

## SEEING THE UNSEEN

### (A Christmas Meditation)

Christ, as you know, created “things” that are visible, and “things” that are invisible (Col. 1:16). Visible things are ultimately depressing. The new car is destined for the junk yard. The new computer is destined to be obsolete. Even the new baby is destined for the grave. That’s why Paul preferred to focus on the unseen world. **“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Cor 4:18)** The antenna that enable us to “see” the “unseen” is faith (Heb. 11:1). How depressing life would be without faith.

I’m sure you have heard of the famous letter written in 1897 by an eight year old girl named Virginia O’Halon. This letter, addressed to the editor of the New York Sun, asked if there really was a Santa Claus. The editor, Francis P. Church, published his response on Tue., Sept. 21, 1897. He wrote: “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus”. He then explained that many of the most valuable things in life, like “love,” “generosity,” and “devotion” are produced by an unseen power. He said that the most real things in the world cannot be seen by either children or men. All minds, he said, are little when compared to a universe that is incomprehensibly complex. He reminded her that while man can tear apart a baby’s rattle and see what makes it work, not even the strongest man can tear aside the covering of that unseen world that is around us. It is only faith that enables us to push aside the curtain and view the supernatural beauty and glory that is beyond.

While we may disagree about the ‘Christmas tradition of Santa Claus, this editor did the little girl a favor by directing her attention to things eternal. Some have mistakenly thought that man receives his ultimate reward or punishment on earth. He does not! Nothing could be more obvious! Some of the most godly people on earth are suffering pain and deprivation. Some of the most ungodly people are living in luxury. Faith enables us to see beyond these basic incongruities in life. It opens the window and refreshes our stuffy minds with the assurance that things will not always be as they are now.

Matthew’s Gospel presents an interesting chronology that helps us to focus on the faith of a little child. In chapter 16 Jesus took His disciples to Caesarea Philippi and made certain that they understood His true identity. He was, as Peter said, the Christ the Son of the Living God. Then Jesus explained that He would have to suffer and die, but assured them that the gates of Hell would not prevail. In chapter 17 He took Peter, James, and John to the Mount of Transfiguration where He conferred with Moses and Elijah about His coming death in Jerusalem. When they came down from the mountain Matthew tells us of a sick boy whom the disciples could not make well. After Jesus healed the boy, the disciples began to argue with one another about who was the greatest. It was at this point, Matthew 18:2, that Jesus called a little child and had him stand among them. He then shocked them by stating that unless they changed and became like little children that would never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Those of us who consider ourselves “mature” often look upon little children with condescending smiles. We look forward to the time when they will “grow up” and see things as we see them. Jesus reversed this! He wanted His disciples to change their way of thinking to be like that of a little child. Perhaps the words of Jesus are especially appropriate at Christmas. At Christmas, thousands of little children escape from the harsh reality around them by dreaming a dream. Often, we adults are too “mature” for that. We prefer to trade the light and magic moment of Christmas for a heavy burden of worry and concern. If little children saw things the way we see them, they would worry too. If we saw things the way they see them, maybe this Christmas would be merry in spite of the dismal circumstances we “see” around us.

So then, especially at Christmas, focus on the things that cannot be seen with human eyes. For the things we see are temporal. It is the unseen things that are eternal!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**