

Amid these disciplinary forces, the lower as well as the higher, man preserves his liberty, may break through them and work downward, controlled by the appetite of the hour, the frenzy of the moment; yet in every stage of descent he meets some check, and passes some barrier which God had placed for his arrest. If at last he bursts away, a comet, into the rayless void, it is because in his own mad impetuosity he will not be swayed by those attractions, which, bending his orbit at apogee, would lead him back again to the Source of light and heat.

ARTICLE II.

REMARKS ON SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS IV. 3, 4.

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Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔστι κεκαλυμμένοι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν, ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἔστι κεκαλυμμένοι· Ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσε τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων,
— EX. REC. J. J. GRIESB.

“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 believed not.”— AUTHORIZED ENGLISH VERSION.

AMONG the apostles of our Saviour a distinguished position was occupied by Paul as a minister of Christ to the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 7–9). Not that the heathen world was exclusively the sphere of his labor; for while his profound acquaintance with the ritual of Sinai, and the gospel it foreshadowed, together with fervid love for Israel, eminently qualified him for labors among “his brethren according to the flesh,” his constant practice also appears to have been in every place, first to make known the glad tidings to them. In every city embraced in his missionary toils, from Antioch even to Rome, he acted on the principle stated Rom. i. 16: “To *the Jew* first, and also to the Greek.”¹

¹ Acts xiii. 5, 14; xvii. 1, 2, 10; xxviii. 16–28.

Though so eminently fitted to discharge the functions of his ministry among his own people, he was a vessel specially chosen to bear the gospel to the heathen. "To me," said he, with his characteristic humility, "who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. iii. 8). And inasmuch as the Gentiles were to be admitted into the church of God as brethren on an equal footing with the Jews, without a previous proselytism to Judaism, or submission to the rite of circumcision, and to enter by another door, even by faith alone, it was indispensable that an apostle to them should be superior to the prejudices which enslaved by their power the great mass even of Jewish believers (Acts xxi. 20, etc.), that he should possess a clear insight into the import of both covenants, with the relation of each to the other, and be prepared, if by misguided teachers a Gentile convert was led with an observance of the institutions of Christ to join those of Moses, to denounce the latter as "beggarly and elementary" (Gal. iv. 9).

Such was Paul. As having kindled his torch at the altar, on which, as a libation to heaven, the blood of the proto-martyr Stephen was poured; as having his lips touched with its living coal; as drinking in inspiration from the eloquence of that servant of Christ when standing on the verge of both worlds, his spirit already in the higher and better, with an angelic radiance on his countenance he declared the former things to have passed away and all things to have become new,—did Paul converse on divine themes, preach Christ, and write for the illumination of the church of every age and clime.

And in order to a ready apprehension of the sense of many parts of those profound writings of his, it is necessary that his readers' mind should be imbued with like sentiments. The elements of all sciences are beggarly, compared with their ultimate or even earlier developments; they form, however, the ladder by which we climb to a more commanding position and gain extensive prospects. The knowledge of revelation forms no exception. "Beggarly" as are its "elements"

compared with the riches of divine truth exhibited in Christ, the higher lessons of the latter will be best known and appreciated by those who have first diligently cultivated the former. Thus Paul alone of the apostles, as a master-teacher, struggling in the greatness of his conceptions of divine truth, is found in sympathy with the feebleness, dullness, and unappreciativeness of those to whom he ministered, dimming his own torch that the brethren might bear its light, and arresting his own divine words, when their sublimity called to heights which his disciples could not climb (1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 11, 12, comp. ii. Pet. iii. 15, 16).

These thoughts were suggested to the writer of these pages by what appeared to him the unsatisfactory rendering in our common version of the words of Paul indicated at the head of this Article. Glancing at Calvin's version, Beza's, the French of Ostervald, Olshausen's Commentary, and those of other persons, he found that King James's translators were by no means singular in their apprehension of Paul's meaning. Led thus to a more careful examination of the passage under review, he was confirmed in his opinion, that the declaration of the inspired writer is altogether different from the generally received rendering of it, notwithstanding the imposing list of learned names by which it is supported.

The forced and unnatural style of the authorized version readily awakens in the mind of a thoughtful reader suspicion that the sense is not correctly given, and that the translators covered their own dubiousness under a word-for-word translation of the inspired penman;—a method often adopted where a writer is not understood, that is, where the signification of each word is known, but the import of the whole in combination is matter of doubt. In this way it is believed, that many verses of our version may be accounted for, the translator oscillating between different interpretations, or having no conception what the writer meant, gave a verbatim rendering, leaving the English reader no chance, except that of consulting commentaries. Instances of this probably occur

in 1 Cor. xi. 10 ; 1 Pet. iii. 19 ; Isa. lxiv. 5 in the phrase "in those is continuance."

When our version says (2 Cor. iv. 3) "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost," a very good sense lies on the words, and a very solemn truth is told us ; but when it is immediately added, "in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believed not," we see at once a styled forced and unlike that of Paul.' Is it intended in the terms "those that are lost" (τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις), to describe a class of persons distinct from those indicated under the terms "them which believed not" (τῶν ἀπίστων), which the English reading seems to require? Then the gravest inconveniences offer themselves, of which it is not the least that it distinguishes between the lost and the unbeliever, while elsewhere the scriptures uniformly make them co-extensive, nay identical. But if, as would be generally conceded, the two designations are descriptive of the same persons, then what inextricable confusion of thought and style is there in making the minds of the latter to be blinded in the former.

Olshausen endeavors to set aside the difficulty by alledging "a kind of Hebrew construction." But Hebrew idiom it is not, and the learned commentator too well understood the syntax of that language to suppose it was. Hence the extenuating phrase "a kind of Hebrew construction." Probably he suspected a mixture of the Greek and Hebrew idioms as best adapted to explain such an unusual collocation of words. But even this plea will not do. In the commonly received sense of the words, the construction is neither Hebrew nor Greek, but must, with such a meaning put on them, be accounted a solecism in any language.

The error lies in mistaking the subject of the ἀπολλυμένοις. This word being undoubtedly used elsewhere by Paul of rejectors of the gospel,¹ it is not strange that the mind of any reader should at once receive the impression, that the

¹ Vide 1 Cor. i. 18 and 2 Cor. ii. 15 where τοῖς σωζομένοις appears as its antithesis.

writer by the same term is designating the same object, though the conclusion of the sentence plainly shows that he does not; for, assuming that he does, it is not possible to make any tolerable sense without admitting at the same time a solecism in language.

But if now by *ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις*² be understood the things that are lost, have perished, or ceased, namely, the entire furniture and ceremonial of the Mosaic economy, to which also the *κεκαλυμμένον* in the same verse points, indicating that the splendid ritual of Moses as a *κάλυμμα*, obscured the glory of the gospel, by pre-occupying the mind with its transitory and unsubstantial glory, as though it were imperishable and divine, the sense of the whole becomes plain, and the anomaly which an incorrect rendering had brought on the language of the sacred writer is removed. The passage would then stand thus: "But if our gospel be veiled, it is veiled by the things which are lost, whereby the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not."

Nor have our interpreters erred with respect to the *τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις* alone; but by confounding the *τῶν ἀπίστων* with it as descriptive of the same object, they have extended the latter to embrace all unbelievers, whereas the reference of the writer, as we shall proceed to show, is not general but particular. Indeed, if the view above contended for be the correct one, it becomes necessary to limit the *ἀπίστος* to those whose deadness to the high claims of the gospel of Christ on them is induced by an exaggerated and altogether false estimate of the legal institute of the Old Testament; for in reference to such alone can it be said that the gospel is "veiled" to them, "by the things that are lost,"—the ritual, whose "glory" is gone, the "commandment," whose authority is "annulled" (Heb. vii. 18). We believe, indeed, that the apostle's reference is even more limited, pointing especially to those Judaizing teachers who vilified his person, and calumniated his character and ministry, and endeavored to gain to themselves and their own doctrine a confidence

¹ *ἐν* before the instrument, as usual.

which apostolic authority alone could claim. To vindicate himself and ministry from their foul aspersions is Paul's great object in this epistolary communication.

This special object of the writer pervades the whole epistle, and can be traced even where his adversaries appear to be lost sight of by him. And, as might be supposed in a case of such delicacy, where the penman has a refinement of mind and nobleness of character such as distinguished Paul, his language receives a certain coloring, and a vein of irony scarcely perceptible where the leading object of the epistle is overlooked, or where there is little sympathy in the lofty bearing of the writer's mind, to whom nothing was more abhorrent than the necessity of self-commendation, as in parrying the threats of the masked gladiators who struck at him. To speak of himself as of one "not worthy to be called an apostle" was in perfect keeping with his character; but to contend for the purity of his aims, the disinterestedness of his motives, and sincerity in presenting the word of truth; to descend into the arena with such vile, skulking, yet specious hunters after popularity as assailed him, and that apparently on mere personal grounds, was repugnant to every feeling of his nature; nor could he pour forth upon the Corinthian mind the full tide of his indignant eloquence till he had laid aside for the present the robe of ministerial dignity, and the wisdom, moderation, and humility of an apostle, and begged permission to appear among them a little as a boaster and "a fool"! Under this appearance, and in this name, how masterly, how perfect his defence! It was probably this change of character, this personating the fool that led Erasmus to say of him: "*tanta vafrities est, non credas eundem hominem loqui.*"

The first direct reference to his antagonists occurs chap. ii. vs. 17, which verse stands in the closest connection with the passage under notice: "For we are not as the many who corrupt¹ the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God,

¹ *καπηλεύοντες*, a term expressive of a high degree of contempt, from *κάπηλος*, a *taVERN-keeper*, and applied by Paul to his adversaries in allusion to the prac-

in the sight of God, speak we in Christ." The comparison made in chap. iii. of the dispensations of Moses and Christ is not a digression, but directly to the writer's purpose. The attitude of Paul to the old economy, and his doctrine respecting it, inspired the rancor of his antagonists toward him, while the object of their labors was to procure for the former dispensation a respect incompatible with the loftier and exclusive claims of Christianity. It is therefore most pertinent to show, as Paul very decisively does, in a few masterly strokes of his pen, the infinitely superior glory of the Christian to that of the legal dispensation. A certain transitory glory, indeed, belonged to the covenant "engraven in stones" (vs. 7) by the finger of God, but it had lost its brightness by the superabounding glory of the gospel — the one is letter, the other is spirit; that is done away (*καταργούμενον*), this remains; the one is the ministration of death, the other of life; the former is the ministration of condemnation, the latter of righteousness. Verses 14, 15 describe the influence of this covenant on its adherents, in contrast with the privilege of those who, beholding the glory of the Lord therein (*κατοπτριζόμενοι*), are changed into the same likeness by the transforming power of the Spirit, "their minds were blinded, for unto this day when Moses is read, the veil (*κάλυμμα*) is on their hearts."

The self-vindication continued in chapter iv. is direct and open, where undoubtedly in repudiating things unworthy of an ambassador of the cross, and challenging to himself those qualities which the service of Christ pre-eminently demands, he tacitly points out the deficiencies of his opponents, and casts on them as the *πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες* of chapter ii. ult., the charges which they had preferred against him.

The subject introduced toward the close of the third chapter is then resumed. It is asserted (iv. 3) that the gospel is veiled from these unbelievers by the transitory

use of adulterating liquors before retailing them; a trick in trade not yet extinct, as recent revelations show, under the extenuating term of extension.

splendors of the old covenant,¹ and that the god of this world exerts an influence on their minds to this end. Thus while the view above taken is demanded by the internal structure of the passage itself, it is found also to be in perfect harmony with the general object of the epistle, and with the scope of the writer in the immediate context.

ARTICLE III.

THE NATURE OF SIN.

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THE characteristic doctrines of the gospel — the atonement, regeneration, justification, and sanctification — all derive their form and meaning from the nature and tendency and ruin of sin. The great aim of gospel preaching, and of all the appliances of the church of God to the end of time, is man's redemption from the curse of sin. This has been the work of the ages past, and is to be of the ages to come; and the song of Moses and the Lamb will be the rehearsal of this great achievement.

Our views, then, of the nature of sin will greatly affect our understanding of the gospel, and our sense of its adaptations to the work it proposes to do. The question, What is sin? is not a mere problem of speculative theology, to be discussed in the schools as a matter of intellectual discipline. It enters into all our practical operations, is an element in all our conceptions of human character, and gives shape to all our endeavors to elevate and save mankind. Every one is interested in it who is himself a sinner, or who has to do with sinners. Sin is the great fact in human experience, and an intelligent apprehension of that experience is essential to a

¹ In *ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις* the old covenant is viewed distributively, in its variety of rites of worship; in *τὸ καταργούμενον* collectively, as constituting one institute.