywhere else: but now that you are lighted you must be put on a lamp-stand, and hence you are undergoing processes of providence that are somewhat painful to you. Our placing, whether it has necessitated removal or not, is largely done by the providence of God: one man is placed here and another there, and it is well for us to look at our position from this point of view. God puts us where we can best serve his cause and bless our age. If you had your choice, perhaps, if you had to be a street lamp, you would like to be a lamp in Hyde Park, to shine upon the nobles who pass that way. But the poor souls want lights far more down that blind alley, down that den of a court, where wild Irish are quarrelling, or drunkards murdering their wives. He that loves God, if he had his choice, might sooner choose to shine in the worse place than in the better. "Oh, that I lived in the midst of a warm-hearted church!" says one. If you are an earnest, thorough-going man, I am glad that you are placed in that dreary village where the people are pretty nearly starved for spiritual life. "What," cries one, "glad that I have to suffer so much?" No, not for that, but because if you are a strong man, you will not suffer, but you will make other people suffer; that is to say, make it hard for the minister, and the deacons, and the church to remain in their wretched condition of lukewarmness. I hope you will be the means of arousing them, and bringing them nearer to Christ. How often a place which appears undesirable will become desirable if we regard it in this light. Providence puts us where we can give the most light, and if our lamp is set up in the midst of darkness, where else should it be? This Tabernacle reminds me of those frames on wheels, filled with lamps, which are used at our railway stations; here we have scores of lamps all burning together, and when first one and then another is dropped through the roof into a carriage and whisked away along the line, though it be to Australia, or America, or India, I am sorry to lose you, but I am glad that you are going where you will do more good than you will do here. Why should you not be scattered abroad like the first believers? Why should not the candles be carried where the darkness is? Why should we keep up an everlasting illumination upon this particular spot, just to gladden our own eyes, instead of lending light to all the world? It is ours to say to others, "There is a candle, let it shine in your houses"; or, "Here is a lamp, set it up in your tents, that God may bless you thereby."

But though I have thus spoken of Providence, a good deal of our placing is in our own hands. There are ways of placing yourselves—for instance, that mentioned in the text, which may be as ruinous to our influence as if a candle were placed under a bushel; or you can put yourself in a place of advantage, as when a lamp is set upon a lamp-stand.

First, note the word in *the negative*—"Neither do men place it under a bushel." A bushel is a good and useful article. In almost every eastern house there was a corn-measure, here called a bushel, though it did not generally measure much more than a peck; this measure was commonly in every house, because they ground their own corn, and so were generally dealing with the neighbours. That useful corn-measure to me represents the pursuits of ordinary life—the proper and natural

avocations of the household. Many men and women hide the candle that God has lit under the bushel of business and domestic cares. But you ask, Is not a housewife to be a housewife? Certainly; but not so a housewife as to conceal her godliness. Is not the labouring man to work with his hands? Certainly, but not so to work for the bread that perisheth as to miss life eternal. Is not the man of business to give his best attention thereto? Of course he is, but he must see to it that he do not lose his own soul, or injure the souls of others. Keep your bushel; nobody asks you to burn it; but do keep it in its place. Subordinate all worldly things to the glory of God. Suffer not your possessions or your desires, your pleasures or your cares to act as a bushel hiding his light. This happens with a great many. I must ask conscience to be so kind as to preach for me for a minute or two. Will you look at home, dear friends, and see where you place your business and your religion? Which is uppermost? Which is foremost? Is religion your business, or is business your religion? Does your candle shine upon the bushel, or does the bushel hide the candle? I will not dwell upon the question, because it will be well for you to answer it in quiet, each man for himself. I know how a minister can put his light under a bushel—he can be a mere official and perform service, being nothing more than a performer. The worst thing to do with the gospel is to *parsonificate* it. As soon as we preach as mere officials we have lost all power: we must speak as men to men. A brother minister one day said to me, “The moment I shut the pulpit door I shut out my natural self.” This will never do: a man must be all there when he is serving God, and if ever he is himself it must be in preaching. We can also cover the candle by using hard words, words which are not hard to educated people, but to the bulk of our hearers. We can also use technical creed words, such as we might use in the class room or in the discussion hall, and these may conceal our meaning from the people. I know some Christians who put their light under a bushel by being excessively bashful, and shamfaced. They are not so dreadfully retiring when five-pound notes are to be made; but if anything is to be said for Christ then they blush and stammer. Oh that they could overcome this hindrance. Others put their light under a bushel by inconsistency: they do not act as Christians should act, and when people see their bad works they do not glorify God. God forbid that in the house our darkness should be more conspicuous than our light. Some, I fear, cover their light under the bushel of indifference: they do not seem to care how things go with the cause and kingdom of Christ. They look well to the state of their flocks and herds, but for the house of the Lord they have small concern. I pray you, dear friends, do not hide your light in any way. Let not your lawful callings, your relationships, your sicknesses, your literary pursuits, or your personal sorrows become so exaggerated as to conceal the divine light within your soul.

The text is, however, *positive*. Put yourself on a candlestick or on a lampstand. What must that be? A candlestick is an appropriate exhibitor of the light; and each man should make an appropriate confession of his faith. The best way is prescribed in God's word. It is written, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Take care that when you have faith you declare it in the ordained manner; for

he that with his heart believeth and with his mouth maketh confession of him shall be saved. O lamp, do not say, "I will shine, but I will lie upon the floor and do it." No, your place is on the stand which is provided. Dear Christian friend, join the church that you may be placed where you will be in order with the arrangements of the divine household. A lamp-stand should also be something which makes the lamp sufficiently visible. If you do not come out and diffuse your light willingly and cheerfully it is very likely the master of the house will fetch you out. Providence will arrange that the light shall not be hidden. See what the Lord did for his church years ago; he allowed her to be persecuted into publicity. What a lamp-stand was found for Christianity in the martyrdoms of the Colosseum, in the public burnings by pagans and papists, and in all the other modes by which believers in Christ were forced into fame. When there was no printing-press, when there were scanty opportunities of making the gospel public compared with those of to-day, the Lord caused his witnesses to stand before rulers and kings, and there publish in the most public places the word of his salvation. Persecution built the lighthouse, and the divine love set up aloft the burning and shining light of sacred truth. You may find that God will make such a candlestick for you. You shall be forced into testimony in your family by the opposition of those about you, unless you take other and happier methods. We ought to be valiant for the truth, and speak of it with all prudence, but without stint.

I long for the day when the precepts of the Christian religion shall be the rule among all classes of men, in all transactions. I often hear it said "Do not bring religion into politics." This is precisely where it ought to be brought, and set there in the face of all men as on a candlestick. I would have the Cabinet and the Members of Parliament do the work of the nation as before the Lord, and I would have the nation, either in making war or peace, consider the matter by the light of righteousness. We are to deal with other nations about this or that upon the principles of the New Testament. I thank God that I have lived to see the attempt made in one or two instances, and I pray that the principle may become dominant and permanent. We have had enough of clever men without conscience, let us now see what honest, God-fearing men will do. But we are told that we must study "British interests," as if it were not always to a nation's truest interest to do righteousness. "But we must follow out our policy." I say, No! Let the policies which are founded on wrong be cast like idols to the moles and to the bats. Stand to that most admirable of policies,—“As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” Whether we are kings, or queens, or prime ministers, or members of parliament, or crossing sweepers, this is our rule if we are Christians.

Yes, and bring religion into your business, and let the light shine in the factory and in the counting-house. Then we shall not have quite so much china clay in the calicoes wherewith to cheat the foreigner, nor shall we see cheap and nasty articles described as of best quality, nor any other of the dodges in trade that everybody seems to practise now-a-days. You tradespeople and manufacturers are very much one like the other in this: there are tricks in all trades, and one sees it everywhere. I believe everybody to be honest in all England, Scotland, and

Ireland until he is found out; but whether there are any so incorruptible that they will never be found wanting this deponent sayeth not, for I am not a judge.

Do not put your candle under a bushel, but let it shine, for it was intended that it should be seen. Religion ought to be as much seen at our own table as at the Lord's table. Godliness should as much influence the House of Commons as the Assembly of Divines. God grant that the day may come when the mischievous division between secular and religious things shall no more be heard of, for in all things Christians are to glorify God, according to the precept, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

III. Our time has gone, but I must detain you a little while I speak upon the SHINING: "Let your light so shine before men."

When a candle shines it is because it cannot help it. Shining is the natural result of possessing light, and I want you, dear brethren, to exert a holy influence upon others, because the grace of God is really in you. Some men made desperate attempts to *appear* good; they would be far more successful if they would seek to *be* good. Grace must be in a man as a living fountain, and then rivers of living water will flow from him. The natural result of a renewed heart is a renewed life, and the natural result of a renewed life is that men see it and glorify God.

Shining, however, is not altogether a thing of necessity so as to forbid our attention to it, for the text demands care of us. "Let your light so shine." I must ask the printer to put the two letters—s, o,—in very large capitals. "Let your light SO shine—let it so shine that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." You will not shine in the best manner though you may have grace in your heart unless you abound in prayerful, watchful, earnest care. You must guard heart and lip and hand, or your light will not *so* shine before men as could be desired. Your light will need trimming. Neglect it not.

The shining which comes from the Christian is here described as "good works." Good talk is very well, but it takes a great deal of talk to light a room. Good works are the *splendour* of the light of God. What works are good works? I would answer—upright actions, honest dealings, sincere behaviour. When a man is scrupulously true, and sternly faithful, all right-minded persons admit that his works are good works. Good works are works of love, unselfish works, works done for the benefit of others and the glory of God. Deeds of charity, kindness, and brotherly love are good works. As also careful attendance to duty, and all service honestly done, together with all courses which promote the moral and spiritual good of our fellow-men. Works of devotion in which you prove that you love God and his Christ, that you love the gospel, that you desire to spread the kingdom of Christ,—these may not be so highly valued by ordinary people, but are eminently good works. Let these good and true things abound in you, and shine out from you; do them not out of ostentation, but still without shame.

Good works, like the shining of a candle, have good effects. A candle cheers the gloom. What a comfort it is when you have long been wandering in the dark to spy out a twinkling candle in a cottage window! A candle directs and guides men, and by its illumination it instructs them. In its light they see, discern, and discover. He who acts teaches.

The man who lives Christianity preaches it. He is the truest evangelist whose life brings glory to God and goodwill to men.

But note, it is said "it giveth light to all that are *in the house*"; so that when we are lit from on high we are first to shine at home. It is not abroad alone that we should make our Christianity known, but chiefly at the fireside, to those who are in the house. Some have a very little house, they live in a couple of rooms with a small family; let them take care that they have grace enough to make a few thoroughly happy, which is not always the easiest thing in the world. Others have a large family; may they have grace enough to influence the whole. A few have large workshops, and employ many hands, and these ought to exercise a holy influence over all their workfolks. Some of us are preachers of the gospel, and have a large house in which to shine: we shall need more of the oil of grace than others, that we may give light to the whole of our house; and that grace is to be had. The whole world is a house in which the church is the candle; and, therefore, the members of the church should so shine, each one in his place, that the whole world shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God.

The text says that the candle gives light to *all* that are in the house. Some professors give light only to a part of the house. I have known women very good to all but their husbands, and these they nag from morning to night, so that they give no light to them. I have known husbands so often out at meetings that they neglect home, and thus their wives miss the light. I have known masters who are utterly indifferent about their servants; and mistresses who quite forget to seek the good of their maids. If our light be in good order it will illuminate the parlour and the kitchen, the drawing room and the scullery, shining upon all that are in the house. Candles do not shed all their light either that way or this, but they shine in all directions. A Christian should be an all round man, blessing all, both great and small, who come in contact with him.

The object of our shining is not that men may see how good we are, nor even see us at all, but that they may see grace in us and God in us, and cry, "What a Father these people must have." Is not this the first time in the New Testament that God is called our Father? Is it not singular that the first time it peeps out should be when men are seeing the good works of his children? The Fatherhood of God is best seen in the holiness of saints. When men see that light is good they bless the source of that light, and seeing that it cometh from the Father of lights, they glorify his name.

I have had to hasten over all this, but I pray God to make it none the less effectual for the stirring up of every Christian here to use all the light he has. It is a dark world, and it seems to get darker, for the emissaries of Satan are going about thirsting to quench every light. Look ye well to your lamps—look ye well to your lamps, ye virgin souls. Trim well the flame, and go you forth even into the black night to meet the Bridegroom. Lift high your torches into the very face of darkness, and make men see that God the Father is still in the midst of his people.

The venerable Bede, when he was interpreting this text, said that Christ Jesus brought the light of Deity into the poor lantern of our

humanity, and then set it upon the candlestick of his church that the whole house of the world might be lit up thereby. So indeed it is. The reason why there is light in the church is that those who are in the dark may see. Churches do not exist for themselves, but for the world at large. Have ye thought of this, ye professors? Ye are blessed that ye may be a blessing. Take heed that ye behave aright. You go to Christ's wedding feast, and you are glad to hear that he turneth water into wine, and you are ready to bless him that he has kept the best wine until now. But oh, ye servants of God, remember what is said, "Draw out now and bear." These are your orders. There is the God-made wine—"Draw out now, and bear." Receive from Christ's fulness, and distribute to others. Neglect not your duty as servitors at your Lord's great feast. Your Master has taken the bread, and has blessed and broken it, and then he has given it to you. Is that the end of the process? Do you stand there and munch your own personal morsel with a miserable self-satisfaction? Nay, if you be indeed disciples of Christ you will remember that the next words are, "and the disciples to the multitude, and they did eat." Break then your bread among the hungry that surround you. Take the whole loaf of Christ, and rightly divide and distribute it, and you shall have as much left as at the first; yea, more, you shall gather of the fragments many baskets full. Only see ye to it that ye freely give what ye have freely received, lest hoarded manna breed corruption, lest a canker come upon your hoarded gold and silver, and lest your very souls grow mouldy even to reeking rottenness before God, because you have not drawn out your souls unto the hungry, nor sought to teach those who are perishing for lack of knowledge.

The Baptist Missionary Society will enable you to teach the heathen. Take a share in it. There, make the collection! Do your best!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Luke viii.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—136 (Song I.), 652,
22 (Part III.)