

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH THE GLORY OF GOD.

*We stand today in a holy place.
A wall of gold encircles us.
It encloses us with the throne of God.
Only a veil intervenes.*

That veil is but a curtain that withholds from our eyes the sight of those glories that exist even this moment beyond the limits of natural vision. What lies beyond that curtain is not another material world, but another sphere of life. There lies a grander realm, more beautiful than anything of beauty on this earth. Here we mark out our lives by the dimension of time. The things that belong to that realm belong to eternity.

The holy tabernacle in which we dwell is called the tent of meeting. It is in this place we meet that God Who is the very center of all existence. This is the gate of heaven. When we entered this place, we entered the sacred presence of One Whose Name is Holy, and Who inhabits Eternity. At any moment one who dwells in this holy place may be called to pass through that veil. Sown in weakness, that one is presented faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy. They shall see His face, and their eyes shall behold the King in His beauty. They will not be ashamed before Him, for there before His holy presence, will be seen -- a perfect creation of His own hands, made after the likeness of Him that created it The daughter of the King is "all glorious within."

We are awed and astonished at the wondrous descriptions of this state that appear in the Word of God. "Having the glory of God."-- As a precious jewel, reflecting that glory, which emanates from God Himself -- like the face of Jesus. We stand indeed, at this hour, in a holy place. It is here, this side of the veil, that preparation takes place for all beyond. Here do we learn to be at home with God. Here do we learn to live with God, learn to live with the glory of God, learn to live with the mighty power of God. It is in this place we learn to live with the love of God, and with the peace of God.

One of our English hymns contains these words;

*"Eternal Light! Eternal Light!
How pure the soul must be.
When placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not but with calm delight,
Can live and look on Thee.*

*The spirits that surround the throne
May bear the burning bliss;
But that is surely theirs alone,
For they have never, never known
A fallen world like this.*

*O, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before that wondrous Light appear,
And to his holy throne draw near,
And humbly worship Him?"*

This lovely hymn goes on to describe the wondrous provision the Lord has made for our complete preparation for that sight of holiness above. It is a process by which beggars from the dunghill are made to feel at home seated among princes.

Esther underwent a full course of preparation before presentation to the king. So must we. In her case this

preparation consisted of many months of frequent immersion and washing in fragrant oils. She received full instruction in all the manners and ways of a royal court. They gave her attire appropriate for entry into the royal presence. In our case -- well, we guess the same applies! Paul describes the Lord as sanctifying and cleansing us by the washing of the water by the Word, that He might present us to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that we should be holy and without blemish. (Eph.5:26,27) The very apartments where this process took place for Esther were themselves places of glory and beauty. They were sumptuous apartments appropriate to the work entailed, the work of preparing a queen for the royal throne. So with this holy place prepared by the Lord. It is a heavenly place. It is designed to sanctify, to elevate the mind, to fully prepare us for the sight of holiness above.

The walls of the Holy are overlaid with gold. The occupants of the Holy are surrounded with all the glory of the Lord divine. As that glory cloud that enveloped the three disciples with their Lord on the Mount of transfiguration, the atmosphere of glory envelopes, embraces, and compasses all who dwell in this secret place of the Most High. It is no natural light that illuminates the Holy, nor can natural sight enjoy its blessedness. The wall of gold is quite invisible to the natural eye. The occupants of the Holy know it is there. They sense the splendor of the light of the seven lamps from the gilded lamp-stand reflected in each segment of the wall of gold. They are enclosed by the glory of God.

This sense was illustrated to me once by a blind physiotherapist, a member of my staff at hospital. One bright sunny morning she said to me, "Isn't the sunshine beautiful this morning." She was blind, yet she sensed the sunshine by the warmth on her face. We too have senses which enable us to perceive around us the warmth of a Father's love. We feel ourselves surrounded, compassed about, by the Lord of Glory.

The "Spirit" of God, the "Presence" or "breath" of God, are terms used interchangeably in Psalm 139: verse 7. Wherever His Spirit is, His breath, there dwells the Lord. In Him, said Paul, we live, and move, and have our being. But only the saints know this. Not by natural vision will they ever see God. Whatever the experience awaiting them beyond that veil, it will not be natural sight, for flesh and blood cannot inherit such glories. It is while they are this side of the veil, that they develop and exercise spiritual senses, that they may discern things that are excellent. Spiritual things are not limited to the natural material form. They are things belonging to a different realm of being. Spiritual discernment is a most blessed ability. It introduces us to a wondrous realm, beyond the limits of natural sense. By it we become aware of the ceaseless activity of spirit realm on behalf of saints on earth. We perceive the reality behind the vision of that young servant of the prophet when he beheld the Chariots of the Lord round about His people.

Oh could we hear that sound of many wings of angel's flight on wondrous mission bent. Could we but see each messenger speed forth to aid, to strengthen, comfort and support. Could we perceive the interest of a spirit world, some rising, some descending, all sent forth along the sunlight shafts of love divine, breaking through clouds, opening prison doors. With ease and grace their wonders they perform. Whispering words behind us beckoning on. Guarding, guiding, watching every step of every saint, to keep in all their ways. Beholding constantly a Father's face. Before we cry, they take our hand to bear us up, and lift us high above the stumbling stones of earth, beyond the things of time and sense to glory realms, eternity's domain, where dwells our Lord. See He prepares within our Father's House, a place reserved (Oh blessed thought) in heaven. Sweet are such messages of love. Beautiful the flight of those that bring them to my longing heart, and loan to me their wings...

It is here in the holy condition of mind that we gain a sense of the enormity of the energy of the Almighty God. That limitless source of power is this moment harnessed to the achievement of His wondrous purpose in the preparation of the saints in light. Day after day, in grand celestial language, the heavens call the earth to witness to that power. For having created that vast expanse, He then filled it with a myriad stars, and giant nebulae that, even at the speed of light, take years to traverse. Each source of light in the starry sky is full of vibrant energy beyond our measure.

Yet, in that He is great in power, not one faileth. We hear nothing from this great activity. Our ears are not tuned to detect the music of the spheres. Yet can any speech more eloquently speak the mightiness of the power that said, "Let there be..." and that brought out of nothing the vastness of the entire material universe. No human mind has approached the boundaries of the material realm. Ecclesiastes 3:11, speaks of the Lord setting eternity in the heart of man, the ability to explore beyond the limits of immediate sight. Yet, with the combined total of all human exploration, man has not approached the end of knowledge on even one of a myriad subjects. These are but "the edges of His ways."

While man discovers the enormity of the force compressed within each atom, the people of God are discovering the even greater exhibition of power and skill in the making of each jewel. This is a New Creation. Something more awesome than the formation of all material things, is the creation of a saint. It takes a little time for us to more fully appreciate that word of assurance --"Kept by the power of God." Because He is great in power not one of His promises fail, nor will His purpose according to which each saint is called. We are learning to live with the power of God. This wondrous New Creation, these are the New Heavens that throughout eternity will declare the glory of God. The making of each saint in the likeness of Jesus, thus will He show forth His handiwork, age after age

We begin here and now, while on earth, to become aware of that which will occupy our minds and spirit's vision throughout the endless ages of glory to come. --The beauty of the Lord, the beauty of His holiness, the blessed glory of the character, the attributes and the ways of Our Heavenly King. A special fragrance fills this place. It permeates through the veil into the Holiest of all. In the type the holy incense was specially formulated, compounded and set apart for most sacred use. Here we have the most blessed reality of that typical fragrance. To those who dwell in this "greater and more perfect Tabernacle," this sweet incense is the breath of heaven itself. The very atmosphere even this moment emanates from and surrounds the Throne of God. It is breathed by those who have His spirit both sides of the veil. It is the atmosphere of Holiness, of Heavenly love. It has mountaintop purity. It is fresher and sweeter than anything of earth. Emanating from the Lord, it finds response in each heart that becomes its vessel.

The Love of God overflows into His people. It embraces all that is pure, and true, and all that is holy and good. It is characterised, wherever found, by its joy in all those things which delight the heart of the Lord. Fullness of mercy, compassion, tenderness, patience, understanding, -- all that God is. Fullness of mercy, compassion, tenderness, patience, understanding, -- all that God is. Such are the ingredients of the sweet incense with which the Lord endows His beloved children. It produces within us that affinity with the things that are divine. It is that most blessed family bond which unites with the Father, the Lord Jesus, and each member. It flows on, with blessed anticipation, and readiness to embrace every creature.

Paul speaks of the Lord's people becoming filled with the fulness of God. This infilling, he says, takes place as we continually contemplate the glory of the Lord. This year, and indeed each year of our pilgrimage, is the year of our change! Paul had in mind the effect upon Moses of old when he spake with God face to face. Not that he saw God, for no man has seen God at any time. There was a veil. Moses was enabled to behold the afterglow of the Lord's goodness as He passed by. We picture it like a glorious sunset. This was a mount of transfiguration experience for Moses, and as he descended that mount the glory of God shone in his face. He had beheld the glory of the Lord, and was changed. What had absorbed and awed his mind on the mount he now reflected from his being.

Brethren, a greater than Moses is here. The fullness of that spirit of holiness in the heart of Jesus was poured out without restraint to fill the whole place with its clinging fragrance. Jesus was here, and He is here still. His fragrance clings to those who follow Him now through that first veil. As saints pass beyond that second veil, they leave behind a trail of broken alabaster boxes.

Behold the cloud of incense rise from every heart in which He dwells. The Master lives within the house, abundantly, the incense tells.

Such a state of heart absorbed in the glory of the Lord is learning to dwell with that glory, which is to be

its eternal abode.

The word for “saint” in the New Testament is *hagios*. The main stem means something of earth, but it is preceded by a definite negative, so that the whole word means “not of earth”. This is characteristic of the way in which the heavenly state is described. When Paul was caught away to the heavenly realm in vision, he said that he heard things which are not lawful to utter. The meaning of words is dependent upon experience. “Cat”, would mean nothing to us if no such creature existed in the material world. The heavenly realm is beyond present experience, and therefore cannot be expressed with meaningful words. Hence we find in Scripture various expressions which use contrast with the present experience. In this way we are helped to glimpse something of those glories we cannot yet fully bear. “Unfading”, says Peter, and “Unspeakable”. “Not mortal”, says Paul, “Not corruptible”. “Not after the image of earthly things at all.” “Not finite”, “beyond limits or bounds.”

Perhaps one of the greatest contrasts is between time, and eternity. Time is a dimension belonging to this material realm. Time sets a boundary to everything we experience, everything we do. Our minds are geared to this realm of time. It is therefore not easy to conceive that realm where time is no more, the realm of the eternal. Our Heavenly Father, we are told, inhabits eternity.

One of the greatest thinkers of recent years was Einstein. Perhaps he came nearer than any in pushing the boundaries of awareness beyond the limits of this present experience. He, it was, who conceived the possibility of time being an illusion. He suggested it to be a concept of the mind of those who dwell in time. Beyond such limited thinking and engulfing it, he theorized the probability of a timeless realm. In such a realm the whole history of man, past, present and future, is spread out for comprehension in one sweeping view. The Scriptures have long anticipated such concepts. The Lord has known all His works from the beginning. It was according to that divine foreknowledge that He could view that completed Christ of many members before the foundation of the earth.

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The fact ... remains, that Our God surveys the end from the beginning. We are learning to live with such a Being, with a Mind and Judgment perceptive beyond our thought. We are learning to live with the concept of divine Sovereignty, His complete ability to achieve everything that He designs. We are learning to live with a divine Foreknowledge that takes into account the exercise of human freewill. Each of these attributes and much, much more, compose the glory of God.

When Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road, we read in the Acts 26, verse 13, that a light brighter than the midday sun shone along the road. [*'kata' followed by accusative = along*] It was the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Each step along the way increases our perception of the glory of God. It is a shining light, brighter than the midday sun. It shines along the way we tread. And it sanctifies. It is a glory that changes those into whose hearts it shines. Beholding, we reflect. Our God is beautiful in holiness. He will beautify His sanctuary. What this means is that Lord Himself will be the beauty of the place wherein He dwells. He dwells with the contrite, the meek of the earth who mourn for sin. He dwells with the poor in spirit who are the pure in their heart's desires. His fulness is for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who thirst after God, as the hart braying for the water brooks. He is a God that hides Himself, the world do not know Him. He is a Father that waits with delight to reveal Himself to His seeking child.

How amiable are His tabernacles. [Psalm 84:1] We read in one place that it was noised that Jesus was in the house. In like manner it will become evident when the Lord God dwells within the heart of His own. It is manifest in certain attitudes of mind and heart. A deep infilling of the fulness of God accompanies a delicate and captivating expression of holiness. It is a family likeness that cannot be hid. It becomes the mark or seal of all those that are His. It is a continual offering of praise, a living spirit and truth worship of God, in the beauty of holiness.

Let us indulge now in reflecting on one most blessed aspect of the beauty of holiness. It results from the continual beholding of the glory of God. Thus, one of its chief attractive qualities is its complete absorption in the Lord and the things of God. "Wist ye not that I must be about the things of My Father?" Absorption in the things of God, means enthrallment in His goodness and glory. We are captivated by the very beauty of the Divine Character. We become engrossed in that which utterly delights and satisfies the heart and mind. Such an attitude stems from an increasing awareness of all that Our Father is, all that He comes to mean to us. We find the drawing power of His love and do not wish to resist. To know Him, becomes the driving preoccupation of life. It forms a strong distraction from all in this present world that would distress or offend.

Isa 58:11 "And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

Psalm 65:4 "Blessed [is the man whom] thou choosest, and causest to approach [unto thee, that] he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, [even] of thy holy temple."

Such absorption means dwelling in that other realm with the Lord. Here we enjoy those present blessed realities of that One Who is beautiful in Holiness. Here we share too that grander vision that belongs to He that inhabits eternity. Here present and future merges together, until difficult to separate. Thus, are we enabled to enjoy today the blessedness of hope's tomorrow. The word absorption means "sucking in." As a beauty of holiness, it describes a state of hunger and thirst for the things of the Lord. As the hart panting for the water brooks, so pants our soul after Thee.

Jer. 31:14 " And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD."

In the state of holy absorption lies the power of translation. We are thus translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Like Enoch of old, our daily walk is with the Lord. Each day we are drawn closer, until one day we are near enough for the Lord to translate us, through that veil, unto Himself. Every day of holy contemplation, the consciousness of that glory that surrounds us becomes more real. It is like a shining light along the way, and it grows more bright. It is the Lord's response to the desires He has implanted into our heart.

Our cry ascends each day with that of David.

Psalm 43:3,4, "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God."

There will be a last day of pilgrimage for each one of us. There will come a last step of the way, a last trial, a last moment of weakness. Then "face to face"--What will it be? The glory that surrounds us now we see as through a glass. It is reflected from the Master's face in such a way that we can bear. But then, as scales fall from the eyes, that glory we shall see unveiled. Our sight will be as of angelic hosts who daily look upon the Father's face, and in full beauty shall we then behold our King.

Dear brethren, may these senses grow to bless each day we tread below, combining love's serenity with deepest sense of urgency. The peace of God, in full accord, with sense of triumph in the Lord.

