

## “The Glory Of God”

Open: Hymn 193

Close: “How Great Thou Art”

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.”

Psa 19:1

Have you ever hiked far up into the mountains and spent the night? If you have you know something his glory. None can see near the city lights, but on the mountaintops, gazing up at the stars, we can begin to comprehend the **immensity** of God’s creation.

Think of the power that created the universe. This is the God with whom we have to do.

Consider the majesty and glory of the divine nature of whom no man can approach and live.

Our Heavenly Father’s glory includes all of that and more. But there is an even more magnificent aspect of his glory.

Do you remember why Lev 9 was performed?

When most of us think of why Lev 9 was done, we think of the installing of the High Priest into office and the blessing that followed, but there is more.

There is another reason.

Towards the end of chapter 9, we see the results of the ceremony:

(Verse 23 KJV) "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation [this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time], and came out, and blessed the people: [**And what happened**

**next?**] ... the **glory** of the LORD appeared unto all the people. "

In **fact**, the beginning of the **chapter** itself states **why** it was to be performed.

(Verses 5-6 New American Standard) “...the whole congregation came near and stood before the LORD. [That’s the whole congregation] {6} And Moses said, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded you to do, **that the glory of the LORD may appear to you.**”

This is the further reason for Lev 9. In antitype, the result will be that mankind will see the Glory of God.

But, what glory will they see? Do you remember?

We didn't. A few months ago our ecclesia studied this chapter in the tabernacle. We had previously studied it many times, both in class and out, **yet we missed this point.** What Glory did they see?

Tabernacle Page 83:

Quote: “"And the Glory of the Lord Appeared Unto All the People" [this is the subheading, then it continues:]

**As the blessing progresses** (restoring and elevating the race, mentally and physically), **the results** will become manifest. The people--the world in general--will recognize God's gracious love more and more each day. Thus it will be that "the **glory** of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together." (**Isa. 40:5**) They will come to **see**, gradually, of the length and breadth and **height and depth** of the **love of God**..."  
Unquote

This is the glory! The people will not see God physically, so it cannot be that kind of glory. It is a glory of character! The Divine Character! What an **amazing** thought, **but** do the scriptures uphold this?

They certainly do! Get a concordance and start looking. Notice how many times that when the scriptures speak of God's glory, they are speaking of **His** character likeness. **It brings depth to these scriptures that I know for myself I have never seen before.**

With all this in mind, what else could this glory (this character likeness) be, but the sum of all graces – agape love.

1John 4:16 states “God is Love”. Agape love is so equated with God that they are here said to be one in the same.

Col 3:14 calls this principled love the **bond of perfection**.

Rom 13:10 tells us that the entire law of God is fulfilled in love.

It truly is the sum of all graces.

As the plan of God progresses, without a doubt, the glory that mankind will see, will be the height and depth of this love of God!

**Think about how this love will be written in their hearts.** Think about the parable of the **sheep and goats**. Think about the **subsequent sacrifices**. **It is an amazing thing -- what they will learn and how they will learn it.** Consider how some of **mankind rushes out** even now and helps people in various parts of the world. Just consider how they will help them then. **The Lord will have them participate in their own recovery.** **It is an amazing thing --**

**how their hearts will reach out and learn this love.**

But with all that said you will want to also notice that after explaining Moses' veil, 2Cor 3 explains that the church is given the chance to behold the glory of God's character and plans **now** with an open face! In other words with no veil – blessed are our eyes for we **see!**

Speaking of Israel:

2Cor 3:15-18 says, “Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. {16} Nevertheless when it [their heart] shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away...{18} But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed into the same image from glory to glory**, even as **by** the Spirit of the Lord.”

(2 Cor 4:6 KJV) "For God, who commanded the **light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God** in the face of Jesus Christ."

In this next hour, we are going to consider how God's glorious divine character can shine into our hearts **now**, ahead of the world. We are going to examine how we can be rightly exercised so that the Heavenly Father can mold us into the same image. Truly we can gradually be changed from glory to glory in our minds, our wills, our hearts, and our characters. This change will be complete at our resurrection. **Then** we will **actually** be able to fully exercise the heights and depths of this principled love!

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**Now for our 1st Consideration:  
Worldly Views In Contrast:**

Let's consider one of the many worldly ideas of God. It sometimes is good to realize the contrast and what a blessing it is to understand the truth.

When I first came into the truth, I had a most amazing discussion. I have since learned that many others believe this. It is a prominent thought with various Universalists.

Anyway:

This person claimed that God created evil for his own pleasure and cited Rev 4:11 as the "so called" proof.

(Rev 4:11 KJV) "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

It was amazing to me that she went to church regularly and yet claimed that all the evil, suffering and death were for God's pleasure. It was shocking! But fortunately, even though new in the truth at the time, I had just studied the 1<sup>st</sup> volume. The scriptures were clear:

Psa 5:4 said that God hath no pleasure in wickedness.

Also, Ezek 33:11 said that God hath no pleasure in death.

Though opposed to evil in every sense, God *permits* it for a time, because he sees that it can be made to be a lasting and valuable lesson to all – even the angels. No other way could these lessons be so fully learned!

Truly as (1 John 4:8) says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Yes the Scriptures declare that all things were created for the Lord's pleasure (Rev. 4:11) but without doubt, it was for the pleasure of giving blessings, and of exercising the attributes of his glorious being.

Acts 20:35 "... It is more blessed to give than to receive." We have abundantly learned this over and over again in our own experiences. And who taught us? It was God.

We look forward to the day that God's character will be fully vindicated.

There are many other thoughts out there, but I would like to share one more.

Over the past few years we have had the most amazing opportunities of witnessing to Mormons.

While they certainly have some strange beliefs, by the Lord's grace we have been amazed at how much truth could at times be shared with them.

One evening we invited a couple of them to house. They reasoned with us on the scriptures for hours that night and even shared many of their own experiences.

It was one of these experiences that stuck with me. A few weeks before, they had been in one of the wealthier neighborhoods. After knocking on the door, a man (who looked like he was in his 40's) brought them inside. As they talked, he walked throughout the house showing them all of

his possessions – including three Mercedes Benzes in the garage.

They were getting very nervous about why he was doing this. It was about this time that they reached the front door again. He opened the door for them to walk outside, then he turned, and with a stern look he said: “with what you have just seen, do you think I need God?” And he closed the door.

What an amazing attitude! It reminds me of:

(Psa 49:6-14 KJV) "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; {7} None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:"

(Now Verse 11) "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. {12} Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. {13} This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah. {14} Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning..."

We cannot help but be saddened that any would take such a view of things.

But, in both of these examples as well as the many more, let's remember:

(Titus 3:3-4 KJV) "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures...{4} But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,"

It is only by his grace – his unmerited favor that we see the truth and His loving kindness toward all mankind.

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**Now for our 2nd consideration:  
A Word Of Warning?**

The world now not only misunderstands God, but they misunderstand his Agape love.

As we examine God's glory -- the glory of character, let's be careful not to embrace worldly ideas of Love.

The Law says: (Luke 10:27) "...Thou shalt love [Agape] the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength..."

Looking back through the history of the past 2000 years we see faithful brethren of old who had an unmistakable love of the Heavenly Father and His truth. Think of Huss, Wycliffe and Tyndale. Think of the Anabaptists and the many other faithful ones who were hunted down and burned at the stake for the truth's sake. The faithful of these all had one goal, and that was to serve God and the truth regardless of the consequences.

It was their love for God and his truth that caused them to lay down their lives for their brethren. Even under extreme pressure, they were not willing to profess a lie for peace.

How different this is from the world's idea of love. The world is willing to compromise truth for peace. In fact, it believes that willingness to compromise truth and principle is a sign of love. How different the scriptures present this.

(Prov 23:23 KJV) "Buy the truth, and sell it not..."

(James 3:17 KJV) "But the wisdom that is from above is **first pure**, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

All throughout the gospel age, the brethren have lost their lives figuratively, if not literally, for the truth. Why should it change now?

How much do you love God and his truth?

Agape love -- This highest form of love is based on principles. It has a kindness and yet firmness that is not found in the world. Growth in this love does not come easy.

In the end, Agape love for others will **not** have been developed from compromise. **Instead**, our love for others will have been developed from a deep love and active service of the Heavenly Father and His truth.

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**For our 3rd consideration I want to ask  
an important question:  
Has the light reached your heart?**

(2 Cor 4:6 KJV) "For God, who commanded the **light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God...**"

Yes, we **have** been given the grand opportunity if rightly exercised, to have this glory, the heights and depths of this selfless Love, written into our hearts now.

Paul spoke of the brethren in Corinth as "living epistles known and read of all men." Epistles "written not with ink, but with the **Spirit** of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart."  
(2 Cor 3:2-3 KJV)

In Matt 5 we are called "the light of the world." If we have received the light into our hearts we will let it shine. Not only the doctrines, but His spirit, His character likeness should shine out in our daily lives.

Apostle Paul alludes to this in:

(Phil 2:15 KJV) Where he says that we should strive to "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

When the light reached Paul's heart, it had **an affect**. When it reached the hearts of the other Apostles, it had **an affect**. They **began to live the truth**. **In time**, they were exemplifying abounding and overflowing love. They were laying down their lives for the brethren – **daily, hourly**. They were sacrificing for the sake of others. They were **not** using earthly things **for self**. They were laying aside earthly pleasures, opportunities and privileges so as to have more for **that** service.

Has the light reached your heart? Has **this love** had its designed **affect**?

The Jan 22 "Songs in the Night" gives us a powerful way to evaluate this.

It says:  
"LET us judge of our love for others, for the Lord, for the brethren, for our families, for

our neighbors, for our enemies even, by our willingness to sacrifice in their interest and for their highest welfare. If we find ourselves sacrificing nothing in the interest of the Lord's cause, let us not delude ourselves by saying that we love the Lord.

If we find ourselves unwilling to endure, to sacrifice in the interests of the brethren and others dear to us, let us not mistake the matter and call it love. If we find ourselves unwilling to do kindness even to our enemies when they are in need, let us make no mistake; for the Lord hath declared that a course of goodness and mercy and self-denial is the **only** index of a loving heart.”

If we can find any of this willingness to sacrifice in the interests of others, let's rejoice.

As we strive to continue in this good way, it is important to ask another question.

Should we expect that this love (this love that we finally learned) would be appreciated and well received?

No! Let's remember that it is a selfless love. The Apostles were persecuted for the truth. They were hunted down and suffered in various ways. They often were not appreciated even by the brethren.

The Apostle Paul said:

(2 Cor 12:15 KJV) "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

Nevertheless he continued to spend and be spent for them. He continued that consistent, selfless effort for the good of others.

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**Now for our 4<sup>th</sup> consideration:**  
**How can we increase and abound in**  
**Love?**

<<Refs: R4662, E223-224, CR446>>

Ah, says one, for years I have desired to grow and abound in love, but I do not know how to cultivate it. What shall I do?

First, we must realize that we cannot do it on our own. It is higher than us.

The apostle expresses this same desire for the brethren in Thessalonica. Notice the source of that love.

(1 Th 3:12 KJV) "**And the Lord** make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you;"

The beams of this higher love must come from the source of love and truth – from God.

The scriptures clearly mark out three channels of this grace – or unmerited favor. We must diligently use these channels if we are to reach the **quarter** marks of love.

At first these channels may seem trivial, but they are not. The question is, do we really appreciate them?

The 1<sup>st</sup> channel is the **Word of God**. We cannot hope to understand this higher form of love without study. Not just reading, but a **heart thinking** on these things.

Heb 4:12 “For the word of God is quick, and powerful... a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

We must prayerfully strive to be emptied of self, if we are to be filled with this higher love.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> channel is **divine providence**. If we ask him, the Heavenly Father will be pleased to order the affairs of life that we might grow in this grace.

He withholds blessings until asked. We must earnestly seek this Agape love by prayer and effort. He wants us to desire it with all our heart. The scriptures say, “seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened.”

(Luke 11:13 KJV) "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

A 3<sup>rd</sup> channel of this divine grace is **through the brethren**. The scriptures indicate that this third aspect comes in many forms. It could come from our difficult experiences with the brethren. It may be by a word overruled by the Lord to be fitly spoken. It may be solicited advice or reproof. Perhaps it is merely the testimony of the daily lives of the brethren, as we see them patiently enduring hardness as good soldiers, without murmuring – taking with joy, with thankfulness, with faith, with confidence, all things which divine providence may permit.

In regard to this 3<sup>rd</sup> channel, we may at first be surprised that our greatest blessings, our greatest growth, come from opportunities to assist the brethren rather than to be assisted.

It truly is more blessed to give than to receive.

We often think of Mary in this connection and the spikenard that she poured on the feet of our Lord.

Our Lord was one of these whose heart was overflowing with love. Due to the fallen condition of man, he found comparatively little companionship in this. But, in Mary he seemed to find the depth of love and devotion that must have been especially refreshing. She not only delighted to sit at his feet to learn of him, but also delighted, at great cost, to give him this manifestation of her devotion.

Each of us should ask ourselves: Am I truly taking advantage of my opportunities to assist the brethren? If Mary had waited, she may have forever lost her opportunity.

Bro. Morehouse told of a dear sister, who had a remarkable experience as a very young girl. One night she heard something. It was in the middle of the night. She could faintly hear her mother asking her for water. Her mother asked several times, water please give me water. But this little girl was so tired – so very tired. It was so hard to get up and finally she went back to sleep. **Her mother died that night.**

She said that she has always looked back with regret. Oh, if I had only gotten up and given her that water.

Many brethren have such a need. At times they are **being** fiercely assailed by the powers of darkness, the world, or even by their own flesh. They may have the need of sympathy and fellowship. Or they may just need the water of truth. They may have

physical need. There may be some in our own ecclesia. It is not always the sick; it may be ones who seem like they have everything. They may be crying out in various ways, and we find it just too hard to get up. Will we likewise look back with regret?

In summary of this section, let's remember that we cannot increase and abound in love on our own, we must earnestly seek it by prayer and use of the channels of grace provided -- the Word of God, Divine providence, and the brethren.

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**Now our 5<sup>th</sup> consideration:  
The Labyrinth of Life**

As we proceed, we want to especially focus on the second channel previously mentioned – the **providences of God**.

In this respect, I especially appreciated the illustration of a labyrinth mentioned in R4280.

A labyrinth is a maze full of intricate passages and windings. When once entered, it is next to impossible for an individual to find his way.

An especially famous one of these is in Hampton Court near London. There a complex maze is carved out in high and thick evergreen hedges.

R4280 "Some years ago," writes Hawthorne, "a minister was rambling in the famous labyrinth of Henry VIII, at Hampton Court... He wandered about [in it] for a time, but when the time for closing drew near, with all his efforts he could not find his way out, and he feared that he might have to remain all

night. At last he looked up, and saw a man in the tower in the center of the labyrinth who had been watching him all the time, and waiting to catch his attention. The eye above could see all so hidden from the man within, and soon guided him out of his difficulties..."

Life is such a labyrinth. How much progress are you making?

If very little, are you putting your trust in self or the Lord?

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**Next our 6<sup>th</sup> consideration:  
The School Of Adversity**

Many years ago we may have blamed our boss, or a neighbor, or someone else for our difficulties. If we did, we certainly missed the lesson. **They** may have meant it for evil. But what is that to us? Satan may have been just attempting to stir up our fleshly mind. However it came, God **overruled** for our good. We must strive to be rightly exercised **so** we can gain all the **good** we can.

It is only in the school of adversity that we can learn the depths of the Glory of God.

As we travel through the labyrinth of life **in** the school of adversity, we more and more learn to look up and lean on our Faithful guide.

It is in this process that we discover the highest forms of his principles and His true character.

(Psa 119:71 KJV) "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

It is then that we can begin to truly sing:

"So on I go, not knowing,  
I would not if I might;  
I'd rather walk in the dark with God  
Than go alone in the light;  
I'd rather walk by faith with Him  
Than go alone by sight."

In time we will come to **fully** trust the Heavenly Father. Think of our Lord when he was before Pilate

The multitudes were outside the gates shouting "crucify him, crucify him." Most would have been pleading for their life. But here stood Jesus quiet and confident. Pilate so marveled that he asked "do you not know that I have the power to crucify you or set you free?"

Jesus answered: "thou could have no power against me at all, except **it** be given thee from above."

(Rom 8:31 KJV) "... If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Nothing happens to us without our Father's knowledge. With them is the arm of flesh. With us is the Lord our God.

(Mat 18:10 KJV) says "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father..."

With these powerful promises we gain **absolute confidence**. But there is a **further step** – a more **advanced step**.

Psalms spoke prophetically of our Lord

(Psa 40:8 KJV) "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

R1840 "Delight in the Lord is a still more advanced step in the Christian life. It is a blessed thing to learn to trust in the Lord; but it **is** when continued trust and responsive providences have ripened into personal acquaintance and fellowship with God that we learn to **delight in him**. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace."

It is then we fully come to realize his **abiding presence** with us. The resulting joy and peace outweighs **any** experience that might come our way.

There is an important illustration that brings this out like no other.

[I think you all know of this illustration. For years I thought that it just represented the receiving of the truth, **but** it represents much more than that.]

It is titled "Joy Unspeakable".

A **blind** child had just had an operation. It would hopefully result in her being able to see. Her wounds were bandaged for many days so that her eyes might heal. Finally the time came for the bandages to be removed.

R610 "Ah! What a moment of supreme interest and anxiety... This child...for the first time... look[ed] out upon all the beauty... [that] was around her..." She "cried out with delight, "O, mother, why did you not tell me it was so beautiful?" The mother, bursting into tears, replied: "I tried to tell you, my dear, but the words wouldn't make you understand."

Precisely; and so, withal, is it with the Christian when he attempts to tell what is the **joy unspeakable** and full of glory, the **peace** of God that passeth understanding, the **love of God** shed abroad in the heart by the Holy [Spirit], and what is the excellency of the knowledge of that Christ for whom he would, if necessary, **joyfully** suffer the loss of all things.”

Have the bandages been removed from your eyes? Do you have the **depth** of this **joy unspeakable**?

Of the world R5802 says “Oh, you who... have never put yourselves wholly into the hands of the Lord to be molded and fashioned into His glorious likeness, who have never made an earnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of your own fallen nature, who have never contended earnestly for Truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of this Divine consolation?”...

“The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the **joy** and preciousness of the **Lord's love and helpfulness**...”

While it is true that the world cannot know of these, it is true that we too, for a time, can be **blind** to them. Again no one could tell us until the Lord **opened** our eyes.

“However great the afflictions or the trials, if they lead to such a **close acquaintance** with God, there is great cause for **rejoicing**...”

This close relationship and the resulting joy and peace are absolutely essential for this principled love -- the glory of God to

crystallize our hearts.

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**For our 7<sup>th</sup> consideration we will ask another important question:**  
**Have you continued this close communion of heart and mind?**

Think back about your heavy trials and difficulties. Were you praying more often? Was it your strong desire to stay close to the Lord? Remember how you earnestly prayed to understand his will? Think about how diligently you sought his word for guidance and answers.

What about after the difficulties? What about months later? Did you ever lapse into praying almost mechanically? How earnestly were you seeking his will then? Did you ever forget to pray?

If **after** having pressing difficulties we continue earnestly seeking his will not only in the difficulty, but now in **all** things, we will continue in that close communion.

Let's prayerfully seek from day to day to use **every earthly thing** for the spiritual good. We can actually leverage off of the earthly for the spiritual good of others and ourselves. We can use it up in God's service. If we **do this**, we will be praying often. We will be searching his word for guidance.

Let's strive to continue this close communion of heart and mind with our Heavenly Father on a **daily** basis.

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**Now for the 8<sup>th</sup> consideration:**

## From Glory To Glory

<<R3656>>

(2 Cor 3:18 KJV) "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed** into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

These words of the apostle have a very strong inference that we should not miss. **We should be alarmed if we do not see change.** We are not talking about perfection of the flesh but a change of heart, and along with that, some change of the flesh.

Each of us should ask ourselves, am I being changed?

Again, Oh how important prayer is in this.

Remember when you first came into the truth? How earnestly did you ask for forgiveness for your every failing throughout the day? Are you still doing that?

And, **Oh** how important that evening prayer is in this regard! If we are not reviewing the day, how can we gain the lessons? How can this change of heart take place? Remember, the Lord is looking for that intense desire and endeavor that would show that if we had perfect bodies we would always do right.

If any have failed along this line, begin anew **right now!** The Great Company will wash their robes later. **Lets do it now!** Despite our failings at times along this or other lines, thankfully we can see progress in others and ourselves. What a blessing!

Let's consider what this progress might physically look like.

R3656 This is one of my favorites: "We all are being changed from glory to glory... We can see it in each other thank God! ...Yesterday the mallet of divine providence struck a blow upon that member of the body of Christ, an unsightly excrescence of pride fell off, and he looks so much more beautiful today, because he did not resist the blow, but gracefully submitted to it. The day before, we saw another under the wearing, painful, polishing process, to which he patiently submitted, and oh, how he shines today! And from day to day we see each other studiously contemplating the divine pattern and striving to copy it; and how we can note the softening, refining and beautifying effect upon all such! So the Spirit of God is at work upon all who fully submit themselves to his will."

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### **Now for the 9<sup>th</sup> and final consideration: Reach For It**

In order to see God's glory, we must reach for it. We must reach for the higher thoughts -- The noble words and conduct of others. -- And most of all for the beauties of holiness brought out in the scriptures.

When we get a glimpse of the heights and depths of God's goodness and when we see its affects, we cannot help but treasure it and reach for it. When we see his lofty character before our minds, earthly things are but **nothing.**

Could it be that we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever?

We can only see the grandeur of God's character by being exercised thereby. This takes **much** study and application.

In this busy world, we must fight for the time. If it is important enough, we will find the time for "**in depth**" study. But there are also the 15 minutes here and the 15 minutes there. These can make a difference. Sometimes just a half hour lunch can become a Bethel. Throughout the day we can reach for it in our heart and mind.

But with all that said, there are times when we can become discouraged with our own progress.

There is an illustration that can help in these times. Many in our ecclesia remind each other of it. If you find that you are not making the progress that you would like, then read this illustration. It is called "The Perfect Copy".

R3739 "Years ago it was the custom in the public schools to furnish the children with ruled copy-books, with copper-plate engraved lessons at the top of each page. The lesson to the pupil was the copying of those perfect characters.... It was the duty of the teacher to examine the work of the pupil... In a majority of cases it was found that the best copy of the original was found on the first line, and that the work became poorer and poorer toward the end of the page. So it is with many in the school of Christ--the great Teacher perceives that their first endeavors to copy God-likeness at the beginning of their Christian experience was more successful than their subsequent attempts. Why? The answer is the same in both cases. The child neglected to look at the copy and merely looked at its own

imperfect efforts, and hence the poor results."

We can be so weighed down with our own failings that we can forget to look at the standard.

Constantly focusing on our imperfect works, takes our mind off of the beautiful perfection of holiness set before us. We can learn from our mistakes, but then we should go on.

(Phil 3:13 KJV) "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, **forgetting** those things which are behind, and **reaching** forth unto those things which are before,"

I think it is important to have an example of this. The first time someone mentioned it to me, it went over my head. I thought that it sounded great, but I really did not understand it. So let's consider an example:

If we are focusing time and time again on a fault (say along the lines of selfishness), it gives us nothing to reach for. Wouldn't it be **so** much better to focus on the glorious character likeness that has been placed before us? Wouldn't it be better to consider all of the selfless deeds we **have seen** in the scriptures? Think of the many examples of this among the brethren or even in the world. Wouldn't it be better to focus on these?

Let's reach for the standard that is set before us.

If we keep filling our heart and mind with these things, then out of the abundance of our heart eventually all these beauties will flow out in our words and conduct.

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**In Conclusion:**

We have been given the grandest opportunity and privilege imaginable. We are being taught of God's glorious character now, and if faithful, we are being molded into that same glorious likeness.

Let's remember [1-2] the worldly ideas of God (and his principles) in contrast. How far short they fall.

[2] Our love for others will be developed not from compromise, BUT from a burning love for God and His truth.

[3] Has the light reached your heart? If so, like Paul, you will be using energy and zeal for the good of others.

[4] Only the Lord can provide the means for us to increase and abound in love. We must earnestly seek it by prayer and effort, making full use of **his** channels of grace.

Remember the little girl and her mom. Will you look back with regret?

[5] Are you getting lost in the labyrinth of life? Remember your faithful guide & his word of promise.

[6] Have the bandages been removed? Can you now see the joy that only comes from adversity? -- The full realization of His **abiding presence**.

Now the Heights of this principled love can be written in your heart.

[7] After the adversity, have you continued this close communion of heart and mind? If

so, you **are** using the earthly for the spiritual.

[8] Are you reviewing your day? Are you seeing the change?

[9] While none can be perfect in the flesh, are you reaching for the heights of character found in God's holy word?

Let's keep our eyes fixed on the perfect copy.

And most of all we must remember:

Psalms 121:2 our "...help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."

Let's more and more treasure this amazing aspect of His Glory -- The glory of Character -- the heights and depths of the love of God.