

~Other Speakers S-Z: D.S. Warner:

Perhaps no figure is more frequently used in the Bible to represent pure divine religion than that of light. To the heart that is filled with the heavenly illumination, this idea is very precious. Glory to God for light—pure spiritual light in the soul. Such is the religion of the Bible; it is opposite to darkness in every respect. It is God Himself shining into hearts where sin had spread darkness and death to restore unto them—the light of life. Our blessed Savior is declared to be the light of the world. A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people, Israel.

If, therefore, as we have seen, the Bible teaches two phases of Christian experience, we might reasonably expect them to be represented by this prominent figure, by two degrees of spiritual illumination. Some may object to this, and say that light emanating from God cannot possess degrees of brilliancy: that it must all be perfect. I answer this by pointing to the creation of light at the beginning of the world, where we have a perfect representation of the impartation of light in the new creation, or redemption of man.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (Genesis 1:3-5)

So the Lord speaks light into the believing sinner's heart—turns him from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. But after he receives—the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins—the pure light received from the Lord is more or less obscured by corrupt human nature: when all goes well there seems to be sunshine, but under provocations and trials the sediment of inbred sin roils up as clouds in our spiritual sky. There is, therefore, in this state a mingling of the two opposites of light and darkness.

But the Almighty speaks the second time,—dividing the light from the darkness—removing by the blood of the cross all moral cloudiness from the soul—that eye who were sometimes darkness, may be all, and forever—light in the Lord.

Who will say that natural light did not shine brighter after the Creator separated the darkness from it? And why not a second and more perfect illumination of the soul, through the incoming Sanctifier? Paul, himself, draws the analogy between the creation of light in the world, and spiritual light in the soul.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Compare this verse with 2 Corinthians 3:18.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

These steps—out of darkness into His marvelous light—are clearly shown by the two applications of the Savior's hand in giving sight to the blind man (Mark 8:23-25). The more we study the precious Word of the Lord, the more we are convinced that the miracles of Jesus were designed to teach and illustrate the plan of salvation; the occasion of each one of them finds an exact counterpart in the condition of sinners: they are deaf, blind, lame, sick, leprous, starving, bowed down, possessed with the Devil, and dead in sin; from all of which they find deliverance in the—Mighty to Save. There is no doubt in my mind that the Lord's manner of opening the eyes of the blind man was expressly to teach the two-fold feature of His salvation. What else could it be for?—And He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town;—it is the merciful hand of Jesus that leads the sinner out of the city of Destruction. —And when He had spit on his eyes;—the Lord's way is always offensive to the flesh, the—carnal mind.—And put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw aught.—In every distinct touch of saving grace we receive from the hand of the Lord, He immediately requires us to tell our experience, or testify to what He has done for us.—And he looked up and said, I see men as trees walking.—A wonderful experience indeed to one, who a moment since, could not even behold the light, and who probably never saw before in his life. Such is the new and radical change of the new birth. In the rapturous joy of the new experience, all consciousness of further want disappears. If the happy man had never enjoyed the blessing of perfect vision, he would not know but what he saw as well as anybody; but he would ere long discover the need of better vision. So the joyful convert has no conception of the salvation yet reserved in Christ Jesus for him until the future develops a deeper want in the heart. There were two defects in this man's vision; first it seemed to magnify the stature of men. What a striking representation of the convert's trouble—the man-fearing spirit. The shaking element of inbred sin—a spirit of fear and trembling—makes men seem like giants. Second, it lacked the power of clear

discrimination: men were simply seen as moving objects, and not their distinguishing features. This well represents young converts who have not "their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." They are very susceptible to misplacing confidence.

After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. (Mark 8:25)

When the soul receives the Savior's second touch, the film of inbred sin is removed, and the eyes of our understanding are fully opened. For "He that is spiritual (hath received the personal Comforter), discerneth all things, yet he, himself, is discerned of no man (1 Corinthians 2:15"margin).

The Savior in His sermon on the mount seems to compare perfect vision with the complete indwelling of God, who is light. "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye is single the whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22).

The following comment by Adam Clark, I think, is very good:

"The light of the body is the eye." That is, the eye is to the body what the sun is to the universe in the daytime, or a lamp or a candle to a house after night. "If thine eye be single" "aplausively" simple, uncompounded, i.e., so perfect in its structure as to see objects distinctly and clearly, and not confusedly, or in different places to what they are, as is often the case in certain disorders of the eye; one object appearing two or more" or else in a different situation, and of a different color to what it really is. This state of the eye is termed, verse 23, "ponerosâ"evil, i.e., diseased or defective. An evil eye was a phrase in use among the ancient Jews, to denote an envious, covetous man or disposition. Our blessed Lord however, extends and sublimates this meaning, and uses the sound eye as a metaphor, to point out that simplicity of intention, and purity of affection with which men should pursue the supreme good. We cannot draw more than one straight line between two invisible points. We aim at happiness, it is found only in one thing, the invisible and eternal God. If the line, or simple intention be drawn straight to Him, and the soul walk by it with purity of affection the whole man shall be "light in the Lord," the rays of that excellent glory shall irradiate the mind, and through the whole spirit shall the divine nature be diffused. How forcibly the uttermost salvation of Christ Jesus is taught in those words of His. The whole body filled with light"no particle of darkness or impurity remaining: the eye single"the entire life governed by one motive, the glory of God, and actuated by the single impulse of divine love. It is the new commandment glory, "which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light shineth;" the Lord has removed the darkness from the light, producing perfect day in the soul.

Saint John also holds up this true light as a higher attainment for the sons of God, and identifies it with purification from "all sin" and "all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7-9)

We will cite but one text more: 2 Peter 1:19. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."

The sure word of prophecy"or inspired truth" is here represented as a light that shines in a dark place, which light these new-born babes were to heed until the blood of Christ removed the shades of sin, and ushered in the brightness of His rising.

But, what is the dark place where the lamp of truth shines? Answer: Unsanctified hearts of believers. The word here rendered dark, according to the Greek-English concordance, does not occur but this single instance in the New Testament. It is rendered directly from the Greek in the Emphatic Diaglott"â"filthy." James McKnight's Notes, "nasty place." "A lamp shining in a dark, obscure, and gloomy place," Doddridge. Does not this correspond with the carnal babes in Christ spoken of by Paul, who were commanded to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit? The whole tenor of the Bible teaches that in the first state of grace, the living word reigns and shines in an impure heart"a roily and cloudy nature.

That this lamp-light denotes the primary grace of God in the heart is very evident from the fact that it was to be succeeded by the "day dawn and day star arising in their hearts:" how could this new experience in the heart remove the former darkness if that were not where it dwelt. God had said, "Let there be light" in these hearts; and there was light. And God separated the darkness of inbred sin from the light He had created in the soul that the whole being might be lit up with the Glory of His presence.

Whatever may be true of the lamplight state, it is certain (1) that the persons addressed were Christians"â"had obtained like precious faith with us (the Apostle Peter) through the righteousness of God, and our Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1). And, (2) a new and sudden experience of perfect day was yet to dawn in their hearts.

Some, it is true, have applied this revelation of Christ to His second advent, but the language rather describes a personal experience in the heart"a revelation of Christ in the inner man. What is the rising of the day-star in

the heart, but the incoming of Christ, the "true light," who calls Himself "the bright and morning star" (Revelation 22:16) and has promised to take up His abode in the temples of His grace?

The exposition we have here given is sustained by the best of scholars, some of whom were not associated with the special holiness cause, as the following from Dr. Steele will show.

No passage in the Scriptures more strikingly describes the writer's Christian experience, first of painful doubt, and then of cloudless assurance: first a spasmodic clinging of the intellect to the external evidences of miracle and prophecy, and then the sunrise—"Christ manifested, the day-star in the heart. There are, in this verse, four verbs in the present tense, have, do, take, shineth, representing the alternation of light and darkness in early Christian experience. The lamp feebly glimmers in a gloomy, or, literally dirty place, giving just light enough to reveal impurities, but not fire enough to consume them. In this twilight state doubts harass the soul and there is and intense wishing and watching for the day-dawn and rising sun. To the patient waiter there is a last tropical sunrise. The darkness flees, the filthy place is cleansed.

But how is this shown in the Greek text? Note the two aorist verbs, dawn and arise; "put an end," says Alford, "to the state indicated by the present participles above." What this day-star is, Grotius, DeWette, and Huther best explain, who think that some state in the readers themselves is pointed at, which is to supervene upon a less perfect state. Says Huther: "The writer distinguishes between two degrees of Christian life: in the first, faith rests upon outward evidences; in the second, on inward revelations of the Spirit; in the first, each detail is believed separately as such; in the second, each is recognized as a necessary part of the whole. And hence, being in the former is naturally called a walking in a dismal, dirty place, in the light of a lamp or candle, while the being in the latter is walking in the light of day.

Alford adds:

"This latter we believe to be nearly the true account." Let us see what is taught here: (1) Two states of spiritual life, symbolized by lamp-light and sun-light. (2) The aorist tense marks a sharply defined emergency from the first to the second, by the glorious King of day arising in the heart. This, we believe, to be a correct exegesis of the highly figurative and beautiful text. It accords with the experience of all who have entered into the definite experience of perfect love.

While these authors concur in teaching two phases of Christian experience, it appears to me they have drawn too heavy shades on their picture of lamp-light grace. A good lamp will fill most of a room with light; will enable a person to carry on work within the compass of its rays, nearly as well as by day-light. So, also the grace of sonship is a real light in the heart: it need not, and should not be faint and flickering, nor spasmodic. It is a great mistake that in this initial state the soul is supported chiefly by an intellectual clinging to the external evidence of miracles and prophecy. Some things can be seen and comprehended near the glowing lamp, just as perfectly as by the sunlight. So, in the light of justification, the soul knows the divinity of the Bible, the pardon of sins and adoption into the family of God by positive experience, by actual inward consciousness.

The chief difference consists in the very limited area of lamplight. Our consciousness of optical power beyond the extent of light for its use naturally begets a desire to enlarge our view of surrounding objects; but in every direction a wall of darkness intercepts our vision. This is precisely the convert's experience. While he can say, "One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see," many things lay concealed in the depths of his soul, beyond the dark wall of inbred corruption: neither can he "see afar off" in the mysteries of redeeming grace. But when the morning appears, "when the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, is come," He fills His temple with light; He shines to the perfect day throughout all the kingdom of God's grace, revealing to the eye of faith, all things that our heavenly Father hath "prepared for them that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

Dear brother or sister, if you know when you passed from darkness to light, let me ask you if you also know when you were "changed from glory to glory," from lamplight to day-dawn. If you know of no such an event in your past life, let this be the glorious day of its dawning in your soul.

O, stay not in the twilight of salvation, the mere vestibule of the kingdom of light. Set your whole heart to seek the "excellent glory." "Wait for it as they that watch for the morning." Wait and watch, and pray, until "unto you the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, with healing in His wings."

As the glorious sun disperses
Gloomy shades of night away,
So the fullness of the Spirit
Turns our lamplight into day.

Sun of Heaven! Shine forever,
In this happy soul of mine;

(Second Work of Grace) 27. TWO DEGREES OF DIVINE LIGHT IN THE SOUL

**I will walk beneath thy beaming;
Lost in all thy love divine.**