

Hebrews - Commentaries by William John Hocking, Editor

The Believer's Monthly Magazine: Volume 3, Seeing the Invisible.

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A PARADOX to nature, surely, and an impossibility! Man does not, with his natural vision, see that which is invisible; but with the eye of faith, he can do so, even as Moses "endured as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27).

A believer in Jesus, when just about to enter into the realization of true life beyond the grave, often sees what is unseen by those who are standing round the bed, and this without suffering from delirium. The heart is melted with rapture at the sights and sounds seraphic which meet the eye and ear; and the cry is heard, "Can you not see? Can you not hear? How lovely! They are coming to fetch me!"

But it is while we are in health, while we are about our daily employment, that our hearts should be more detached from the things of this life, so that the unseen may be more real, and we may live in the constant habit of referring everything to the Lord. Moses thus endured. He "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," and afterward he had a great honor and privilege conferred upon him, for "the Lord talked with Moses" (Ex. 33:9).

And we who are in the full blaze of gospel light, who have many more advantages than even Moses had, we who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, ought we not, in a deeper, truer sense, to endure, as seeing him who is invisible?" For we can say of the Lord, "whom having not seen," we "love"; and we can rejoice in Him, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

This sight of the Invisible One is a power in itself. "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." Let us believe this daily and hourly, and thus be prepared for whatever may come. In sickness, His presence gives patience; in bereavement, His presence gives consolation; in reverses of fortune, in tribulation, persecution, or distress, His presence cheers and calms, and gives the trusting soul a strength to surmount obstacles, which is far beyond natural power.

How often has it been said "If I had been told beforehand that I could pass through such a trial, I should have thought it impossible; but the Lord stood by me and helped me, and I have come through it."

So, dear fellow-believer, roll thy burden on the Lord; trust that He will lay you on His shoulder and carry you all the way home. Cultivate a near and intimate communion with Him, sweeter and more precious than the most loving earthly tie. Tell Him all your griefs and sorrows, and you will then be enabled to "endure." You will never feel lonely, but will bravely bear all, and face every difficulty, "seeing him who is invisible" now, but Who will be seen by-and-by in all the splendor of His glory, for which we are waiting, watching, and longing. H.L.R.

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W.T.— Deliverance from the fear of death (Heb. 2:15). What does this mean? The effect of the death of Christ was to extract the sting of death which is sin; so that the believer can say, "O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55, 56). No Christian need dread death; for he does not die (if he die at all) as a sinner, but is put to sleep by Jesus as a believer (Thess. 4:14). Old Testament saints however being under the bondage of the law, which is the "strength of sin," feared death, as we see in the case of a pious man like Hezekiah who wept sorely at the prospect (Isa. 38). Fear of death arose from sin being on the conscience and from the apprehension of the judgment of that sin which follows death. The Lord Jesus, by Himself submitting to death and thus receiving the "wages of sin," destroyed the power of the devil to terrify the soul with forebodings of the consequences of sin unatoned for. The believer knows that He became the propitiation for his sins (1 John 4:10). There is therefore nothing to fear in death itself, because there is nothing to fear after death. The completeness of the victory over death obtained by the Lord for us is shown by the apostle's word, "We shall not all sleep" (1 Cor. 15:51). The fact that some believers will be "present with the Lord" without the dissolution of the "earthly house of this tabernacle" (2 Cor. 5:1-8) shows how great is the deliverance. While there is the possibility of the believer dying, there is no necessity for it. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).