

OUR GOSPEL HID TO SOME.

"Therefore having this ministry, even as we received mercy we faint not; but have repudiated the secret things of shame; not walking in craftiness, nor falsifying the Word of God; but by the exhibition of THE TRUTH approving ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

But if, indeed, our Glad Tidings be veiled, they have been veiled to those who are perishing [lost], to those unbelievers whose minds the God of this age blinded, in order that they might not [or, so that they cannot] see clearly the effulgence of the Glad Tidings of the Glory of the Anointed One who is the likeness of God." (2 Cor. 4:1-4).

The above rendering in the Diaglott brings to the surface of this passage a beauty and meaning, more difficult to grasp from the common translation. How true and forcible this expression, and how applicable to the Glad Tidings as now seen shining out in fullness and beauty, declaring our Father perfect, not only in Wisdom and Power, but also in Justice and Love.

Very much of what is preached today as Gospel, is far from being glad tidings. Instead of revealing the glory of God's character, a vast amount of what is taught, like rubbish, almost conceals the truth held, and dims and tarnishes God's justice and his love by misrepresentation; and though instilled into men from childhood, it does not commend itself to the conscience of even its advocates. In proof of this, we quote the following from the pen of that good man, Albert Barnes, who, alas, was much blinded by the deceptions which the Prince of this Age had engrafted on theology before his day. Were he living now and brought in contact with the glad

tidings now shining, probably he would rejoice in the light from the Word of God."

Mr. Barnes says:

"I see not one ray to disclose to me the reason why sin came into the world, why the earth is strewn with the dying and dead, and why man must suffer to all eternity. I have never seen a particle of light thrown upon these subjects that has given a moment's ease to my tortured mind, nor have I an explanation to offer or a thought to suggest that would be a relief to you.

"I trust other men, as they profess to do, understand this better than I do, and that they have not the anguish of spirit that I have; but I confess, when I look on a world of sinners and sufferers, upon death-beds and grave-yards, upon the world of woe, filled with hearts to suffer forever; when I see my friends, my parents, my family, my people, my fellow citizens; – when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and danger; when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned; and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet he does not do it, I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark to my soul, and I cannot disguise it."

– Albert Barnes' Practical Sermons, p. 124.

Of the Glad Tidings which we proclaim – some publicly, some privately – it is true that we repudiate the darkness and traditions of men brought from the "dark ages" – "not walking in craftiness [substituting traditions for God's Word], nor falsifying the Word of God – [wresting, twisting and ignoring Scripture] but by the EXHIBITION of the TRUTH approving ourselves to every man's conscience. Not that all will acknowledge the force, grandeur and harmony of our teachings, but we may be sure that "in the sight of God" all who hear and carefully weigh these Glad Tidings will in their hearts approve it as reasonable and beautiful; unless, as the

Apostle here remarks, the God of this age [Satan – John 14:30] has blinded their eyes. If our glad tidings be hid – veiled, obscured – it is not the fault of the glad tidings, for to all who can see, it is glorious, harmonious and bright. Where it comes and cannot be seen, the fault is not in the light but in the eye.

As originally created, man was in his Creator's mental likeness: Justice, Mercy, Love, etc., in man were the same in kind as in God: so much so that they could and did, even since the fall, reason together on these subjects (Isa. 1:18). But from the very outstart Satan's policy seems to have been to blind men. He blinds and obscures and obliterates, as far as possible, these God-like qualities in them; and in addition seeks to misrepresent God's character, and thus hinder their recognition of these qualities in Jehovah.

Looking about us to-day we see people thus blinded everywhere, and from various causes. Some worship the work of their hands. In them the moral qualities – justice, love, etc., are almost extinguished. These retain scarcely any of the image of God, in which man was created. They are almost totally blind: yet in their blindness they are "feeling after God, if happily they might find him," as Paul expresses it (Acts 17:27). Another class he blinds in an opposite way – with pride and liberty of earthly wisdom, science falsely so called. Vainly puffed up by their own wisdom, this class often become fools, who say in their hearts "There is no God" (Psa. 14:1).

Another class who escaped his arts as applied to the two classes just mentioned, Satan seeks to blind in yet another way: this class has caught some glimpses of God's character; they see a little of his power, but to his justice, wisdom and love, they are blinded by Satan who, by mixture of dishonoring falsehoods with their little truth, conceals the grandest elements of the divine nature. Those

thus blinded cannot appreciate the glad tidings. This is no less true of many called Christians today, than of religionists in past centuries.

When Jesus wanted to point out the blind in his day he did not mention the heathen, but the favored people of Israel, and especially the Pharisaic Doctors of the Law. It was to these he said that they were "blind leaders of the blind" (Matt. 15:14). Satan's method by which he blinded the Pharisees, was the same which he now uses with such effect on a similar class. Jesus mentions their cause of blindness – "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect through your traditions" (Matt. 15:6). Satan could not get Israel to forsake the law and become idolaters, therefore he took the opposite course, and by multiplying the forms and ceremonies of religion, he satisfied their consciences, while he blinded them to the spirit, or true meaning of the Law. So now, with the spread of general intelligence, Satan keeps changing his tactics to hinder the light of the glad tidings from being appreciated.

For a time, through Papacy in the dark ages, Satan had succeeded not only in blinding men by religious forms, but in almost extinguishing the glorious light; for he had almost destroyed the Lamp itself – "Thy Word is a lamp." Bibles were destroyed until it was supposed that none remained. But God, though permitting the prince of this world to reign, did not leave men in total darkness, and soon the fires of the reformation began to light up the world and scattered much of the darkness.

But our wily foe, unable to restrain the light (the truth) transformed himself into a seeming angel of light (messenger of truth). He led the reformation into success, pride, and worldly honor, and introduced a worldly spirit so as to blind them in an opposite direction. As Israel had the Law, these have the Bible; but they glory more in printing Bibles, owning Bibles, and reading

Bibles, than in studying and understanding them. Bibles are bought and worshiped and occasionally read; but the creeds of past ages and traditions of the Fathers are studied and practiced. Satan now, unable to hinder the publishing of Bibles, endeavors to have them read through creed-tinted spectacles. These will blind them so that the light of the glorious glad tidings can scarcely be discerned.

Many who have been led to see some light, are blinded by fear; they fear to let their light shine; they fear to let any one know that though once blind, now they begin to see. These wear their goggles when others are in sight, and take them off a few moments when alone. They have the spirit of bondage and fear which bringeth a snare and blindness upon them again. Such are not worthy to be of the Bride, the Lamb's [R526 : page 3] wife, as Jesus said: "Whosoever is ashamed of me and of my words... of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

Let the dear saints who by the truth have been translated out of darkness into this glorious light wherein we stand and rejoice, give special heed to another blinding influence. We have known some who had clean escaped from all those snares and blindings, and who had seen much of the glory of the glad tidings, who were still pursued by the adversary, and again brought into bondage and darkness, being led into spiritual pride and ambition; and such the adversary harnesses into the service and blinds to the truth, by engaging them in manufacturing and spreading fancied new light which has foundation and support neither in hoary tradition nor in Scripture, and whose only passport is that it is new.

Of such are some of the modern theorizings on the Atonement, which strike at the very foundation of the Christian's hope, and are blinding and overturning the faith of some.

Some others are blinded by prosperity: Satan throws them handfulls of gold, and their eyes become so fastened on it, that soon the glories of the glad tidings begin to fade from view, and they, too, are in outer darkness. Others are blinded by the cares of this life. They are made to appear necessities, so that all the energies of life may be absorbed in the things which perish; and that the heavenly things, being neglected, may fade from view. Let us beware of every blinding influence and keep the one thing constantly before us, saying as did Paul: "This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

THE PERISHING BLINDED ONES.

Thus seen, the blinded ones, not only embraced nearly all of Jesus' day, but nearly all of every age since; and the Apostle says they are the perishing – the lost. What does he mean? Some tell us he means that all these billions of blinded ones are going to a place and condition of eternal torture because blinded by Satan. We answer, no; they and we were ALL lost – perishing in death because of Adam's sin – and the difference between those who SEE by faith the glorious promises of God, as though already fulfilled, and those who are blinded by Satan so that they cannot see, is, that those not blinded have joy and peace through believing, and are reckoned SAVED both by God and themselves, while the blind are still in the lost condition – still under condemnation, even though Christ died for them. The benefit of Christ's death becomes applicable to each, as he by faith grasps Christ's sacrifice as the "propitiation for our sins." The blinded ones are unable to realize the ransom, hence are still among the lost or condemned.

But we inquire, Shall it be thus forever? Will Jehovah forever permit the god of this world to blind men, so that, though the

sacrifice for sin has been given, the blinded cannot see and take the benefit of it, by accepting their share in it?

Oh, no; there comes an end to the reign of "the god of this world." He who redeemed men is commissioned to "put down all rule and all authority and power" other than that of Jehovah (1 Cor. 15:24,25). The great clock of the Ages has just tolled the close of Satan's 6,000 years' reign: the appointed "heir of all things," Christ – Jehovah's vice-gerent – is present, and the binding of the great blinder – the prince of this world, the prince of darkness – is commenced. When he is bound and shut up for a thousand years that he may not deceive and blind the nations during the reign of Christ, think you will the mass of the world be blinded still? If it required his continued arts to prevent the true light of the gospel from being seen, what will be the result of his binding? Surely it will be, sight to the blind.

To this agree the words of the prophet: "Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart be strong, fear not: Behold your God shall come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you." "THEN the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped."

The RANSOM for sin will then be clearly seen, "and the ransomed of the Lord (all who will accept of Christ as the propitiation or satisfaction for sin), shall return (from the lost and perishing condition) to Zion (God's fortress) with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; THEY shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35.)

Does some one inquire why the god of this world was so long permitted to blind mankind to the glories of God's character and plans? We reply that it was not long in God's estimation. A thousand years are to him but as one day – as a watch in the night.

Then, too, he had an object in permitting Satan's reign. It furnished bitterness and distress to men in their experience under sin, which prepares them to appreciate the true light and reign of righteousness when due. And the blinding of the many served to develop and select the choice first-fruits unto God and the Lamb, the "little flock," who are to be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, who shall share with Christ the glories to follow. They are to share in the bruising of Satan (Rom. 16:20) and in blessing and restoring of sight to the blind.

It was referring to this future healing of the deaf and opening of blinded eyes of the understanding, that Jesus said to the disciples: "Greater works than these shall ye do." Thus far Jesus' disciples have never done greater works than his for the blind and lame and sick but in the dawning Millennial Day, they with him shall do the greater works – they shall not only heal the bodies but the minds of men.

In fact Jesus' miracles were also types of spiritual blessings yet future, as we read: "These things did Jesus, and manifested forth (showed beforehand) his glory" (John 2:11). The glory of Jesus is still future and will be shown "when he shall come to be GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, and to be admired in all them that BELIEVE IN THAT DAY." (2 Thes. 1:10). That coming glory was foreshadowed by his miracles. When it is remembered that very many of his miracles, in fact most of the notable ones, were done on the seventh or Sabbath day, it will be seen that this also was typical, and foreshadowed the fact that the great healing time would be the seventh thousand years – the Millennium – the **[R526 : page 4]** great Sabbath of rest in Christ, in which the world will be reinvigorated and perfected for the eternal ages of sinlessness to follow.
