



The Collect

St. Luke the Evangelist

ALMIGHTY God, who didst inspire thy servant Saint Luke the Physician, to set forth in the Gospel the love and healing power of thy Son; Manifest in thy Church the like power and love, to the healing of our bodies and our souls; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, **Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.** (Rev 1:12-20)*

The CANDLE in Scripture always represents light. Not surprising is its use to describe the Word of God as a Light unto our path, and a lamp unto our feet. God's Word truly is a brilliant light. In fact, His only Begotten Son is the Light of the World (John 8:12), and Christ calls us the Light of the World as well in Matthew 5:14. How can we be the Light of the World when it is Christ who is undeniably the Light of the World? Because our Light is not our own. It is the REFLECTED Light of Christ in our lives. But all light comes down from the Father of Lights above – even Jesus Christ! *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* (James 1:17)

To fully comprehend how Jesus is like unto the Candlestick, we must first

understand the candles and from whence comes their light. In the most basic sense, all who are the Children of Light are the recipients of that White Light of Christ - *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light* (John 12:36) Can we trust our Light? We certainly can trust that Light if it comes from Christ! If it is an unnatural or synthetic light of some diverse color other than pure white, it is the dark light of the world. In a greater sense, the Church itself is the Keeper of the Light to lighten a world of darkness.

In the Anglican traditions, which is also in conformance with the reverence required before God, we present our Gospel Candle (words of Christ) on the strong (or right) side of the Lord's Table, and the Epistle Candle (writings of the Apostles) on the left (or weak side). Both signify the bright Light of Truth being propagated in our worship and work. Not very long ago, a fellow minister friend (who is Baptist) accused me of making the candles a thing of idolatry. I simply pointed out the counsel of Christ in Revelations 2:5: *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* (Rev 2:5) I then smugly reminded my friend that the Anglican Orthodox Church still has her Candlestick (which is Christ).

Christ it is who is the Lamp-Lighter of our Candle. He is the support that holds our reflected Light of the Lord in place: *12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.* He moves among His people and Church to keep the Lights burning. If we fall, it is because we have rejected the Candlestick and therefore have no Light source.

The Seven Churches of Revelations 1-3 are depicted as the seven Candlesticks. They should, but do not always, reflect the Light of Christ. *20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.* Shall we, in these dark and latter days, allow our candles to go out? Shall we seek Him who has the Oil of the Spirit to keep our fires burning? If so, the Light shall be seen from Lachish as of old.

The Candlestick was a necessary part of the furniture of the Tabernacle of Israel. Like Christ who received our stripes, the Candlestick of the Tabernacle was of pure gold and beaten of one piece. Christ, too, is pure and of the greatest of worth. The Candlestick of the Tabernacle had to be of one piece – so Christ is One with the Father and the Holy Ghost – even of the SAME substance. Just as the bride of Adam was taken from Adam's side, so the Church from the side of Christ: *And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it* (Exodus 25:31-32) This Candlestick represented the Old Testament Church just as the seven Candles of Revelations 1:20 symbolize the Church of the New Testament. *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning* (Luke 12:35) *Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world* (Philippians 2:14-15)

The Candlestick of the Tabernacle was the only Light-Source of the Sanctuary. Christ is the only Light Source for the Church. The seven candles represent the perfection that is in Christ. The Candlestick had an upright beam to hold the Light of Truth aloft. Christ is our Upright Beam and our Plumb-line in our midst.

The Candlestick was adorned with many adornments. So the Church and her people are adorned with many gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. The Candles were dressed daily by Aaron who also replenished the oils. We no longer have Aaron as our priest to furnish fuel for our Lights, but an High Priest who is Jesus Christ. His Holy Spirit is a constant and renewable source of blessing and strength.

The Candlestick of the Tabernacle was equipped also with snuffers of pure gold. This may symbolize the extinguishing power of the church to enforce discipline and, if necessary, that by means of excommunication.

When men see you approach, do they behold a light, or a dark shadow?