

**Thoughts
on
Vision**

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Introduction

It is interesting and thought-provoking to consider the striking similarities between physical vision and spiritual vision. A few illustrations will be briefly compared below with a prayer that the readers will further expand on the subject.

Vision is entirely dependent upon light. Our eyes are attuned to light waves ranging in length from slightly below four hundred millionths of a millimeter to slightly above seven hundred millionths of a millimeter. The wave length of light and the phenomenon of its bending as observed through a prism makes us to see the different colors. This is known as chromatic vision. The vision of white, gray, and black is controlled by brighteners or lack of brighteners. This is called achromatic vision. May we consider II Corinthians 4:3-6 with these things in view:

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

No doubt, the reason for the blindness mentioned here is the lack of light. Considering the truth that the “light” of the glorious gospel is the Lord Jesus Himself, and that there is no salvation apart from Him, one can readily understand how Satan keeps people blinded. His method is simple—keep them in darkness. Isn't it wonderful that according to this passage, “God commanded the light to shine out of darkness?” Not only has this glorious “light” been commanded to shine that we may behold the beauty of the universe by the eye, but the “light has shined into our hearts” to reveal the Lord Jesus. Also, as the light waves of God's Word enter our blood washed hearts, they scatter into the varied and wondrous hues that blend perfectly in painting a masterpiece of Him we adore. Visual experts tell us that they are at a loss to explain how that when we view an object with our eyes, the image on the retina is upside down and inverted from right to left. How we come to see right side up, even though our retinal image is upside down is a problem that has puzzled “experts” to the present time. The “god of this world” (Satan) is attempting to present a distorted view of the Lord, but thanks be unto God, who created the intricacies of the eye, we can, through His word, clearly see the Lord Jesus. Remember the Lord Jesus is the express “image” of God.

Situated at the point where the optic nerve leaves the eye and enters the brain is a “blind spot” in everyone's eyes. Note in the Scripture that Satan “hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.” It is ter-

rible to think about, but most people in the world live in total darkness.

Reader friend, will you not consider that the Lord Jesus stated, “when you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” Give up today, and let God open the windows of your mind and heart, that the radiant light of His Word may shine into your darkened heart and give you eternal life !

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Are You Near-Sighted

We have seen in the preceding chapter that the chief aim of Satan is to completely blind the minds of people today, “lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them” (II Corinthians 4:4). If he loses in this primary endeavor, his efforts are then directed to weaken the vision of the believer. This effort of Satan takes on many varied forms. One device of Satan that we will note carefully, is his effort to make us “near sighted” or “short sighted.” Let us consider II Peter 1:4-9, but especially verse 9:

“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; Receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls.”

Physical near-sightedness means that a person can see distinctly at short distances only. Spiritual near-sightedness surely means the same thing in reference to the things of the Lord. If the short-sighted believer turns and looks backwards, he cannot see “that he was purged from his old sins,” and that “the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son cleanseth us from all sin,” therefore, he will either feel that he can lose salvation or on the other hand live salvation loosely. Also, as the near-sighted believer takes a forward look, he cannot see distinctly “the things that God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Corinthians 2:9), and the wonderful admonition to “set your affections on things above” means absolutely nothing to him.

If one will just gaze off into the far-away distance, it will rest the eyes and relax the mind and body; yet the god of this world is doing everything within his power to keep us busily engaged with “minding earthly things.” If we could really grasp the meaning of the divine statement that “our citizenship is in heaven” maybe we wouldn't be “entangled with the affairs of this life.” We would all do well to consider “holy men of old” who had a far-sighted look at the plan and purposes of God. Just briefly consider two of these men — David and Abraham. In Acts 2:29-32, the Lord through Peter instructs us that David foresaw the resurrection of Christ. Verse 31 states:

“He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul

was not left in hell neither his flesh did see corruption.”

The expression “seeing this before” literally means that David was far-sighted. In Galatians 3:6-8, we are told that:

“Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.”

Romans 4:20-21 states of Abraham that:

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith giving glory to God: And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”

There is no doubt, when we consider Hebrews 11:17-19, that Abraham saw beyond the death of Isaac and beheld the power of God to resurrect.

To use a human illustration, the writer not long ago talked to a young girl who was quitting school to be married. On the surface, there appears to be nothing wrong with this common occurrence, but as particulars came to light, it was found she only lacked two months of graduating from high school. Her husband to be had also quit only lacking a few months of graduating. He had obtained a job; but had quit it recently because of near induction into the armed services. One can surely understand and be sympathetic of this young couple's plight, but note the many hasty decisions

made . If the world could just be slowed down a little and give people time to “consider” the things of the Lord, a longer perspective of life would be possible.

Dear reader, if you are one who subscribes to the theory of “eat, drink, and be merry,” please remember tomorrow. Yes, it seems a long time ago that “Christ died for your sins,” but remember, one look away from this “present evil age” to the One who suffered, bled, and died on the cross for you, will give you “eternal life.” Trust Him as your Saviour today, and then you can look away into the glorious future when “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:1-3)

Night Blindness and Vitamin "A"

We have noted previously that vision is entirely dependent upon light. The amount of light determines the degree of ability to see clearly. It is apparent from just a superficial reading of the Word of God that "darkness" not only bespeaks of evil but also characterizes this present world system. The Word speaks of "the rulers of the darkness of this world" in Ephesians 6:12, and in John 3:19 we are told,

"That light is come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil."

Knowing all this to be true, how are we going to "see" or "visualize" spiritual things in this darkened world?

Literal, physical night blindness was recognized by the ancient Egyptians, according to historical accounts. They used liver, preferably raw, as a remedy. It is now understood that this defect is caused partly by insufficient Vitamin A, and that liver is a rich source of this vitamin. Army and Navy personnel who must see well at night are sometimes fed a rich diet of Vitamin A. This enables them to adapt readily to the low night illumination. Newer, more sophisticated methods are used today. It might be added here as a matter of interest that the chief purpose of the military in desiring a man to see at night is to detect the enemy and his actions. May we not draw a

rich spiritual lesson from these facts? I Corinthians 1:5 states:

“That in everything you are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge.”

Spiritual vitamins come from an ample supply of the precious Word of God. Jeremiah of old exclaimed, “Thy words were found and I did eat them ...” I Peter 2:2-3 states:

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”

Nothing supplies the vigorous strength necessary to observe the actions of Satan on the one hand, or to appreciate the wonders of the Lord on the other hand, as does the Word of God.

According to reports, it takes about 40 minutes to become completely dark-adapted, yet this adaptation is lost within a few minutes when one looks at brightly illuminated objects. Yes, Satan has a false glitter about his works that blinds believers in one glance. By prayerful diligent study, a child of God can come to a place of enlightenment, but a moment of yielding to the flesh can so affect his spiritual eyes until it is difficult to see the things of God clearly.

We are told that the most convenient way to keep dark-adapted while at the same time carrying on activities which require

response to illuminated objects is to wear special tight fitting red goggles. The only way for the sincere believer to carry on the work of the Lord in a darkened world is to “view” everything through the crimson tide that flowed at Calvary. Let us look at things objectively through the Word, always striving to see things with the “mind of Christ.”

Color Weakness

Many people have lower than normal ability to distinguish colors or hues. Those who can see the various hues, but have certain difficulties in distinguishing them, are said to have a color weakness. The color blindness or weakness which we hear about most frequently is red-green color blindness. Incidentally, a much larger percentage of males than females is red-green color blind.

The above becomes of extreme interest to us in our desire to visualize spiritual things from God's Word. Take for example the work of the Levitical priests in detecting and treating leprosy. Read carefully Leviticus 13:49-59, taking special note of the fact that the priest had to distinguish the color of the sore in order to determine whether it was leprous or not. In verse 49 we read:

“And if the plague be greenish or reddish in the garment, or in the skin, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any thing of skin; it is a plague of leprosy, and shall be showed unto the priest;”

Then in verse 55 the Word states:

“And the priest shall look on the plague, after that it is washed; and behold, if the plague has not changed his color, and the plague be not spread; it is unclean; thou shalt burn it in the fire, it is fret in-

ward, whether it be bare within or without.”

Now, considering the well-known Scriptural fact that leprosy is a type of sin in the Word, these truths take on an added significance. Genuine Christians should be able to distinguish sin at a glance, but the tragedy sometimes is that we are blind, or at least weak, to Satan's attractions. Also, tragically true is the fact that many people with defective color vision do not recognize their defect. The reason that they are not aware of the deficiency is that they have learned to give color names to familiar objects in terms of the most characteristic brightness of these. Thus, red to one type of red-green defective, is equivalent in stimulating value to dark gray. He does this, because, when earlier stimulated by the “red” object, he has heard it called red. Yes, Satan starts early on a person to get him to “learn” defectively. God's admonition is to:

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

The only way to recognize sin as to its true nature is to accept God's definitions and descriptions. Satan is a master of shading or cloaking sin in low illumination until it looks harmless. We must “see” everything through the “light” of God's Word.

In verse 58 of Leviticus 13 we noted that after complete washing, the leprous

sore became clean. Of course, the skin is restored to its natural color. Meditate upon Isaiah 1:18 for a moment:

“Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Note the color of crimson and scarlet; yet God is able to make them “white as snow,” and “as wool.” Revelation 1:5 says:

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

Think of the remarkable phenomenon of the crimson blood of the Son of God. Applied to our scarlet sin, it makes us white as snow and clothes us in His perfect righteousness. How is this accomplished? We can't explain—we only believe! But we do advance this thought in closing:

“Being born again; not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (I Peter 1:23)

The glorious Word of God sheds such extreme, wonderful light upon our souls that it clears away and cleanses us from all

the discoloration of sin.

Perfect Vision

There probably is no such thing as perfect vision! Someone has said, “our hindsight is always 20-20.” However, a 20-20 vision is not perfect and only refers to an aspect of the intricate mechanism of the eyes. Whether we speak of hindsight or foresight, there are many things that keep us from seeing perfectly. Also, when we realize that we really “see” with our minds, then we understand the importance of “having the mind of Christ,” and not the “mind of the flesh.” Sometimes it is true that we generally “see” about what we want to see.

There are many things that hinder us in our desire to view things correctly. For example, distance will sometimes make things appear falsely. A huge mountain may appear to be only five miles away, when in reality it is fifty miles. We know that distance “seems” different on water than on land. Court cases abound with instances of witnesses “thinking” they saw something or someone, then later finding they were in error. In Zechariah 10:2, it is stated:

*“For the idols have spoken vanity,
and the diviners have seen a lie,
and have told false dreams ...”*

We realize that the miraculous healings performed by our Lord while He was on earth have deep spiritual significance, but in reference to our “thoughts on vision” the one recorded in Mark 8:23-25 is appropri-

ate:

“And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hand upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.”

A careful reading of this portion of Scripture affords an interesting and revealing example of blindness, imperfect vision—and then perfect vision. Note that in verse 23, he was blind, in verse 24 he didn't see so well, and in verse 25 “he saw every man clearly.”

If only we would yield completely to Him, acknowledging our helpless estate, we could see so much better. Also, please observe that in verse 25, the Lord “made him to look up.” Keep Looking Up!

A comparison of I Corinthians 13:12 with I John 3:1-3 will bring the difference between our earthly (imperfect) vision and the heavenly (perfect) vision into focus. The Apostle said in I Corinthians 13:12:

“For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

Life is sometimes a puzzle, we don't

always see things in proper perspective. Countless “things” mar or cloud our vision. As long as we are in these “bodies of humiliation,” we will “see through a glass darkly.” Even our view of the Lord Jesus Christ is sometimes distorted by our own prejudice and bias, but one of these days “we shall see Him as He is.” Perfect vision will be ours only when we are with Him. The closer we walk with Him today, the better is our vision.

In conclusion, it needs to be brought to the attention of our readers that, one “look” in simple childlike faith to the Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary will bring eternal salvation. God says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22).

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov- ed.”

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John 3:16-21)

Lessons to Focus On

As we have seen, many spiritual lessons can be learned and applied from “Thoughts on Vision.” In fact, the Scripture speaks often about the eye and seeing and looking—physically, mentally, and metaphorically.

Like all parts of the human anatomy the eyes can be used for good or evil. In fact, our Lord taught the great importance of this organ of our body when He said,

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:22-23)

What we set our sights on determines our character to a great extent. If we focus on earthly and evil things, our body will “be full of darkness.” On the other hand, if our eye is concentrated on heavenly and spiritual truths, our body will be “full of light.” Notice the great contrast, “full of darkness” versus “full of light.” Light is absolutely necessary to see properly, in fact, to see at all!

There are so many things to see in the world, some of it is good, much of it is evil. Knowing that the devil is the “god of this world” (system) we can expect many attractive and appealing sights. In 1 John 2:15-17, we are given loving, but stern

warning to:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

We are told to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” Then the world and its “things” are categorized into three parts:

- Lust of the flesh
- Lust of the eyes
- Pride of life.

These things comprise the sum total of the world's attractions. These are the areas that are appealed to by the world's system. Most advertisement, entertainment, and literature is directed to all of us for the purpose of influencing our choices and controlling our lives. One of these three, the lust of the eyes, plays a major role in our choices and activities. Consider Eve in the garden of Eden. The subtlety of Satan is shown in many ways as he cast doubt upon God's Word and then finally an outright denial of what God had said. The fruit of the tree that God placed in the midst of the garden was declared off limits to our first parents. In fact, God said,

“And the Lord God, commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. 2:16-17)

Then the devil said,

“Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:4)

Notice the reference to the “eyes” and then in verse 6, we read “then the woman saw the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes.” Then in verse seven, we see that “both their eyes were opened; and they knew they were naked.”

An outstanding example of the “lust of the eyes” is that concerning Abraham and Lot in Genesis, chapter 13. We are told that Abraham and Lot had a problem concerning the land, cattle, and their substance. Abraham, in the Spirit of the Lord said to Lot, “separate thyself I pray thee from me: if thou will take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.” Then we are told in Gen. 13:10

“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld the plains of Jordan that it was

well watered everywhere—“.

Notice, Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld. The lust of the eyes got him into trouble and we know the rest of the story. These examples could be duplicated many, many, times in the records of Scripture, both old and new testaments. How true and representative they are of the human race in general and of each of us, personally!

*Ye dwellers in darkness with sin-blinded eyes,
The Light of the world is Jesus;
Go, wash, at His bidding, and Light will arise,
The Light of the world is Jesus.
Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;
Once I was blind, but now I can see;
The Light of the world is Jesus.*

— P.P. Bliss