

BLINDED BY SATAN

NO. 2304

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“The god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not.”
2 Corinthians 4:4.

THE practice of blinding men is a horrible process, too horrible for us to say another word about it, but there is also a *spiritual* blindness which comes upon some men. These are, to begin with, unbelievers. The god of this world does not blind Believers—but he blinds the minds of them which believe not. It is, therefore, a very dangerous thing not to believe on the Son of God. The penalty of unbelief is death and condemnation—and that penalty begins to fall on men when, in consequence of their unbelief, their foolish heart is darkened, their intellect loses the power to perceive spiritual objects—and the god of this world blinds their mental vision. Ah, my Hearers, how anxious Satan is to secure your destruction, since, rather than that you should see the saving Light of God, he takes the trouble to blind your eyes! God grant that no man here may die under this dreadful deprivation of Light which is caused by Satanic influence upon the minds of men who have not believed in Jesus!

Remember that this blindness to spiritual things is quite consistent with much sharpness as to natural things. A man may be a very keen politician. He may be a first-rate man of business. He may be an eminent scientist, a profound thinker and, yet, he may be blinded as to spiritual Truths of God. How often is it true, “You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes”! As an old writer says, “Poor, ignorant men often find the door to Heaven and enter in, while the learned are looking for the latch.” Yes, a man may have clear eyes for worldly things. He may be very keen as to his insight into the problems of life and, yet, the god of this world may have blinded his eyes!

What is more remarkable, still, a man may have much Scriptural knowledge. He may understand, in the letter, the things of the Kingdom of God. He may be very orthodox in his beliefs and may be able to give an answer to those who ask him what he believes, and why he believes—but, still, he may have no *spiritual* perception of the reality of these things. A person may know something of botany from books and he may even understand the Linnaean system of classifying plants, but he may never, after all, have seen the primrose by the river's brim, nor have gathered a single flower out of the garden. He is a poor botanist, is he not? He who has studied natural history in his own chamber, but has never seen a living animal, knows very little about the subject, after all! We have many round about us who can talk of Heaven and Hell, and sin and salvation, and Christ and the Holy Spirit who, nevertheless, have never had one true perception of the meaning of any of these words. They see, but perceive not. They hear, but do not understand—they are unbelievers and the god of this world has blinded their minds.

Now, I am going to say, tonight, first, that *this blindness is very common*. Secondly, that it is *worked by the Evil One upon men in different ways*. And, thirdly, I shall speak upon *the kind of treatment that this blindness requires*.

I. First, then, THIS BLINDNESS IS VERY COMMON.

It is manifested in some by *occupation with this world*. Here is a man who has lived in this world for a good many years and, all that while he has been thinking, working, proposing, projecting, but what about? Why, about this world! He has generally been concerned with a trinity of questions—“What shall I eat? What shall I drink? With what shall I be clothed?” This man believes that he is to live forever in another world, that this present life is only like the porch of a house—that the state to come is the house, itself. All these years, 30, 40, 50, 60, seventy—may I say 80 years?—this man has never thought about the eternal world, but only about the temporary world! He has never thought about where he is to dwell forever, but has spent all his power and strength upon the passage to it. This is so unreasonable that I am

sure he must be blind! I cannot account for his folly anyway else. Surely, the soul is more important than the body! We think more of the body than we do of the garment it wears, but the body, after all, is only the *garment of the soul*! The true ego, the I, myself, is my soul! Am I never to think of that, but only to be thinking of my earthly house, my food, my garments, my daily work? That is the kind of thing that a brute would think of—oxen and asses think of what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and where they shall lie down—if they think at all! And is this all of which you and I think? Surely, that occupation of the mind upon what must be of secondary consideration is a proof that the god of this world has blinded the mind!

I will give you another example, from a different quarter, and that is, *the extreme easiness of conscience* which we see in many men and women. They can commit a great sin, wash their hands and then have done with it, as if the very washing of the hands or the wiping of the mouth was quite enough to put away all thought of the wrong. Many will sit here, tonight, who have, through a long life, committed a hundred sins of which they would be ashamed to be reminded, and yet they are not ashamed of them! They would only be ashamed to be found out—they are not ashamed of the sin, itself. A man truly awakened by the Spirit of God feels the remembrance of his sin to sting him as with scorpions! He cannot bear it. But the great mass of people do a thousand wrong things and yet they are not troubled, but feel quite at their ease.

Some of you are probably within a very short time of death and judgment, and yet you can make sport of sin! How often does it happen that people come to the place of worship and go their way, having rejected solemn appeals—and they will never hear any more! They have had their last warning. Oh, if they could but know that, during the week, they will fall down dead, or be laid aside by sickness, never to leave the bed, again! Yet they trifle, on the brink of fate, on the very verge of everlasting woe! If you saw a man going straight on to the very brink of some dreadful precipice, and you saw him about to take another step, you would say, “That man is blind. I am sure that he is, or else he would not act like that.” People do not go into terrible danger with their eyes open—yet there are many of our fellow men, perhaps many of ourselves, going right on, carelessly and heedlessly—to the very brink of the awful abyss without a thought of danger! They must be blind! This horrible peace of conscience, this quenching of the Spirit whenever conscience stirs itself, this playing and trifling with death and judgment prove that they are blind!

To give you another example, there are many who have *presumptuous hopes about the future*. At any rate, they do not trouble themselves. I do not know why they are so easy, but there are different forms of presumption which enable them to look into the future without fear. One says, “Well, you see, I was christened when I was a child, and I was confirmed as a youth.” Another says, “I have always attended the Meeting House. I am never absent from any of the services. I have subscribed my guinea to the hospital. I am kind to everybody. I think that most people would give me a good name.” Their dependence is on that sort of thing and they have never looked at what is really lacking. They will not stay to hear that Word of God, “You must be born again.” They will not listen to Christ when He says, “He that believes not shall be damned”—whatever his profession or moral character may be! No, but they go on dancing to destruction with a light and merry heart. Surely these people are blinded by Satan!

Then see another sort of people, and note *their readiness to sin*. They yield to the tempter, they yield at the first request! There is no need for Satan to importune them to evil. They seem always ready for it, especially if they think that they can escape from trouble by doing wrong. Why, are there not many persons who would tell a lie to save a sixpence? Ah, to save a *penny*? The shop was open this morning—the profit made did not amount to two pence—but, still, the Sabbath was broken for that paltry sum! How many are selling their souls, not to gain the whole world, no, not to gain a four penny piece! They think so little of their souls and their eternal destiny, that, for the sake of a drop of beer, for the sake of an evening’s amusement, for the sake of pleasing a foolish companion they will fling their souls away as if they were only pebble stones not worth the keeping!

Ah, Sirs, such people must be blind! People who have had their eyes opened spiritually have been known to die sooner than do the least thing that was wrong. Remember the man who was told that if he would give one farthing to be spent on incense to the heathen gods, his life should be spared? But the man knew the Lord and, therefore, he would sooner die than give a single mite towards the worship of idols! Men of God have cheerfully laid down their lives to defend even a slight point of God’s eternal Truth. But these men who think nothing of such holy heroism and are willing to lose their souls for a paltry pleasure, why, they must be blind!

I need not stay to say more except this one thing. This blindness shows itself in *trifling with eternal things*. There is a person here who, not long ago, was very greatly awakened, even resolved to seek the Savior then and there. But when in the Enquiry Room he put off the final decision. There was no reason why he should put it off except the reluctance of his mind to accept Christ. That was not the first time that he had procrastinated and postponed. And yet he is still putting off his reception of Christ. He is not sure that he will live to get home, tonight. He is not certain that, should he fall asleep, tonight, on his bed, he will wake up in this world in the morning! Yet he leaves his soul in jeopardy, as if it were a matter of very small concern.

A person came here, not long ago, who had taken off a diamond ring when he washed his hands. And all the while he was sitting here, he kept wondering what would become of that ring, whether, when they emptied the water out of the basin, it would be thrown away. He was so anxious about his ring that he hurried home as quickly as ever he could after the service. He did not wait a week to see about it, yet there are men, here, who have waited weeks, months, years, ah, *many years*, procrastinating and procrastinating! They would not leave their worldly business like that, but they leave the eternal business of salvation or damnation as though it were but as a sere leaf that might be blown whichever way the wind might please! Such people must be blind! I am sure they must be blind. Oh, that they were wise enough to cry, in the language of Charles Wesley's hymn—

*“O God, my inmost soul convert,
And deeply on my thoughtful heart
Eternal things impress!
Give me to feel their solemn weight,
And trembling on the brink of fate,
Wake me to righteousness!”*

I could heap up many proofs that this blindness is very common, but I have not the time to do so, for we must pass on to consider the next point.

II. Secondly, I want to prove to you, very earnestly and very pointedly, that THIS BLINDNESS IS WORKED BY THE EVIL ONE IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

In some, it comes by *utter worldliness*. There are some people who say, “We cannot attend to that matter, we have enough to do to earn our living.” Others say, “Well, thank God, we have not to earn our living by the sweat of our brow, but really, we have plenty of other things to think of besides turning our attention to that Methodistic stuff.” One says, “I—, I—,” yes, you may speak it out if you like—you think that God and Heaven and eternal things are trifles unworthy of your thoughts! Your house, your horse, your wife, your money—these, of course, are not trifles—these must come first. The world, the world, the world—this is in your heart and occupies it all. Said the captain of a whaler, one day, to a man of God, who spoke to him about his soul, “Mr. Bertram, it is of no use for you to speak to me about my soul, or ask me to come to the service, tonight. You see, I am out here after whales, and all the while that I was sitting, and you were talking, I should be thinking about whales. And when you gave out a hymn, I should just be thinking of whether there was a whale anywhere about. If I were to pray, I should be praying about whales. I have whales in my heart, Sir, and there is no room for anything else.” It is so with many, many people. They have their business, they have set up a loom, they have an invention, they have all the materials of a building inside their hearts—and there is no room for God. Their hearts are blinded by utter worldliness.

Some, again, are blinded by the devil in a very desperate way, *by love of some favorite sin*. I do not hesitate to say it is a general fact that when men kick against true religion and when they get offended by being spoken to about it, if you could track them home, you would find in their conduct some very good reason for their opposition. I recollect that in preaching, on one occasion, I happened to allude to the pleasure it gave me to see the gleaners picking up the wheat in the harvest time, as Ruth did, and I said, “I verily believe that there are some farmers who would rake their fields with a small tooth comb, if they could, to get every grain of the wheat up.” I noticed a respectable-looking gentleman, in the front of the gallery, get up and go out. Somebody at the door said, “Why are you going out, Mr.____?” He replied, “I won't stop to listen to such a fellow as that. I always rake my fields three times.”

Yes, you see, it was the truth that made him angry. It is usually so. There is a reason for men being angry with the Gospel and turning away from it, when it strikes at some of their favorite sins. Such and such a man says that he does not believe in Jesus Christ. It is not likely that he should! I will not tell you why, but his wife knows. There is another man

who keeps a shop. He says that he does not need to be converted. No, if he were, he could not keep that shop! Or if he did, he would have to alter the line of business in which he is engaged. Ah, the god of this world blinds men's eyes with sin! I cannot go into all the particulars, but if there is any man here who has a pet sin that he cherishes, do not let him wonder that he cannot see the beauties of Christ, or the glories of salvation! And let him not think that we would do anything to win his approbation while he remains in love with that sin! It is with us very much as it was with Martin Luther when he said, "I could be proud to think how badly some people speak of me! For them to speak badly of me is the highest honor that such as they are can confer upon me." When you who are living in unchastity and dishonesty speak badly of Christ and of Christians, you only speak after your own manner—and we cannot wish you to alter your tone till God has changed your heart!

Many are blinded as to the things of God by *following a party*. "Well," you say, "I could not begin to study these matters of religion, because I am linked in with such a set. I know how they would treat me. They would laugh at me, first, and they would give me the cold shoulder, next. No, really, my dear Sir, if you know how I am connected, you would not expect me to ever give any consideration to these doctrines that are preached, whether they are true or not." It is a pity, it is a solemn pity, that a man should ruin his soul to keep in with his party! I rejoiced to read of the praise that was passed in the House of Commons, the other night, upon John Bright who deserved much more than was said, especially upon this one point, that, whenever his conscience came in conflict with his party, he followed his conscience and let his party go where it might. Public approbation and applause were nothing to him so long as he could keep clear in the sight of God by doing what he believed to be right. Now, when he dies, every party has a word of honor for him. There is nothing lost, after all, by sticking to what you believe to be right—and if it is so in *politics*, how much more should it be so in the matter of religion!

Cut your sinful connections, quit your evil companions! It were better to do that than to go with them, applauded and approved, and find yourself wrong at the last. Oh, that men had but a grain of grit in them, so that they would never make the things of God, Heaven and eternal realities to hang upon the breath of men's nostrils, or the smiles or frowns of their fellow men! But I am afraid that a great many will never come to know Christ because they will continue to follow their party, or the prejudice of their early education still clings to them.

A fourth way in which Satan blinds a great many, and he does it very commonly, is *by raising objections to the Truth of God*. There is nothing in this world to which you cannot object. I venture to say that there is no fact, however palpable to all the senses, but what you can, if you like, find reasons for not believing it to be a fact. If somebody were to assert that I am not here and that I am not speaking, I have no doubt that, with proper pay, a lawyer could be found to prove it—and what a lawyer could do, a great many, who are not learned in the law—could do as well. To answer objections is an endless task—it is like trying to empty a flowing fountain with bottomless buckets. Men do not object to the *religion* of Jesus Christ really and truly. It is not this to which they object, but they invent objections, they go abroad searching after objections that they may then have an excuse for rejecting *Christ*. In this way many prove that they are blind—they have a difficulty they cannot get over, and do not mean to get over, either—and so they see not Christ.

With others, blindness is worked *by wrong inferences*. It is astonishing how many eyes are blinded by wrong inferences drawn from the Truth of God. We have known one say, "Well, the mercy of God is very great—it is universal—therefore I am sure that God will not cast us into Hell." This is a wicked lie derived from a great Truth! Another says, "I read that God has an elect people." That is most surely true, but not the inference that is drawn from it—"Therefore, if I am to be saved, I shall be saved. And if I am to be lost, I shall be lost, so that I need not trouble my head about the subject." That is another false inference deduced from a great Truth of God. When a man means to commit suicide, any rope will do, and when a sinner is resolved to perish, he can always find an argument, fetched even from the Truth of God, itself, as the means of his own destruction! I am not going to answer any of these lies, but only to say that, by these false inferences, many a man has been blinded to his own eternal ruin.

Then there is another way of being blinded, and a very common one, too. That is, *by general conceit of knowledge*. I know a man stone blind of it. When I met him last, he looked at me, condescended to ask how I was and he as much as intimated that he was occasionally prepared for a little conversation with an inferior person and, therefore, he did not mind speaking about religion with me, he, himself, being a very superior person, indeed, knowing everything and, if possible, a few things besides! This man called himself an agnostic—and when a man says that he is an agnostic, he is an ig-

noramus—that is, a person who knows nothing. Yet, such a man usually talks as if he knew everything and the appendix at the end of that. He mentions Calvinism and he says in a tone of contempt, that his grandmother was a Calvinist! He says that he remembers the Evangelical School, but that they have nearly died out now. You have not talked long with him before you discover that the Lord Jesus Christ and he could never get on together because the Savior has said, “Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,” and this man will never become a little child, not he!

If you need the *opposite* of a little child, there you have the gentleman—and he wishes you, “Good afternoon,” when you begin to quote Scripture. He is not at all the person to receive any instruction of that sort. The “superior” person will always be lost, take my word for it! The more superior he is, the more sure he is to be lost—I mean not that he is *really* superior, but that he *thinks* himself so—superior to all teaching. He is not prepared to be a learner. He is ready to set up as a *teacher* and a *master* of anything you like. He is not the kind of man to enter the gates of Heaven—he carries his head too high for that. He is a man of broad thought and, of course, he goes the broad way. Narrow-minded people go in the narrow way—but then it leads unto life eternal and, therefore, I commend it unto you—

*“Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there.
But wisdom shows a narrower path,
With here and there a traveler.”*

We have another set of people who are blinded *by some special conceit of false grace*. Here is a man who has attended to many duties. Some, of course, he does not care about, but he compounds for duties he does not like by attending to others that are to his taste. He does not pray, but then he sings in the choir! Communion with God—he does not know anything about *that*—but he takes the sacrament! He has never repented of sin, but then he has found fault with other people for *their* sins, and he regards that almost as good! He does not help the poor and needy, but then he has a capital plan for lowering the poor rates! He is always doing some good thing or other, of a sort, but not of the sort that Scripture proscribes. As to believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, by a living faith *trusting* Him, that is beyond his range. As to seeking a new heart and a right spirit—and being converted and turned from darkness to Light—he does not know anything about *that*, either, but there has been, after all, a very great improvement in him. He has given up some very questionable practices and, on the whole, he has done a good deal which ought to be spoken of with considerable commendation. This is the kind of gentleman who is blinded by the god of this world!

But it is idle for me to talk about people being blinded except to those who can see, for the blindest man is the man who says that he is not blind, who will not have it that he does not see everything aright, even though he has never had his eyes opened by the Lord! He says that he could always see—it is an insult to suppose that he is blind. He is like the Pharisees who said to Jesus, “Are we blind, also?” to whom Jesus answered, “If you were blind, you should have no sin but now you say, We see, therefore your sin remains.” This is sinning against the Light of God! This is sinning with a vengeance! May God preserve all of us from such a sin!

III. Now I come to the most practical point, that is, THE KIND OF TREATMENT THAT THIS BLINDNESS REQUIRES. I pray God to bless to you what I have to say upon this matter.

I should say, first, dear Friends, *beware lest this blindness be sent as a punishment*. Although our blind friends have our loving sympathy and God blesses them, yet it must be a great calamity to be without their eyesight. Now, blindness of *heart* is not only a sin, but it is the *punishment of sin*, and it comes to many as the result of violating conscience, resisting the Holy Spirit, trifling with solemn things and being desperately set on mischief. Oh, you who have a tender conscience, mind that you do not lose it! You who have the power to sit and hear a sermon and to feel it, do not trifle with that holy sensitiveness. Once lost, so that you can read the Book of books and hear the most earnest talk, and yet feel nothing, you have lost one of the greatest privileges that you ever had. May God help the man who is going on towards this fatal blindness—and stop him before he gets any further!

I would say, also, to you who are in any way blind, *beware lest that blindness becomes the herald of your doom*. Before Haman was hanged, the first thing that the servants did was to cover his face. And when a man is about to be lost forever, the first thing that the devil does is to blind his eyes so that he cannot see. Now the poor blind Samson will make sport for the Philistines! Now they hope that they can kill him whenever they please. Beware of a blinded conscience—it is the prelude of eternal destruction! God save you from it!

Next, *if you have even a little Light, value it greatly*. If any one of us should be gradually losing his eyesight, I know that he would greatly prize the little sight that he had. How often have I spoken to a friend who has said, “This eye is quite gone, Sir, there is just a little light left in this one, and the doctor says that I must wear a shade and be very careful, or I may lose that.” Oh, take care of the little Light of God you have! If you can feel a little, be very tender of that feeling. If you can see a little of the beauty of Christ, be very jealous over that sight. Have I not often said that he who has starlight, if he thanks God for starlight, and uses it, will get moonlight, and he who has moonlight, and thanks God for it, and uses it, will get sunlight—and he who has the sunlight shall yet come to that Light which is as of seven days in the glorious Presence of God? Take care, then, of any Light that you have.

And then, the next thing is, if you are at all conscious of your blindness, but do not see the full evil of sin, do not see the glory of Christ, and do not perceive the way of salvation, *confess your blindness*. Go home, tonight, and, in your chamber, alone, acknowledge that you do not see what you ought to see, and do not feel what you ought to feel. Show your sightless eyeballs to the Savior who gives sight to the blind. Do not cloak your sin, confess it. “He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.” Say with David, “I acknowledged my sin unto You, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.” So shall you also be able to say with him, “and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”

When you have confessed your blindness, do one more thing, *trust to the Lord Jesus to open your blind eyes*. Put yourself consciously into the Presence of the Divine Savior and say to Him, “I believe that You are able to work this miracle of mercy. I believe that You can make me see Your Truth and feel Your Truth. I believe that You can make me see Yourself, and trust You. Here are my eyes, Lord, I would receive my sight! I believe that You can give it! Give it to me now!” Ah, perhaps while I speak these words, the flash of the Divine Light is coming into some dark heart! Salvation does not take hours—it is in one single instant that we pass from death unto life! The moment that we believe in Jesus, we are saved! The moment that we look to Him hanging on the Cross, our iniquity is pardoned! God grant us that blessed look of faith tonight, each one, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

It may help some to look to Christ if we sing a verse of that well-known hymn—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One!
There is life at this moment for thee!
Then look, Sinner—look unto Him, and be saved—
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.”*

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON.

ISAIAH 6; MATTHEW 13:10-17; LUKE 18:35-43.

Isaiah 6:1-4. *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His Glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.* Isaiah was awe-stricken by this vision of the Glory of the Lord. It was a sight such as few eyes have ever seen. Isaiah was never actually in the Holy Place, for he was no priest and, therefore, he could not stand there. It was in vision that he saw all this Glory and it was a vision that must have remained upon his memory through the rest of his life. The holiness and the Glory of God struck him at once.

5. *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts.* There was, indeed, enough to make him say, “Woe is me!” A sinful preacher, an imperfect preacher, among a sinful and imperfect people, he felt as if the society in which he moved was the reverse of the society in which God dwells. Pure seraphim cry, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts,” but as for us, our very talk is unholy—“a people of unclean lips.”

6, 7. *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.* The live coal from off the altar does not represent the holy flame which burns in the Prophet’s heart, but it

represents purgation, cleansing, participation in the sacrifice, and the putting away of sin. With a blister on his lips, Isaiah stood silent before God.

8. *Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?* Here we have the Divine Trinity in Unity. “Whom shall I send?” There is Unity. “Who will go for Us?” There is the Trinity. God is seeking a messenger to deliver His message to men.

8. *Then said I—*Stammering it out with the blistered lip—

8. *Here am I; send me.* Isaiah did not know the errand; perhaps, if he had known it, he would not have been quite so ready to go. Who can tell? But God’s servants are ready for anything, ready for everything, when once the living coal has touched their lips. I thank God that I was never called to such a work as Isaiah had to undertake.

9, 10. *And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear you indeed, but understand not; and see you indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* That was no Gospel ministry! It was a ministry of condemnation. The house of Israel had rejected the Prophets and had rejected God and, in the fullness of time would reject God’s own dear Son! When Isaiah in vision looked forward to all this, he was not sent to soften, but to harden—his word was to be a savor of death unto death, and not of life unto life.

11, 12. *Then said I, Lord, how long? And He answered, Until the cities are wasted without inhabitants and the houses without man, and the land is utterly desolate, and the LORD has removed men far away, and there is a great forsaking in the midst of the land.* This was a heavy task for the Prophet—he had no tidings of God’s relenting, no tokens of Divine Mercy.

13. *But yet.*—You never get this deep bass note of Divine Justice without having a, “but yet,” to accompany it!

13. *In it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.* When the oak sheds all its leaves, it is not dead—there is living sap that will again cause the tree to be verdant. Though the nation was to be brought very low, there was still to be left a remnant according to the Election of Grace. Sin never reaches such a point in God’s people but what Divine Grace triumphs! Still, where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound. This is a terrible chapter! It shows the Sovereignty of God in a lurid light and reveals how, when sin comes to a certain point, the Lord gives men up and leaves them to the blindness of their heart, so that even the means of Grace, the prophetic message, becomes a means of condemnation to them.

Now we are going to read in one of the many places in the New Testament in which this passage is quoted.

Matthew 13:10-12. *And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why do You speak unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has.* You can understand this Truth of God if you go into certain museums. I will suppose that you know nothing whatever of comparative anatomy and you go into the Museum of Comparative Anatomy at Paris. If you understand a little of the science, you will learn a great deal more—“for whoever has, to him shall be given.” If you do not know anything about the subject, you will say, “Well, this is the most uninteresting exhibition I ever saw,” and you will come out with the feeling that you do not know anything. What you did know will have vanished in the sight of all that mass of bones arranged in those extraordinary shapes. You will only feel your own lack of knowledge in that department—you will show your ignorance, and nothing else. So it is in the things of God. If you understand the fundamental principles of true godliness, you will soon understand more. But if you do not comprehend as much as that, even the reading of the Scriptures will be but slightly instructive to you.

13-15. *Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* Now the Savior turned to His disciples and spoke especially to them.

16. *But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.* It is no use having eyes that do not see, or ears that do not hear, and yet I fear that there are many eyes of that kind, and many ears of that sort, in this congregation tonight.

17. *For verily I say unto you, That many Prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.*

Now let us read one other passage to show how the Lord heals the blind and makes them see.

Luke 18:35, 36. *And it came to pass, that as He was come near, unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.* If he could not see, he could hear and he could speak. Use all the ability that you have and God will give you more!

37-39. *And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passes by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, You son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace.* They told him that he was spoiling the Preacher's sermon. They had lost his last sentence. They could not catch the Savior's meaning, so they cried out to the blind man, "Hold your tongue, Sir."

39, 40. *But he cried so much the more, You son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood.* I can see Him stop. He had been walking on, before, and talking as He went, but prayer can cause the Savior to be spell-bound. Here Jesus stood.

40, 41. *And commanded him to be brought unto Him: and when he was come near, He asked him, saying, What will you that I shall do unto you?* Our Lord likes us to know what it is that we need. He would have us feel our need, that we may have a distinct perception of the blessing when it comes and know just what it is.

41. *And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.* He needed nothing else, but oh, how badly he needed that gift!

42. *And Jesus said unto him, Receive your sight.* Notice the echo. The blind man said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Jesus said, "Receive your sight." With a little turn in the expression, Christ's answer is the echo of our prayer!

42. *Your faith has saved you.* No, surely it was *Christ* who saved him. Yes, but Christ delights to put His crown on Faith's head, for Faith always puts the crown back on Christ's head—"Your faith has saved you."

43. *And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him.* What should we do when our eyes are opened by Christ but follow him? The moment that we can see Him, we should begin to follow Him!

43. *Glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.* May we have cause to praise the Lord, tonight, for many blind eyes opened!

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