

THE CLEARER VISION

I have often remarked to my friends on the wonderful change that took place in my mind immediately after hearing the „good tidings”—after being shown the narrow way to life in the gospel age, and the restitution of all things in the age now dawning. To compare great things with small, I will illustrate it by another life-experience.

It was my lot to be endowed with power of vision far from perfect—with eyes that were „near-sighted.” How much pleasure I lost because of this, I could not tell. I knew there were distant beauties spread before me which from this cause I could but poorly appreciate, and that the delicate features, the intricate combinations and the nice details of nearer objects were lost to my eyes.

But there came a change. A few years ago for the first time I used glasses to aid the eyes. What a transformation! O happy change! That which was beautiful before had now an added charm, and

what was gloomy, dim, obscure, now stood out in such clearness that it seemed a new world was around me, or I a new being, that I could thus behold it.

Now, all these years, what was mental vision showing me? Oh! some perplexing scenes. I looked across the way and saw a family whose future lot I vainly tried to trace. The father was profane, passionate, unkind. The mother was uncultured, overburdened with cares, little inclined and almost wholly unfit to train the children under her care. They were wayward and disobedient. Anger, contention, unkindness, marked their daily life; and self-denial, peace, gentleness, were virtues unknown. Observation taught that likely these children would come to dishonor, unhappy marriage, law-breaking—some of the many forms of sin or

crime, with all their bitterness and pain. I could not see further, but many whose vision was thought clear declared that for this earthly life of evil there was a fearful condemnation—that for these who were reared in ignorance, lived in misery, and died in shame, there was punishment inexpressible and endless, prepared by their Creator, and awaiting them. I could not see, but many told me this.

Down the street, in a home of elegance, lived a very different family. Pride, haughtiness, love of wealth and honors pervaded all things there. The daughter gave herself up to the frivolities of fashion, and was found in the ball-room rather than in the house of worship. The son chose the pleasures of the gaming table, the race course and the club room. Finally he brought woe and shame upon all, for in his passion he slew a man. For the crime he died on the scaffold, and thus two lives went out early, in darkness and unfitness for future happiness.

An aged widow, whose life was one of faith and good works, ceased not to plead with God that some of her children who were unconverted might be brought into the fold before death came to them, lest while part of her dear ones attained the endless bliss of heaven some would be consigned to unutterable, endless anguish.

All things showed that humanity was borne down by an awful burden of sin, while it was required of them, „Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” The most thoughtful might well ask, „Is life worth living? Oh! who shall deliver us from this death?”

The zeal which once warmed my heart to serve the Lord had given way to stoical determination to try to do right and abide the consequences. Not only „I craved what the world never gave,” but I sought for what the churches had not to offer. To me a guiding hand was sent by God, lifting the veil that had shrouded the pages of His Word, pointing me to the „good tidings of great joy.”

I saw how the world is learning the exceeding sinfulness of sin; that being saved from the prison of death by Him who „gave himself a ransom for all,” when they „come again from the land of the enemy” they may know, and fear and shun the way of evil; that „as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;” and that the dark problem of human misery finds solution in the day now being ushered in by the dark hour before the dawn—the day when „the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

Now, for the first time, I saw not only that justification by faith in the ransom of Jesus saves from the penalty in the coming age, but that to consecrate and sacrifice our justified lives to do the will of God leads, during the Gospel age, to a higher life, spiritual, divine, immortal.

O reader, rejoice with me that having gained the standpoint of belief in „the restitution of all things,” the providence of God in the past and his written plan for the coming age are seen in matchless harmony. Rejoice with me that He has „opened our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of His law.”

B. E.

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