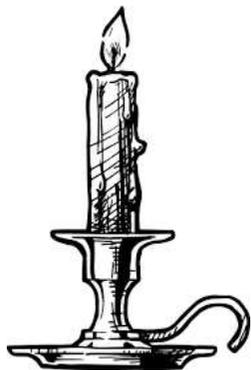


Wednesday, 10th February 2021



THE CANDLESTICK

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Rev. 1:5,6)

At the beginning of this concluding book of the Bible, we are promised, Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (Rev. 1:3).

The purpose, therefore, of this book is not to confuse the reader. Neither is its purpose to cause dissension. Instead, it is The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto ... his servant John (Rev. 1:1).

He is imprisoned on the island of Patmos, on the eastern side of the Aegean Sea. His only crime was knowing Jesus and making Jesus known. He is elderly. His brother James had died many years earlier. He had taken care of the Mary, the mother of Jesus. He had been living in Ephesus and teaching the churches and their leaders.

He has many wonderful visions to present ... but before he does, he presents *Christ*, the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ (v.2), the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth (v.5).

This Jesus was not someone he had heard about, at a distance. Neither was He some remote fanciful character who lived and died sixty years earlier, and he (John) was trying to constitute a kind of legendary cult fixation. No, this was, - as he had written previously in his Gospel, - the One Who In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made (Jn. 1:1-3). ... This was the Jesus, Whose Father loved the world so much, He sent Him to die on a cruel cross that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (Jn. 3:16). ... And He is the same Jesus Who rose from the dead on the third day after He was committed to the tomb. Forty days later He ascended into Heaven, and returned to His Father. And John concluded his Gospel, This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true (Jn. 21:24).

As the years continued, - while he had moved to and was living in Ephesus, - he wrote his three letters to the churches and he began with the same theme by which he had introduced his Gospel, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (I Jn. 1:1). ... Jesus was alive and John was in a living daily relationship, as he wrote, truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (I Jn. 1:3).

Jesus was not a past memory, but a present reality for John testified to the daily cleansing power of the blood of Christ (v.7). He spoke of how we have an advocate (*parakletos*, intercessor, comforter) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ... Who is our 'propitiation' (I Jn. 2:2), the One Who has made the atonement for us so that we would become righteous before the holy God. We have been separated 'unto Him that loved us', and made spotless when He 'washed us from our sins in His own blood', wrote John, **I Jn. 2:12** I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake ... **25** And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life ... And eternal life begins the moment we believe in and receive the Lord Jesus. For that is the manner of love God by His grace has bestowed upon His people, that we should be called the children of God (I Jn. 3:1).

We were not born into this world as His children. Instead, we were born as 'children of wrath', and as slaves to sin ... but by God's wonderful grace, we have been 'born again', for God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us (I Jn. 4:12). And consequently, because He first loved us, we now love Him (I Jn. 4:19). We are His for we belong to Him. He has paid the price of our redemption through the shedding of His own Son's blood at Calvary ... and now, we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (I Jn. 5:20).

And so, He alone is our blessed and glorious hope for we know that when He comes again, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is (I Jn. 3:2). We shall rise to meet Him as He descends from Heaven and we shall be with Him forever. But even already, - in the 'here and now', - we belong to Him for *already* He hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father (Rev. 1:6). He has made us into His own royal priesthood. He has given us the qualities and the qualifications to serve Him. They have not been of our own ability to produce them, but of His grace He gifted us with them. ... Salvation is the gift of God, and being privileged as His children to serve Him is also His great gift. The hymn writer has written, "Only by grace can we enter, only by grace can we stand, not by our human endeavour, but by the blood of the Lamb".

As he sat in the presence of the Lord, on the island of Patmos, old John saw as clearly the glory of God as ever He had seen it. The passing of the years had not dimmed his view. The trials he had to endure did not cause his faith to wane. He was stronger during those times of hardship because, even then, he was in the centre of God's will ... and he knew it for he concluded, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Rev. 1:5,6).

Father, lead me day by day,
Ever in Thine own sweet way;
Teach me to be pure and true;
Show me what I ought to do.

When in danger, make me brave,
Make me know that Thou canst save;
Keep me safe by Thy dear side;
Let me in Thy love abide.

When I'm tempted to do wrong,
Make me steadfast, wise and strong;
And when all alone I stand,
Shield me with Thy mighty hand.

When my heart is full of glee,
Help me to remember Thee,
Happy most of all to know
That my Father loves me so.