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EARTHLY THINGS APPRECIATED MOST

NOT infrequently we meet some dear brother or sister who says: "It seems to me that I am not of the spiritual class. Try as I will I cannot imagine spiritual things, heavenly things. On the contrary, I can well imagine and take great joy and pleasure in thinking of the blessings of the Millennial Kingdom, the restitution times, the earth in process of release from the curse and progressing to the Paradise condition, and mankind being greatly uplifted through the ministries of the Lord and the glorified Church out of sin-and-death conditions now prevailing up to the full perfection of all lost in Adam, with the added favor of increased knowledge on every subject. Does not this indicate that I am not begotten of the Spirit, and that I need not have any expectancy of attaining to the heavenly things of which we read so much in the WATCH TOWER publications?"

We answer that those who take this position [R3891 : page 359] labor under a great mistake. These same things are true of every Christian. Everyone who has seen beautiful fields and lawns and gardens and who has a soul appreciative of the beauties of nature, can to some extent imagine what Paradise restored will be. Everyone who discerns the noble and true qualities of the human mind can approximately estimate what perfection of mind and heart would mean in the fully restored race of Adam, the result of restitution times at the end of the Millennial age. But not a soul on earth, not a saint that ever lived, has been able to imagine the heavenly things, the spiritual things, because he has never seen anything of the kind, has no powers whereby to contrast these with earthly things, and because they are not described in the Scriptures. As the Apostle declares, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." (I John 3:2.) He gives the key to

our faith and knowledge when he adds, "But we know that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Our knowledge is purely a faith knowledge, dependent [R3892 : page 359] upon our confidence in our Lord and his promises. We walk by faith, not by sight, whom not having seen we love, whose heavenly home not having been described to us we realize to be grander than all earthly things, because our heavenly Lord has assured us that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him." These things he tells us God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit. (I Cor. 2:9.) Not that he has given us pictures of them either by visions or mental pictures or word pictures, but he has revealed them to us in the sense that he has revealed himself to us; and as we come to a knowledge of the Lord and to an appreciation of his great wisdom and love and justice and power – as we come to realize that he is the grand exemplification and illustration of all that is good and great and loving and wise and beautiful and true, so we know that his heavenly home and all the arrangements which God has prepared for his special elect ones must be in some very special sense far above the very glorious things which he has prepared for those of the world in general, who during the Millennial age will accept his favors and his blessed provisions.

Suppose a woman who had found her ideal of a man, noble in every trait, mental, moral and physical, the one altogether lovely in person and character: suppose that she has accepted from this lover an invitation to become his bride and joint-heir in his estates: suppose that he showed her the most beautiful things of her knowledge in the vicinity of her home, and told her that these were not worthy to be compared with the grandeur of the home which he had prepared for her. Would not her confidence in her lover, that would lead her to forsake all to become his bride, lead her to have full confidence in his judgment and in his

veracity respecting the many advantages of the home which he had specially prepared for her? Surely it would! She would need no more than his assurance, and would be glad to forsake her father's house and the best of everything that she had ever seen or could imagine and attain to the things of her betrothed. And is it not so with those who have accepted the Lord's invitation to become his Bride – to leave the world, to be changed from human nature to spirit nature, to inherit with him the glory, honor and immortality unspeakable and unknowable until the change shall come? Is this an unreasonable faith? Is this credulity? Does our Redeemer require of us an unreasonable faith? We think not. Yea, in proportion as we become followers in his steps our faith in the Leader grows, and our confidence not only in his words but also in his wisdom increases day by day as we onward go. We are confident, therefore, that he is able and willing to do for us exceedingly more abundantly than we could have asked or thought, according to the riches of his grace and his loving-kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. – Eph. 3:20.

Let us, therefore, gird up the loins of our minds and be sober minded, and hope to the end for the grace that shall be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us look not at things that are seen, which at most are temporal, but let us look at the things that are unseen, at the eternal things. Let us look unto Jesus with the eye of faith, let us look unto the crown of life which he has promised, let us look unto the place that he is preparing for us in the many mansions of the Father's house; let us look, not with doubt and fear, but with full confidence that the grandest of our hopes will be much more than realized when he shall bid us come up higher and enter into the joys of our Lord. "Faith can firmly trust him, come what may." The more we exercise faith along these lines of his direction, the more are we pleasing in the sight of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light; and the more of such faith we exercise the more we will have in us the power of God, which

will work in us both to will and to do his good pleasure – which will enable us to more and more live separate from the world, to overcome the world, and to fight a good fight against sin and selfishness, the world, the Adversary and our own flesh.
