

THINGS NOT SEEN

By

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Contemporary Christianity is working toward its own defeat. Not that Christians are renouncing Christ, rejecting the Bible and purposely taking the wrong road. Rather it is because attention is given to the temporal instead of the eternal. *“The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal”* (II Co. 4:18)

The world delights in the temporal. It has things — all sorts of attractive and exciting things, ego-gratifying things — daily dangled before our eyes, and says, “This is the good life. Enjoy!”

Many believers make this their goal, for they see nothing immoral about it. Money, possessions, fame, worldly achievement, recognition and material things give them a sense of success and fulfillment. They are encouraged by a great company traveling the same road, for the road is broad. But it leads to destruction, for it is temporal.

While God may sometimes give the saint great prosperity, and while He gives everyone sufficient cause for praise and thanksgiving, the gaining of the world’s things is never to be the focus of a Christian’s purpose and efforts.

Man and his world are temporal. *“The world passes away and the lusts thereof”* (I John 2:17). Jesus said that temporal treasures rust, are corrupted in time or lost by theft. Only that which is done for God and suits His purpose will survive.

The ultimate purpose of God is the basis of His sending His Son to die on the cross and rise again: that man *“should not perish but have eternal life.”* Man that perishes in the day of judgment is a complete failure, no matter how he lived, whether he was rich or poor, moral or immoral, loved or hated, praised or despised, happy or sad. Whatever success he claimed will be of no benefit in that final day if he is among those who perish in the fire of the final death (II Peter 3:7, Rev. 20:14–15).

Jesus never instructed His disciples to strive for financial and social success. Rather, he said, *“Work not for the food which perishes, but for the good which abides into eternal life”* (John 6:27). He asked, *“What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?”* (Mark 8:36). Even a lifetime of worldly success will be as nothing compared to eternity. But to have that success then lose **life** for eternity! What failure could be worse?

To look to the eternal does not lead to neglect of earthly duties. The socialists have long accused Christians of a “pie in the sky” attitude. They ridicule Christ’s teaching of present sacrifices for eternal rewards. They see the Gospel as a promise of better living conditions, a change in political structure and redistribution of the wealth. They call it “liberation theology” in order to give it a religious status and rally the masses to revolution, as is taking place in South Africa and Central America. Such temporal goals sound heroic and basic to Christian commitment, but in the long run they are destructive. The real benefits, temporal and eternal, come from Christians who, with their eyes on eternal things, work to impart character, morals and spiritual goals, which result in responsible labor, compassion and charity to those in need.

The more we see time running out, the more some tend to cling to “the things seen,” and give them permanent value. But Peter wrote, “Seeing these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness...” (II Peter 3:11). According to Peter, “the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (II Peter 3:10).

The house for which we labored so long and which gives us a feeling of security —erased! The car, the camper, the clothes in the closet — all the things we can lay our hands on and say, “Mine,” however essential they seem to be to daily living and future security, are to “be dissolved.”

How, then, did they ever get such a hold on us to enslave us, to dominate our lives and rob us of the spiritual and eternal values?

When we look “at things which are not seen” we are able to “walk by faith, not by sight.” We do not see God, but we speak to him with faith that He hears. The power of the enemy we can see everywhere, but we have faith that the unseen power of Christ is greater, so we walk by His rule and resist the enemy.

In spite of Satan’s lie, “Thou shall not surely die,” man is still mortal and temporal: his days are numbered. Immortality belongs to Deity alone and to whomever Christ gives it at His coming (I Tim. 6:16, John 5:21). At that time He will bring all time to an end, and with it an end to all things temporal.

Then that which is done for Him and committed to Him will be ours for eternity. For this reason, Christians are victorious under all circumstances and at all times.

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