Ecclesiastes - Commentaries by William John Hocking, Editor

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It was written of old, “The eye is not satisfied with seeing” (Eccl. 1:8). But then the “preacher” was writing only of what is “under the sun.” We are waiting to see what is above the sun; and when we see Him “as He is,” shall we not then be satisfied?

Well is it for us to foster the growth of those heaven-born longings within us to be in the presence of the Christ of God. As we concentrate the vision of our souls upon the glorified Man on high, our aspirations to be with Him where He is are intensified. And proportionately every lesser aim and object dwindles into comparative insignificance.

If we probe our hearts we find truly enough that the desire to behold the face of our Beloved is there. But is not that desire often almost buried by the mass of our daily engagements and occupations? And yet it is a fact, warranted by the revelation of God itself, that in a moment, perhaps, of this very hour on which we have entered, the sight may be ours. A twinkling of an eye—and we shall be “Forever with the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Think what it will be, when in a moment, we are taken from the Babel of the crowded street to the hush of His presence, from the pain and shadow of the sick chamber to the sunlit peace of the Father’s house, from the sight of this world’s sin and shame to behold Him as He is.

We have known and believed His love even here. “‘Tis the treasure I’ve found in His love that has made me a pilgrim below.” But what will it be when that love streams upon us there in a flood of heavenly radiance from His own blessed person? And let us remember, beloved, we shall not be overpowered by the display of that living fullness. For it will be displayed in Jesus, — in Whom we have learned all we already know of the Father’s love, and Who has never yet overwhelmed us by anything He has shown us.

Faith and hope serve us well in the wilderness; but the love of the Father is our eternal home. And that love will be known to us then, even as it is known to us now, in Christ. Only then we shall “see him as he is,”— Him Whom “having not seen we love.” Does not the very contemplation of such a prospect set our souls leaping for joy? Do we not sing, “How great our joy to see Thee shine?”

But some will condemn this as extravagant sentiment. Yet I know not why. We are permitted to read the palpitating desires of the psalmist, “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psa. 42:1, 2). And Paul is not behindhand in intensity of longing when he writes of himself as “having a (consuming] desire to depart, and to be with Christ” (Phil.1:23). Let us then cultivate spiritual ardour. Remember that assembly which was “neither cold nor hot.” May we not be of its spirit! Let us rather be able to appropriate to ourselves the sentiments expressed with such, beautiful but forceful simplicity in the following lines: —