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Things Eternal (Aug 1955)

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“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal,” (2 Cor. 4:18). “The heavens shall pass away… the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (1 Pet. 3:10).

In these Scriptures God brings before us the temporality of “things seen.” The verse in 2 Corinthians, especially applicable to the Lord’s people in the midst of trying circumstances, and in the possibility of physical death, embraces much more than is seen in the immediate context. The “things seen” are summed up by Peter as, “the heavens” and “the earth,” God’s creation; “And the works that are therein,” man’s addition to God’s creation. God’s creation has been marred by man’s sin, which resulted in the curse. Since the Fall, man has been trying to build a character from a depraved nature, and a paradise out of a cursed earth. Nevertheless the Divine edict still stands, “The things which are seen are temporal.” Let us then be, not like Isaac, whose eyes were dim so that he could not see, (Gen. 27:1) but rather like Moses who, though an aged man, “His eyes were not dim,” therefore, “From the top of Pisgah… the Lord shewed him all the land,” (Deut. 34:1-7). Moses got a heavenly view of the “good land,” because he had good eyes. May the Lord enable us to rise above this scene of uncertainty and insecurity, “While we look at,the things which are… not seen… things which are… eternal.”

The question may arise, how can things not seen be seen? The answer is, through faith, faith as described in Hebrews chapter 11. This chapter opens with FAITH'S DEFINITION: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." In order to see the things not seen, we must be convinced that they exist. Faith is a confident assurance, and a firm conviction of reality. Faith primarily believes in the existence of invisible things.

Next in the chapter, we have FAITH'S APPREHENSION, for "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God," (vs. 3). Regarding Divine truth it is known that the natural man will not receive it, because to him it contains absurdities, and "Neither can he know them," (1 Cor. 2:14). Man's wisdom results in mere human speculation, but faith has no difficulty in apprehending God's Divine revelation, for faith not only gives assurance, but lends intelligence as well.

Beginning at verse 4, we see FAITH'S OPERATION. "By faith Abel offered a… more excellent sacrifice." Operative faith takes God at His word, and acts accordingly. In this chapter we see faith manifested by the deeds recorded.

FAITH'S FOUNDATION is alluded to in verse 8, "By faith Abraham when he was called to go out… obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." This indeed was faith, faith in operation, faith resting on the sure foundation which is referred to in Genesis 12:1, "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country… unto a land that I will shew thee." Here we have the foundation on which Abraham's faith was fixed, God's Word. We mentioned above that faith takes God at

His Word and acts accordingly, we now add that faith takes God at His word and rests thereon.

This brings us to FAITH'S APPROPRIATION: We were just noticing that Abraham believed. In Hebrews 10:39, the believer is spoken of as being, "Of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Surely this is appropriating salvation by faith. In 2 Tim. 3:15, the foundation and the appropriation of faith result in salvation, for we read, "The Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Faith that rests upon God's Word, and lays hold of the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour, accomplishes salvation, salvation not only of the soul, but of the whole man, spirit, soul, and body. (1 Thess. 5:23). The faith that avails must have the Bible as its basis, Christ as its object, and salvation as its first result.

Finally, we have FAITH'S VISION: "These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off," (vs. 11). The promises had not been fulfilled in their time, but faith has been vision, for they saw them at a distance, and as a result, "They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," (vs. 11-13). Though in the world they were not of it, for of them we read, "But now they desired a better country, that is, an heavenly," (vs. 16). What Jeremiah said of himself was true of them, and should be true of each one of us, "Mine eye affecteth mine heart," (Lam. 3:51). The more that we see of the heavenly things, the less shall we be like the earthly.

How appropriate it is that four of the "Things which are eternal," should be found in the epistle to the Hebrews; all of them being inseparably linked to the Eternal Son

of God. In Hebrews the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed as the substance of that, which in the law, was a “shadow of good things to come,” (Chap 10:1). Therefore it presents Him as being superior to the law which was merely typical. The law being typical was likewise temporal, and as the type must give way to the antetype, even so, the shadow to the substance. The law had its beginning, for in Gal. 3:19, we read, “It was added.” The same verse also suggests it was temporal, for it reads, “Till the Seed should come.” In Gal. 3:16, we read that the Seed was Christ, “And to Thy Seed which is Christ.” We also read of Him, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,” (Rom. 10:4). The law, therefore, being temporal, that which was accomplished under it also must be temporal. In contrast, our Lord, in the epistle to the Hebrews, is set forth as the Eternal One, the Creator, Who remains after creation has perished. “They shall perish; but Thou remainest,” consequently, that which is accomplished by Him is eternal. We suggest four of these eternal things for our present enjoyment, and for further consideration.

ETERNAL SALVATION: This could not be known under the law, for what the law demanded, man could not accomplish. Instead of being a means of salvation it became “The ministration of condemnation.” Our Lord, in contrast, after keeping its precepts for us bore its curse, and thus became the Author of Eternal Salvation. (Heb. 5:9).

ETERNAL REDEMPTION: That which all the blood of all the sacrifices under the law could not do, Christ did, “By His own blood… obtained eternal redemption for us,” (Heb. 9:12).

ETERNAL PERFECTION: Such perfection in man could never be produced by the law. “For the law… can never with those sacrifices… make the comers thereunto perfect.” (Heb. 10:1). Now that which could not be secured by the many sacrifices, has been provided by the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, “For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14).

ETERNAL POSSESSION: The children of Israel under the law did not fully possess their inheritance, for they were later dispossessed. The possessing and the retaining of their inheritance were dependent upon their obedience. How different all this is for the believer in this age, for we read, “That they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance,” (Heb. 9:15), and “In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance,” (Eph. 1:11).

Surely the faith that can open our eyes to see these eternal things, can loosen our tongue to sing His praises.

“I’m going to the better land,

By faith long since possessed,

The glory shines before me,

For this is not my rest.”

Eternal Salvation (Sep 1955)

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“For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.” (Hebrews 2:10).

“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that Obey Him.” (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Eternal salvation is inseparably linked with Christ as Captain and Author. As Captain, He is its Leader and Originator; it does not, and indeed cannot, originate with man, who needs himself to be saved, but with the Lord Who alone does the saving. Man in his weakness is unable to fulfil God’s requirement as set forth in the law. But what man could never produce through self-effort, God provides by grace. As the Author, Christ is the source; that is, He is Salvation. Simeon, in Luke 2:30, said of Him, “Mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation.”

“And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation.” Eternal salvation could only be accomplished by a perfect Saviour. John 1:1, 14 gives us a twofold revelation of His Person: “The Word was God,” His Deity; “The Word was made flesh, His humanity. In Luke 2:11, we read of His birth, “For unto you is born… a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” As to the perfection of His divine nature we need not comment. All who acknowledge His Deity also acknowledge that perfection is essential to Deity.

However, due to erroneous teachings of some cults concerning the human nature of Christ, a few words on this subject may be in order. We, in contrast to Christ, came into the world with a fallen human nature, which was obtained as an inheritance from our first father, Adam. Because man thereby has sin within him, he has an inward response to temptation and a tendency to commit sin. As a result, the natural man becomes a sinner by choice and by practice.

Some say that man is inherently good and, if allowed freedom of expression, this good will be fully manifested. The opposite is true. Man is inherently sinful and, if allowed freedom of expression, his evll nature will soon be manifested. The prohibitive expression, “Thou shalt not,” predominates in the ten commandments, showing that God takes into account man’s tendency to do the very things that he should not do. From childhood man has to be taught to do right, but no one has to teach him to do wrong, because that comes naturally.

None of these things were true of our Lord Jesus Christ. The perfection of His human nature was as intrinsic as the perfection of His divine nature. He alone could rightly say, “The prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in Me.” That is, he found in Him no sin; Therefore, there existed no inward tendency to sin when tempted. John says, “In Him is no sin.” Peter says, “Who did no sin.” These words reveal the inward and outward perfections of the true Holy One of God.

Some one may say: “The Scripture says, ‘Yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal

salvation.” What does this means? In what sense did He learn obedience, and in what sense was He made perfect?”

An answer is found in Philippians 2:6-8, “Who being in the form of God.” This expresses the very essence of Deity, and emphasizes, not what He became, but rather what He was, for it reads, “Who being”; that is, Christ always was, now is, and always will be. Then He became what He never before had been; “Took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man.” This shows His humanity and His humility. As a man He was God’s righteous Servant, and took as such a place of subjection to, and dependence upon, God the Father. “He humbled Himself, and became obedient.” The One Who in the eternal past was co-equal with the Father, as a servant became obedient to the Father. This path of obedience was a pathway of suffering, even to the extent of death. Thus He learned obedience; that is, by experience He learned what it was to be in subjection, or obedient to another. It does not mean that He, like we, had to learn through suffering to become obedient. He suffered in obedience, and because of His obedience to God.

Finally, it was as the Captain of our salvation that He was made perfect through sufferings. The perfection of His person, though essential to His becoming an acceptable sacrifice, could never of itself save a sinner. Notice that He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Death had no claim upon this perfect One. Like the Hebrew servant of Exodus 21:2-5, He could have gone out free for nothing. He was not obligated to stay in this scene of sin and degradation, nor was He required to go out by way of death. He could

have returned to Heaven at any chosen time. But if He had not gone by the way of the cross, He never could have presented to Himself a glorious church. In the ages to come, there would be no redeemed to show the exceeding riches of His grace, and no Bride to sing His praises or to display His glory.

Thanks be unto God, He did not go out free, for we read, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” He was perfected as Saviour by His suffering and death, thus becoming the Author of eternal salvation. In so doing, this blessed Servant plainly has said, “I love My Master (God the Father), My wife (the Church as a whole), and My children (individual believers); I will not go out free.” As a result, He will present unto Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, and will say in that day, “Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me.” Just as the Hebrew servant, for the rest of his life, bore the mark of the wound made by the awl, so our Lord Jesus Christ will bear the marks of Calvary, as eternal reminders of His great love.

Notice, also, that it says of the Hebrew servant, “He shall serve Him forever.” Even so, in 1 Corinthians 15:28, we read, “When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that hath put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.” Here, as we tread on sacred ground with unshod feet, words fail us. With heads bowed in reverential awe we worship and adore Him. The curtain is partly drawn aside so that we may learn a little of the meaning of His words when He said of Himself, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father.” Praise His holy Name! Soon we shall see Him face to face and then we shall know, even

as we are known. In the meantime we would exclaim even as Paul, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).