

The Glory of God

I. The Chief End of Man

- The Westminster Catechism tells us that the chief end or purpose of Humankind is to “glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”
- What does it mean to “glorify” God?
- What, after all, is “Glory?”

II. A Blessing of Glory

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*May the
SHEKINAH
ever dwell
in your presence*

Shekinah (She-Kī-'nā) Heb., The presence of God on earth or a symbol or manifestation of His presence.

The word Shekinah, not found in the Bible, was a word used by the later Jews to express the visible majesty of the Divine Presence. Ex. ch. 40:34-38,

The *Glory* of God

compiled by Troy Caldwell, M.D.

Glory: the Most Attractive Force in the Universe

I'm putting your armor on.
Finding myself so suddenly drawn
like a moth to a flame, whenever I call your name.

Keith Green
Dust to Dust

Mankind longs for God's Glory like moths are attracted to flames.

1 John 1:5 *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: **God is light**; in him there is no darkness at all.*

1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who **called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.***

2 Corinthians 4:6 *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," **made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

Can you feel longing for God's light as you read these verses? As you feel that longing, does your heart burn? Hear those who saw his face revealed in Emmaus. "*Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?*" Does eternity ever burn in your heart? Is there ever a fiery longing for wholeness, truth, beauty, and goodness found only in Him? C.S. Lewis let Psyche express this longing in *Till We Have Faces*.

Do you think it all meant nothing, all the longing? The longing for home? For indeed it now feels not like going, but like going back. All my life the god of the Mountain has been wooing me. Oh, look up once at least before the end and wish me joy. I am going to my lover.

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Moses knew the importance of God's presence and light when he and God spoke.

Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." [We see here where Moses' longings were.]

And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Exo 33: 12f.

The Light of God is also the Fire of God when we feel it in our hearts. *Phos* in Greek is usually translated "light", however when Peter stands at Jesus' trial warming himself by the fire in the courtyard, the word for "fire" is also *phos*. So light and fire go together. This makes sense in a culture that has no electric lights. *Illumination* of our awareness as well as the *passion fires* of longing for our Ultimate Attraction can both be considered the Glory when we experience them in our heart. Only this highest desire is able to lead us through the *purging fires* that clear the way for His fuller manifestation. So there is an attraction and a fear at the same time. But Moses had it right. Unless we are bearers of God's glory, what else will distinguish us from all the other people on the face of the earth?

The faint, far off results of those energies which God's creative rapture implanted in matter when He made the worlds are what we now call physical pleasures; and even thus filtered, they are too much for our present management. What would it be to taste at the fountainhead that stream of which even these lower reaches prove so intoxicating? Yet that, I believe, is what lies before us. The whole man is to drink joy from the fountain of joy. As St. Augustine said, the rapture of the saved soul will "flow over" into the glorified body.

C.S. Lewis *The Weight of Glory*

Christ in You

...the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints...is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.** (Col 1:26-27). Since Christ resides in your deepest part, the place to go and seek for this glorious hope, the end of all desire, the light and fire of God, this longing of all longings **is found in you.** Search for that burning desire found in your heart, and let it guide you to God's Light. Or more poetically...

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the maidens love you! Take me away with you let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you!

Song of Songs 1:24

And ...

I'll give you ninety five reasons to ride with me.
Faith is a brave and beautiful child to see.
Oh, can you tell me what it's worth
The hurt
Your heart
never knowing more.
Hello!
Love's pounding at your door.

Running wild inside me
Is a life that comes free
To a far, far country.

*95 Reasons
by Darrel Brown, David Batteau & Marty McCall
Sung by First Call*

The Glory on Earth

To whet your appetite further and open your soul, let us track the Glory in its appearing here on earth.

The Light Nature of Our Race

The following is not from the Bible but rather reflects a Ethiopic version of an ancient Arabic text called *The Second Book of Adam and Eve*. It picks up our racial ancestors' story about where *Genesis* leaves off and fills in much detail and emotion. I cannot vouch for its veracity, however, it was clearly the vision of the ancient writers that Adam and Eve were glorious creatures before the fall much like C.S. Lewis also suggests in *The Problem of Pain*. (See this quote in the section on the "Glory in Heaven"). Consider these images as you imagine the effect of Glory, and use them to long with our progenitors for their lost light nature.

Because at that time they were filled with the grace of a bright nature, and they had not hearts turned towards earthly things, therefore had God pity on them; and when He saw them fallen before the gate of the Garden, He sent His Word unto father Adam and Eve, and raised them from their fallen state.

God said to Adam, "I have ordained on this earth days and years, and thou and thy seed shall dwell and walk in it until the days and years are fulfilled; when I shall send the Word that created thee, and against which thou hast transgressed the Word that will again save thee when the...days are fulfilled.

But Adam and Eve wept for having come out of the garden, their first abode. And, indeed, when Adam looked at his flesh that was altered, he wept bitterly, he and Eve, over what they had done.... And Adam said to Eve, "Look at thine eyes, and at mine, which afore beheld angels in heaven, praising; and they, too, without ceasing. But now we do not see as we did: our eyes have become of flesh; they cannot see in like manner as they saw before."

Then Adam wept [to God of this loss]. Then God the Lord said unto Adam, "When thou wast under subjection to Me, thou hadst a bright nature within thee, and for that reason couldst thou see things afar off. But after thy transgression thy bright nature was withdrawn from thee." When Adam and Eve had heard these words from God, they went their way; praising and worshipping Him with a sorrowful heart.

Then they came and drew near to the water that watered the garden, from the root of the Tree of Life, and looked at it. And Adam wept and wailed, and smote upon his breast, for being severed from the garden... And he said to Eve, "Seest thou not this water that was with us in the garden? An we, when we were in the garden did not care about it; but since we came to this strange land, we love it."

But when Eve heard these words from him, she wept; and from the soreness of their weeping, they fell into that water; and would have put an end to themselves in it, so as never again to return and behold the creation; for when they looked upon the work of creation, they felt they must put an end to themselves. Then God sent His Word unto Adam and Eve, who raised them from their death.

Excerpted from chapters IX-XII
found in *The Lost Books of The
Bible and the Forgotten Books
of Eden*; World Bible Publishers

And all of this was for lack of the Glory.

Rays of Glory through the Bible

Fortunately for our grieving ancestors, the Glory is once again promised through prophesy and we begin to see it showing up on earth in the Bible.

Abraham may have been the first to glimpse it again as a sign to him of God's covenant.

When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces [of the offering on the altar]. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates."

GENESIS 15:17-18

Moses got the full treatment, seeing it first in the burning bush and subsequently as a fire by night and smoke by day that led the people out of slavery into the promised land. It was present in the giving of the manna. A heavy dose was given him on Sinai as well.

...and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them.

Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai. When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the LORD'S presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.

EXODUS 24:16-18,34:29-35

Moses, as a symbolic type of God the Father, radiated Glory which had to be hidden behind a veil. The people were not ready to receive it. And a veil separated the Father's holiness and Glory from the people as part of the tabernacle and temple structures as well. The Old Testament Jews could only relate to its awesome power symbolically through the mediation of their high priest who once annually could enter behind the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the more daily activities of the priests. This was only after much purification, on the Day of Atonement. God the Father's Glory is incredibly potent stuff.

The Glory filled the tabernacle during its dedication; it was present when the seventy elders were chosen; it was also present when Solomon finished the temple and put the Ark of the Covenant within. There is also a mournful description of the Shekinah leaving the temple when it was defiled in Ezekiel 9-11. In the millennial temple it is spoken of as reinstated and never to be removed. (Ezekiel 43).

The **Old Testament prophets** were blessed with visionary displays of God's Glory from time to time with Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel all falling to their faces when it appeared. Shortly after this, prophesy fell silent for 400 years as human efforts largely replaced trust in the living presence of God. One doubts if the Glory was ever witnessed during those years even by the high priest during his annual inner sanctum rite, since everyone was surprised when Zacharias, John the Baptist's father, reported the supernatural visitation. It seems God draws near to his people at times or withdraws at times his Glory in order to lead or correct us. I have seen him withdraw for effect just prior to manifesting a pivotal message in myself and others. If we feel His being gone for awhile, then we notice the difference more readily when He comes again. Perhaps this was happening during Israel's 400 year prophetless inter-Testamentary period.

With **Jesus** the Glory returns big time. It is possible the Shekinah is what overshadowed Mary. I guess we could say this is further evidence of its potency. Then we all know the passage, "*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.*" Then there was that strange star. What kind of star could lead Wiseman to an exact house? No astronomical occurrence we know of today does this. I will bet it was God's ever-alluring Glory performing its

hobby of leading wise men to Him. Jesus Himself shone forth the Father's Glory on Transfiguration Mount, but he did not fall or hide like the Israelites. He was able to stand within the presence of that Glory without trembling and even seemed to take it as a matter of course. Peter, on the other hand, was awestruck, stammering something about wanting to stay there forever.

Of course, this episode of Jesus' of most awesome glorification was followed by the cross. Ouch! This seems to be a pattern of God also. We first receive the Glory of the Lord through our conversion or through an awakening of the soul. Then we are called into a wilderness of temptation and suffering. We receive the vision that guides and gives our hope through the desert. But we must pass through this desert before we receive His sustained presence of Light. Thus it was with Christ. He goes through God's purgation for all mankind, he gestates three days in the earth, then like a seed blossoming forth into flowers and fruit, he rises again with Easter Brilliance all around.

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

Matthew 28:14

Jesus also leaves us in a blaze of Glory better than any old western. And he promises to return with that same Glory (1 Thes. 4, Mt. 24:26, Rev 1, Lk 21).

Then Peter and the other disciples experience a resurrection of their own when they witness the resurrected Christ. Yet Peter, and probably the others, were never fully transformed by all this. On a beach by a lake we see evidence of this as Peter replies weakly to Jesus' three questions, "Peter, do you love me?" Afterward Peter resorts to the "misery loves company" complaint when Jesus prophesies Peter's death. "What about John?" he asks. This was rather like a child's saying, "It's not fair!"--hardly a transformed response. Only when Peter is touched by the Glory do we see his transformed character. (John 21)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

Acts 2:13

We all know what happened to Peter after that. He became positively bold.

Released from the confines of the Holy of Holies through the rend in the veil, the Glory is now unleashed in a new way, falling upon many individuals and not just the temple and prophets. So fresh is this new and living way that Paul, after he also receives his own vision of Glory, must devote many chapters of his writings to contrasting the old and the new. In his passage below, follow the apostle closely as he tells us the climax of the Glory's presence in this age. Look and **stand in awe of who you are**.

He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And **we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.**

2 Corinthians 3

Isn't that incredible? God let **YOU** be a climax in His story of Glory. **You** are his vessel of **Glory!**

Think about it.

You hang your heart in the closet
You hide your faith in your wallet
When skies turn gray say you knew it
Won't ask for much, afraid you'll lose it

You're running around in circles, Mr. Blue,
without your heavenly father

There's going to be another day
The sun is coming up no matter what you say
Why don't you take a different point of view
There's a box of Glory waiting here for me and you.

*Box of Glory--Sung by First Call
by Darrell Brown, David Batteau, and Bonnie Keen*

Some Visions of Glory in Literature

Spiritual theology has long considered the vision of God in His Glory one of the ultimate experiences of ecstasy and meaning known to humankind. It is promised to the pure in heart in the beatitudes of Christ; "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*" Do not ever forget that seeing God in His Glory is a very BIG deal. It is so big we even give it a special name, "The Beatific Vision."

Often good writers can bring to life for us that which is otherwise hard to imagine. Here are two such visions from writers whose names you will recognize. Read them slowly and take it all in.

The eyes [of Mary] venerated and beloved
by God, fixed on him who prayed, showed
how gratefully devout prayers are heard.
Then they turned to the Eternal Light into which
we must not think any mortal vision,
however clear, can ever penetrate so deeply.
And I who drew near to the **goal**
of all desires, ended, as I ought,
within myself, the ardor of my longing.
Bernard [Dante's guide through Paradise] signaled to me and
smiled
so that I might look up,
but I already had made myself as he wished.
For my sight, growing pure, penetrated
ever deeper into the rays
of the Light which is true in Itself.
From then on my vision was greater
than our speech which fails at such a sight,
just as memory is overcome by the excess.
As one who in a dream sees clearly,
and the feeling impressed remains afterward,
although nothing else comes back to mind,
so am I; for my vision disappears
almost wholly, and yet the sweetness
caused by it is still distilled within my heart.
Thus, in sunlight, the snow melts away;
thus the sayings of the Sibyl, written
on light leaves, were lost in the wind.
O Supreme Light that risest so high
above mortal concepts, give back to my mind
a little of what Thou didst appear,
and make my tongue strong,
so that it may leave to future peoples
at least a spark of Thy glory!
For, by returning to my memory
and by sounding a little in these verses
more of Thy victory will be conceived.
By the keenness of the living ray I endured
I believe I would have been dazed
if my eyes had turned away from it;
and I remember that I was bolder
because of that to sustain the view
until my sight *attained* the Infinite Worth.
O abundant grace through which I presumed
to fix my eyes on the Eternal Light
so long that I consumed my vision on it!
In its depths I saw contained, bound with love
in one volume what is scattered
on leaves throughout the world

substances [things] and accidents [qualities] and their modes
as if fused together in such a way
that what I speak of is a single light.
The universal form [principle or archetype] of this unity
I believe I saw, because more abundantly
in saying this I feel that I rejoice.
One moment obscures more for me than twenty five centuries
have clouded since the adventure which made Neptune
wonder at the shadow of the Argo [the first ship].
Thus my mind with rapt attention
gazed fixedly, motionless and attentive,
continually enflamed by its very gazing.
In that light we become such
that we can never consent
to turn from it for another sight,
inasmuch as the good which is the object
of the will is all in it, and outside of it
whatever is perfect there is defective.
Now my speech, even for what I remember,
will be shorter than that of an infant
who still bathes his tongue at the breast.
Not that more than a single semblance
was in the living light
I gazed upon (for it is always as it was before),
but in my vision which gained strength
as I looked the single appearance,
through a change in me, was transformed.
Within the deep and clear subsistence
of the great light three circles of three colors
and of one dimension [the Trinity] appeared to me,
and one [the Son] seemed reflected from the other [the Father]
as Iris by Iris, and the third [the *Holy Spirit*]
seemed fire emanating equally from both.
O how poor our speech is and how feeble
for my conception! Compared to what I saw
to say its power is "little" is to say too much.
O Eternal Light [Father], abiding in Thyself alone,
Thou [Son] alone understanding Thyself, and Thou
[Holy Spirit] understood only by Thee, Thou dost love and
smile!
The circle which appeared in Thee
as a reflected light [the Son]
when contemplated a while
seemed depicted with our image within itself
and of its own [the Circle's] color,
so that my eyes were wholly fixed on it.
Like the geometer who strives
to square the circle and cannot find
by thinking the principle he needs

I was at that new sight. I wanted to see
 how the [human] image was conformed
 to the [divine] circle and has a place in it,
 But mine were not the wings for such a flight
 Yet, as I wished, the truth I wished for came
 Cleaving my mind in a great flash of light.
 Here my powers rest from their high fantasy,

But already I could feel my being turned
 Instinct and intellect balanced equally [i.e. wholeness of soul]
 As in a wheel whose motion nothing jars
 by the Love which turns the sun and the other stars.
The Divine Comedy
 Dante Alighieri
 Paradise Canto XXXIII

In our own century, the pivotal book of C.S. Lewis's space trilogy has its hero, Ransom, recovering from a spiritual battle which he had to fight partly with his fists. Exhausted, the still untainted planet soothes him with singing waters and wondrous beasts until finally he meets with the angel of the planet and the still glorious and unfallen progenitors of the Perelandrian race. As he recovers from his wounds, Ransom wonders why things had to be so painful during his fight for this world. His answer comes in a vision.

The [angelic] voice that spoke next seemed to be that of Mars, but Ransom was not certain. And who spoke after that, he does not know at all. For in the conversation that followed, if it can be called a conversation, though he believes that he himself was sometimes the speaker, he never knew which words were his or another's, or even whether a man or an *eldil* (angel) was talking. The speeches followed one another, if, indeed, they did not all take place at the same time like the parts of a music into which all five of them had entered as instruments or like a wind blowing through five trees that stand together on a hilltop.

"We would not talk of it like that," said the first voice. "The Great Dance does not wait to be perfect until the peoples of the Low Worlds are gathered into it. We speak not of when it will begin. It has begun from before always. There was no time when we did not rejoice before His face as now. The dance which we dance is at the centre and for the dance all things were made. Blessed be He!"

Another said, "Never did He make two things the same; never did He utter one word twice. After earths, not better earths but beasts; after beasts, not better beasts, but spirits. After a failing, not a recovery but a new creation. Out of the new creation, not a third but the mode of change itself is changed for ever. Blessed is He!"

And another said, "It is loaded with justice as a tree bows down with fruit. All is righteousness and there is no equality. Not as when stones lie side by side, but as when stones support and are supported in an arch, such is His order; rule and obedience, begetting and bearing, heat glancing down, life growing up. Blessed be He!"

One said, "They who add years to years in impish aggregation, or miles to miles and galaxies to galaxies, shall not come near His greatness. The day of the fields of *Arbol* (solar system) will fade and the days of Deep Heaven itself are numbered. Not thus is He great. He dwells (all of Him dwells) within the seed of the smallest flower and is not cramped. Deep Heaven is inside Him who is inside the seed and does not distend Him. Blessed be He!"

"The edge of each nature borders on that whereof it contains no shadow or similitude. Of many points one line; of many lines one shape; of many shapes one solid body; of many senses and thoughts one person; of three persons, Himself. As is the circle to the sphere, so are the ancient worlds that needed no redemption to that world wherein He was born and died. As is a point to a line, so is that world to the far off fruits of its redeeming. Blessed be He!"

"Yet the circle is not less round than the sphere, and the sphere is the home and fatherland of circles. Infinite multitudes of circles lie enclosed in every sphere, and if they spoke they would say, "For us were spheres created. Let no mouth open to gainsay them. Blessed be He!"

"The peoples of the ancient worlds who never sinned, for whom He never came down, are the peoples for whose sake the Low Worlds were made. For though the healing what was wounded and the straightening what was bent is a new dimension of glory, yet the straight was not made that it might be bent nor the whole

that it might be wounded. The ancient peoples are at the centre. Blessed be He!"

"All which is not itself the Great Dance was made in order that He might come down into it. In the Fallen World He prepared for Himself a body and was united with the Dust and made it glorious for ever. This is the end and final cause of all creating, and the sin whereby it came is called *Fortunate* and the world where this was enacted is the centre of worlds. Blessed be He!"

"The Tree was planted in that world but the fruit has ripened in this. The fountain that sprang with mingled blood and life in the Dark World (earth), flows here with life only. We have passed the first cataracts, and from here onward the stream flows deep and turns in the direction of the sea. This is the *Morning Star* which He promised to those who conquer; this is the centre of worlds. Till now all has waited. But now the trumpet has sounded and the army is on the move. Blessed be He!"

"Though men or angels rule them, the worlds are for themselves. The waters you have not floated on, the fruit you have not plucked, the caves into which you have not descended and the fire through which your bodies cannot pass, do not await your coming to put on perfection, though they will obey you when you come. Times without number I have circled *Arbol* while you were not alive, and those times were not desert. Their own voice was in them, not merely a dreaming of the day when you should awake. They also were at the centre. Be comforted, small immortals. You are not the voice that all things utter, nor is there eternal silence in the places where you cannot come. No feet have walked, nor shall, on the ice of *Glund*; no eye looked up from beneath on the Ring of *Lurga*, and *Ironplain* in *Nerual* is chaste and empty. Yet it is not for nothing that the gods walk ceaselessly around the fields of *Arbol*. Blessed be He!"

"That Dust itself which is scattered so rare in Heaven, whereof all worlds, and the bodies that are not worlds, are made, is at the centre. It waits not till created eyes have seen it or hands handled it, to be in itself a strength and splendour of *Maleldil* (God). Only the least part has served, or ever shall, a beast, a man, or a god. But always, and beyond all distances, before they came and after they are gone and where they never come, it is what it is and utters the heart of the Holy One with its own voice. It is farthest from Him of all things, for it has no life, nor sense, nor reason; it is nearest to Him of all things for without intervening soul, as sparks fly out of fire, He utters in each grain of it the unmixed image of His energy. Each grain, if it spoke, would say, I am at the centre; for me all things were made. Let no mouth open to gainsay it. Blessed be He!"

"Each grain is at the centre. The Dust is at the centre. The Worlds are at the centre. The beasts are at the centre. The ancient peoples are there. The race that sinned is there. *Tor* and *Tinidril* are there. The gods are there also. Blessed be He!"

"Where *Maleldil* is, there is the centre. He is in every place. Not some of Him in one place and some in another, but in each place the whole *Maleldil*, even in the smallness beyond thought

There is no way out of the centre save into the Bent Will (Satan) which casts itself into the Nowhere. Blessed be He!"

"Each thing was made for Him. He is the centre. Because we are with Him, each of us is at the centre. It is not as in a city of the Darkened World where they say that each must live for all. In His City all things are made for each. When He died in the Wounded World He died not for men, but for each man. If each man had been the only man made, He would have done no less. Each thing, from the single grain of Dust to the strongest eldil (angel), is the end and the final cause of all creation and the mirror in which the beam of His brightness comes to rest and so returns to Him: Blessed be He!"

"In the plan of the Great Dance plans without number intersect, and each movement becomes in its season the breaking into flower of the whole design to which all else had been directed. Thus each is equally at the centre and none are there by being equals, but some by giving place and some by receiving it, the small things by their smallness and the great by their greatness, and all the patterns linked and looped together by the unions of a heeling with a sceptered love. Blessed be He!"

"He has immeasurable use for each thing that is made, that His love and splendour may flow forth like a strong river which has need of a great watercourse and fills alike the deep pools and the little crannies, that are filled equally and remain unequal; and when it has filled them brim full it flows over and makes new channels. We also have need beyond measure of all that He has made. Love me, my brothers, for I am infinitely necessary to you and for your delight I was made. Blessed be He!"

"He has no need at all of anything that is made. An eldil is not more needful to Him than a grain of the Dust: a peopled world no more needed than a world that is empty: but all needless alike, and what all add to Him is nothing. We also have no need of anything that is made. Love me, my brothers, for I am infinitely superfluous, and your love shall be like His, born neither of your need nor of my deserving, but a plain bounty. Blessed be He!"

"All things are by Him and for Him. He utters Himself also for His own delight and sees that He is good. He is His own begotten and what proceeds from Him is Himself Blessed be He!"

"All that is made seems planless to the darkened mind, because there are more plans than it looked for. In these seas there are islands where the hairs of the turf are so fine and so closely woven together that unless a man looked long at them he would see neither hairs nor weaving at all, but only the same and the flat. So with the Great Dance. Set your eyes on one movement and it will lead you through all patterns and it will seem to you the master movement. But the seeming will be true. Let no mouth open to gainsay it. There seems no plan because it is all plan: there seems no centre because it is all centre. Blessed be He!"

"Yet this seeming also is the end and final cause for which He spreads out Time so long and Heaven so deep; lest if we never met the dark, and the road that leads nowhither, and the question to which no answer is imaginable, we should have in our minds no likeness of the Abyss of the Father, into which if a creature drop down his thoughts for ever he shall hear no echo return to him. Blessed, blessed, blessed be He!"

And now, by a transition which he did not notice, it seemed that what had begun as speech was turned into sight, or into

something that can be remembered only as if it were seeing. He thought he saw the Great Dance. It seemed to be woven out of the intertwining undulation of many cords or bands of light, leaping over and under one another and mutually embraced in arabesques and flower like subtleties. Each figure as he looked at it became the master figure or focus of the whole spectacle, by means of which his eye disentangled all else and brought it into unity only to be itself entangled when he looked to what he had taken for mere marginal decorations and found that there also the same hegemony was claimed, and the claim made good, yet the former pattern not thereby dispossessed but finding in its new subordination a significance greater than that which it had abdicated. He could see also (but the word "seeing" is now plainly inadequate) wherever the ribbons or serpents of light intersected, minute corpuscles of momentary brightness: and he knew somehow that these particles were the secular generalities of which history tells peoples, institutions, climates of opinion, civilizations, arts, sciences, and the like ephemeral coruscations that piped their short song and vanished. The ribbons or cords themselves, in which millions of corpuscles lived and died, were things of some different kind. At first he could not say what. But he knew in the end that most of them were individual entities. If so, the time in which the Great Dance proceeds is very unlike time as we know it. Some of the thinnest and more delicate cords were beings that we call short-lived: flowers and insects, a fruit or a storm of rain, and once (he thought) a wave of the sea. Others were such things as we also think lasting: crystals, rivers, mountains, or even stars. Far above these in girth and luminosity and flashing with colours from beyond our spectrum were the lines of the personal beings, yet as different from one another in splendour as all of them from the previous class. But not all the cords were individuals: some were universal truths or universal qualities. It did not surprise him then to find that these and the persons were both cords and both stood together as against the mere atoms of generality which lived and died in the clashing of their streams: but afterwards, when he came back to earth, he wondered. And by now the thing must have passed together out of the region of sight as we understand it. For he says that the whole solid figure of these enamoured and interanimated circlings was suddenly revealed as the mere superficies of a far vaster pattern in four dimensions, and that figure as the boundary of yet others in other worlds: till suddenly as the movement grew yet swifter, the interweaving yet more ecstatic, the relevance of all to all yet more intense, as dimension was added to dimension and that part of him which could reason and remember was dropped farther and farther behind that part of him which saw, even then, at the very zenith of complexity, complexity was eaten up and faded, as a thin white cloud fades into the hard blue burning of the sky, and a simplicity beyond all comprehension, ancient and young as spring, illimitable, pellucid, drew him with cords of infinite desire into its own stillness. He went up into such a quietness, a privacy, and a freshness that at the very moment when he stood farthest from our ordinary mode of being he had the sense of stripping off encumbrances and awaking from trance, and coming to himself. With a gesture of relaxation he looked about him

In a sense, the Great Dance and the Glory are not exactly the same. However, the numinous light manifesting in this awesome revelation of God's multidimensional meaning was most certainly the Glory Itself. God, after all, is the center and circumference of the Dance. Let us now see Him be Lord of the Dance in history.

Glimpses of Glory in History

The Glory of God as it comes to us in our hearts is only rarely the beatific vision like described above. More often it is the quiet presence of God's peace in our hearts. As we grow through various stages of prayer, we find we are experiencing this more and more. A figure recognized as a giant in the realm of prayer by Catholic and Protestant alike is St. Teresa of

Avila. This Carmelite founder of the 16th century had many glory-filled spiritual experiences. However, as a means of illustrating the quieter ranges of the Glory's coming, let us look at her teaching on the "prayer of quiet".

What I call "consolations from God" and which elsewhere, I have termed the "Prayer of Quiet" is something of a very different nature. To understand this better, let us suppose that we are looking at two fountains, the basins of which can be filled with water. Now these two cisterns are supplied with water in differing ways. The one is supplied from a distance by several conduits and with human skill. But the other has been constructed at the very source of the water, that is over a spring, and so it fills without making any noise. If the latter spring is abundant, as is that of which we are speaking, it sends forth a great volume of water after it has filled the cistern. Here no skill is necessary, and no conduits had to be made, for the water flows all the time. You see here the difference. For the water which comes through conduits resembles the tenderness and pleasures spoken of in the third stage of prayer which we draw from our meditation. For these we draw from our thoughts by the help of meditating upon created things. In short, the thoughts are obtained by our own diligence so that they make a noise when we fill them. So this happens when we are filled with the benefits of these thoughts. The water now comes direct from the source to the other fountain. This source is God.

So when it is His Majesty's will, and He is pleased to grant us some special favor, His coming is accompanied by the greatest peace and quiet and sweetness within ourselves. I cannot say where it arises or how this happens. This contentment and delight are not felt, like earthly delights are felt in the heart not at the beginning, at least. Later the basin completely fills, and then this water begins to overflow all the Mansions and faculties until it reaches the body. It is for this reason that I have said it has its source in God and yet ends in ourselves. For it is certain and anyone will know this who has experienced it that the whole of the outer man enjoys this consolation and sweetness as well.

While writing these words, I am thinking of this verse, "You have enlarged my heart" (Psalm 119:32). This dilation is not something which I think takes its rise within the heart, but from some other more interior part that is truly deep. I think it must be the center of the soul itself. For I discover such wonderful secrets within me. They astonish me. But how many more there are! O my Lord and my God! How wonderful is Your greatness! Yet here we live like so many silly shepherd boys, imagining that we have attained some knowledge of You. Yet when I say "amounts to nothing at all. I mean that You are so surpassingly great. This is not because the signs of greatness that we see in Your works are not very wonderful. But we have actually learned to know of them ourselves very little.

Returning then to this verse, I think that what it says about the enlargement of the heart may be of some help to us. Apparently, as this heavenly water begins to flow from the source of which I am speaking from our very depths it proceeds to spread within us and to cause an interior expansion. It produces an ineffable blessing so that the soul cannot understand all that it is receiving there. The fragrance that it experiences, we might say, is as if in those interior depths there were a brazier [Note: here comes the Glory] on which sweet perfumes were being burned. The light cannot be seen nor the place where it dwells, but the fragrant smoke and the heat penetrate the whole soul. Very often the effects will extend throughout the body. See that you properly understand me here. For neither is any heat felt, nor smell perceived, since it is something more subtle than these sensory experiences. I speak plainly to help you understand me. But people who have not experienced this must realize that it really does happen. Its occurrence is capable of being seen, and the soul becomes aware of it more clearly than these words of mine can express.

It is not something that we can imagine nor strive after nor acquire. For it is very clear that it is not something that is made of human metal; rather, it is made of the purest gold of divine wisdom. In this state the faculties are not in union, but they become absorbed, and they are astonished at what they consider is happening to it. As I have said, the soul cannot fully understand the favors which the Lord grants it. Nor can it know the love which draws it ever nearer to Himself. It is certainly desirable that we should know how to obtain such a favor.

There is another kind of prayer, however which commences almost before this. So let me say a little about it here although I have spoken of it elsewhere. This is the Prayer of Recollection which also seems to me to be divinely given. For it does not require the soul to be in the dark, nor to shut the eye, nor to do any external thing. It often happens that without our wishing it, our eyes close and we desire solitude. Then without any contrivance, it is like a building that seems to be erected for the prayer that I have just mentioned. The senses and all external things then seem to lose their grip upon the soul so that the soul recovers what was lost. They say that the soul enters within itself, and that sometimes it ascends above itself.

In this fourth stage there is no sense of anything; there its only fruition, without understanding what the fruition is that is given. It is understood that the fruitfulness is of a certain good containing in itself all good together at once. But this goodness is not comprehended. The senses are all occupied in this fruition in such a way that not one of them is at liberty to attend to anything else, whether outwardly or inwardly. The senses were permitted before to give some signs of the great joy that they feel. But now in this state, the joy of the soul is incomparably greater, and the power of showing it is still less available. For there is no power in the body or the soul whereby this fruition can be made known. Anything of that kind would be a great hindrance, a torture, and a disturbance of its rest. And I say that if it really is a union of all the faculties, the soul, even if it wished, cannot make itself known. For if it can, then it is not a union at all. How this which we call union is effected and what it is I cannot tell. Mystical theology explains it, but I do not know the terms of that science. Nor can I understand what the mind is, nor how it differs from the soul or spirit either. For all three seem to me but the same thing, although I do know that the soul sometimes leaps forth out of itself like a fire that is burning and becomes like a flame. Occasionally this fire increases violently and the flame ascends high above the fire. But it is not therefore a different thing. It is the same flame of the same fire.

What I am undertaking to explain is what the soul feels, when it is in divine union. It is plain enough what that union is. It is that of two distinct things becoming one. O my Lord, how good You are! Blessed be You forever, O my God! Let all creatures praise You Who have so loved us that we can truly speak of this communication which You have with souls in this our exile! Yes, even if they be good souls, it is on Your part great munificence and kindness. In a word, it is Your lovingkindness, O my Lord.

In order to speak about the Prayer of Recollection I have passed over the effects or signs to be observed in souls to whom this prayer is granted by our Lord. It is clear that our enlargement of the soul does take place, as if the water proceeding from the spring had no means of running over. Instead, the fountain had such a device that the more the water flowed in, the larger the basin became. So it is with this kind of prayer. God works many more wonders in the soul, fitting it and gradually disposing it to retain all that He gives it. This gentle movement and the interior enlargement of the soul cause it to be less constrained in matters

relating to the service of God than it was before; it has much more freedom, also. It is not distressed because of the fear of hell. Although it feels greater fear now for having offended God, yet it is freed from servile fear and has a great confidence that it will enjoy Him. It thinks it can do all in God. It has more desires for using spiritual discipline than ever. The fear of afflictions which it used to have is also now moderated because it has a more living faith. It knows that if the soul bears them for God's sake, His Majesty will give it grace to bear them with patience. Indeed, sometimes the soul desires them since it has a great desire to do something for God. And as it now understands His greatness better. Having also tried the delights of God, the soul finds those of the world to be in comparison as mere dirt (Philippians 3:8). So the soul separates itself from them little by little, and for doing this the soul has more control over itself. In a word, it has matured in all virtue and will not fail to go on increasingly.

I am now speaking of the water which comes down from heaven to fill and to saturate in its abundance the whole

Though the Kingdom of Heaven is within us, God does not limit his Glory to interior manifestations. He only begins it there. When groups of people begin interceding with brokenness of spirit, God sometimes sends His Glory in unexpected ways. The following is an abbreviated account of the Welsh revival.

In 1904, one of the greatest revivals in history broke out in Wales, a small principality of the British Isles. There have been a few spiritual awakenings in history to span the globe and touch millions, but few have had the power and impact during such a short period of time as the Welsh Revival. It seems that the Lord looked down upon Wales and said, "I am going to show the church and the world what I can do with just a handful of faithful saints who will yield themselves to Me." The results of that demonstration still send shock waves of conviction and hope to all who hear the story.

Evan Roberts was the most popular evangelist of the Welsh Revival. He is also one of the more enigmatic figures in church history. Roberts was not a dynamic leader of people; he did not come with new teachings, neither was he even considered a good preacher. What he did come with was one of the greatest examples of how one can be a dynamic follower of the Lord, and how the church can be a proper host to the Holy Spirit.

As the news of the Welsh Revival spread around the world, some of the great preachers and spiritual leaders of the world came to see if they could give direction and leadership to this new movement. There was a concern that such a great revival was being run by mere children. Evan Roberts was only in his mid-twenties and most of the evangelists and workers in the revival were teenagers and children. When the great and renowned preachers arrived they would inevitably be so impacted by the presence of the Holy Spirit that they sat dumb and mute before Him and the children He had chosen. **When the glory of the Lord fills His temple all flesh and presumption flee.**

This was to be a hallmark of the Welsh Revival. Great knowledge and eloquence bowed the knee to love and pure devotion, possibly like it had not done since the "unlearned and untrained" apostles stood before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. One of the great preachers of that era testified that he would trade all of his learning for even a portion of the presence of God that accompanied these children.

Grace Comes To The Humble

There can be a great difference between preaching from a source of knowledge and preaching from a well of living water that flows from the throne of God. This was to be one of the central lessons of the Welsh Revival. When God decides that He is going to move, He does not look for those wise enough or educated enough. He looks for those who are yielded and humble enough to

garden with water. If our Lord never ceased to pour it down whenever it was necessary, the gardener certainly would have plenty of rest. If there were no winter, but an equitable season throughout the year, the fruits and flowers would never fail. The gardener would have his delight always there. But in this life this is not possible. We must always be careful, when one water fails, to obtain another. This water from heaven comes down very often when the gardener least expects it. The soul which seeks after God is conscious with an excessive and sweet joy that it is, as it were, utterly fainting away in a kind of trance. The period of time however long it may have been during which the faculties of the soul were entranced is really short. Maybe half an hour, but that would be a long time. I do not think that I have ever been in such a trance for so long.

A Life of Prayer

by St. Teresa of Avila

Abridged & Edited by James Houston

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risk following Him. In Wales, the Lord demonstrated that when He finds such vessels there is no limit to what He can do with them.

While the revival spread into almost every corner of the country, the ministry of Evan Roberts was mostly confined to just one of its twelve counties. The fire of God burned in towns and villages which he did not visit. In many of the places which he did visit, he found that the fire was already there. He would fan the flame a little and then go back to his base. Even Roberts knew from the beginning that he was neither the source nor the perpetuator of what was happening. He simply tried to stay yielded to the Spirit so that he could play whatever part was required of him.

That the Lord has chosen men to be His habitation must be one of the great marvels of the creation. But God has chosen men to do His work, and He often uses just a single individual to ignite a new move of His Holy Spirit. We see this in Scripture with such men as Peter, Paul, or John The Baptist. There are many historical examples of this principle. But even though the Lord does often use a single individual to ignite the fires of revival or to lead a spiritual advance, there have always been others prepared to keep the fires going and to lay a proper foundation for the gains that are made. The same is true in the Welsh Revival. Evan Roberts undoubtedly struck the match, but there were many who carried the flames, and many others who had prepared the timber for the fires. Few of these ever became well known with men, but they are certainly bright stars in the eternal chronicles of the Book of Life.

Few men in history have been able to find that delicate balance between being used by God and trying to use God. A Christian teacher once defined "profanity" as "the seeking of one's own recognition at the expense of God's glory." Evan Roberts was driven by that conviction. He was utterly jealous to see that only the Lord received the glory. For as long as Evan maintained that devotion, and as long as he imparted it to the workers, the fires of revival did not go out. From the beginning until the end, this was one revival that could not be attributed to human charisma or promotional ability.

You Do Not Have To Advertise A Fire

A true move of God is not fueled by money, organization or advertising. True revival only comes when the pillar of fire, that is the presence of God Himself, picks up and moves. Historians would later write that the most astonishing feature of the Welsh Revival was the lack of commercialism. There were no hymn books, no song leaders, no committees, no choirs, no great

preachers, no offerings, no organization. Yet souls were redeemed, families were healed and whole cities were converted on a scale that had not been seen before nor since.

James Stewart, a historian of the Welsh Revival (to whom much is owed for the content of this article) researched the newspapers and magazines published in Wales in 1904 and 1905 and could not find a single advertisement promoting meetings. The only organized or planned evangelistic campaign for Evan Roberts was a single meeting in Liverpool in 1905. But even in that meeting the Lord disrupted the plans and radically changed the agenda even before the evangelist arrived.

The Plan Was Not To Plan

Broken plans seemed to be the hallmark of the Welsh Revival. This is not to imply that leadership and organization are not at times needed in the church, but when the Spirit is doing something new and fresh, the greatest gift is not knowing how to lead, but knowing how to follow. Humility, that comes from knowing you do not have all the answers, stimulates a holy desperation for God in oneself. Those few with this humility seem to be the only ones who can ever be responsive to the Lord when He wants to do a new thing.

As the Lord Jesus explained to Nicodemus: "**The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit**" (John 3:8). The workers in the Welsh Revival came to understand that the Lord meant this literally. Finally they did not try to figure out where the Spirit was going next, they only tried to stay close enough to "hear the sound of it." The workers came to abhor the presumption that the Spirit would automatically go with them and bless their own plans. They knew that the Spirit did not follow them, but that they must follow the Spirit.

It is noteworthy that many who have tried to duplicate this kind of ministry style succumbed to spiritual delusions or even suffered the shipwreck of their faith. Even the apostles to the early church often planned their missionary journeys and would announce months ahead of time their impending visits. Yet, they always remained open for the Lord to change their plans; nevertheless, the apostles could not always keep their intentions to visit a city, as with Paul's attempts to revisit the Corinthians. The point is that our renewed minds are not in conflict with the Holy Spirit. The Lord did not lead the apostles around by the hand; He sent them. They made many of their own decisions because they had His mind. But because they were always growing and maturing, they did not always make the right decisions. At times, the Lord would correct their course with an intervention of divine guidance through a dream, vision, or a prophet. We need to labor with the spiritual wisdom that has been given to us, but always be open for the Lord to intervene and change our plans.

Seek The Wine, Not The Wineskin

Many of the great missionary ventures in church history, such as William Booth's Salvation Army, were planned over many years, and they generally followed the plan. Those who have tried to duplicate the original glory of the Salvation Army have, for the most part, failed. Those who have tried to duplicate the Welsh Revival became pitiful caricatures of the original revivalists. Those who have tried to build the wineskin first have usually found themselves out of step and unable to receive the new wine when it came. The Lord has never restricted Himself to move by any predetermined formula. There is one quality common to those who have been mightily used by the Holy Spirit they were able to hear the sound of the Holy Spirit moving and were willing to move that way for that time and place.

The lessons of this great revival are critically important for the last day church to understand, as she will see the greatest harvest of

all. As the Lord Jesus testified: "**THE HARVEST is the end of the age**" (Matthew 13:39).

The Presence Comes

Almost everyone in attendance that Monday night of the Spirit's coming was moved to tears; many cried in agony. By midnight the presence of the Lord was so intense that it could hardly be contained. The people had never experienced such deep repentance, or such deep joy. Those crying in remorse for their sins could not be distinguished from those crying in ecstasy at the nearness of God. It was after 3:00 a.m. before an attempt to close the meeting was possible.

The next evening, Tuesday November 8, the people crowded into the chapel early just to be able to get seats. Everyone was talking about another great awakening, maybe even another Pentecost! But that night the meeting was cold and lifeless. Evan and a few faithful remained until almost 3:00 a.m. agonizing in prayer. Why had the Lord departed so quickly? Near 6:00 a.m. Evan and Dan finally left to go home and sleep.

The Lord had been working on [people in the community to burden them toward repentance.] He had in fact been at the meeting in a very special way, but one which they did not recognize. The Lord does not always come to give us "goose bumps"; at times He comes in silence. Sometimes He does not want to speak to us as much as He wants us to learn to just wait. The people of Loughor got the message quickly. Now it was time for Evan to be astonished at the people. By 6:00 a.m. the streets were noisy with crowds on their way to the early morning prayer services. The entire population of the town was being transformed into a praying multitude.

On November 9 and 10, Evan Roberts preached at the Brynteg Congregational chapel. By the second night the entire congregation was, in the words of James E. Stewart, "completely carried away by spiritual emotion."

On this day the first public reference to the Revival was made in a secular newspaper. Soon almost the entire press in Wales and many other newspapers around the world would be devoted to covering the amazing revival taking place in their midst. The following is the short article that appeared in *The Western Mail* of Cardiff, Wales.

GREAT CROWDS OF PEOPLE DRAWN TO LOUGHOR

Congregations Stay Till Halfpasttwo

In The Morning

A remarkable religious revival is now taking place at Loughor. For some days a young man named Evan Roberts, a native of Loughor, has been causing great surprise at Moriah Chapel. The place has been besieged by dense crowds of people unable to obtain admission. Such excitement has prevailed that the road on which the chapel is situated has been lined with people from end to end. Roberts, who speaks in Welsh, opens his discourse by saying that he does not know what he is going to say but that when he is in communion with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will speak, and he will simply be the medium of His wisdom. The preacher soon launches out into a fervent and, at times, impassioned oration. His statements have had stirring effects upon his listeners. Many who have disbelieved Christianity for years are again returning to the fold of their younger days. One night, so great was the enthusiasm invoked by the young revivalist that, after his sermon which lasted two hours, the vast congregation remained praying and singing until twothirds in the morning! Shopkeepers are closing early in order to get a place in the chapel, and tin and steel workers throng the place in their working clothes.

On November 11, the Moriah was teeming with over 800 people trying to squeeze into the little chapel. A young girl in her early teens seemed to capture the feeling when she cried out, "Oh, what will Heaven be like if it is so wonderful down here!"

By the next day the prayer meetings had so overflowed the chapel that people were opening their homes for meetings throughout Loughor. The people's burden for their unsaved loved ones was reaching a fever pitch. By early afternoon wagons and carts were pouring into the town from all over the countryside. By night even the home prayer meetings were overcrowded. The evangelists were running from chapel to chapel and house to house. Salvation seemed to be flowing down the streets like a great flood. On this day Sam Jenkins, the famous gospel singer, was first heard in the revival. In one of the galleries he broke out in the song "Saved By Grace" and the multitude picked it up, singing it over and over.

The meetings lasted until after 5:00 a.m. that Sunday morning. Evan introduced his friend Sydney to the throngs at Loughor and then departed for Aberdare without sleeping. The grocery shops were completely cleared of food as the people who had come from long distances determined that they were not going to go home. **Feeling like they had found the cloud of glory they were just not going to leave it.**

The Revival Spreads

From Aberdare, Evan traveled to over two dozen cities and towns throughout the hearts were captured by the glory of the Son of God. Because the people had fallen in love with the Lord, they therefore loved and honored His messengers, but they did not worship them. When once we see the glory of the Son it is impossible to be overly impressed by men, be they kings, presidents, or even the greatest men of God.

The conspicuous common denominator found wherever this revival broke out was that the Son of God was being lifted up and all men were being drawn to Him. Holiness and obedience were emphases, but this was primarily because the Son was holy and everyone wanted to please Him in all things. The presence of the Lord was so strong that no one could imagine speaking vile words or performing vile acts in His presence. Those who were present could only describe His presence as being absolutely beyond description! The promptings of the Holy Spirit were so distinct that thousands would simultaneously spring to their feet to worship in such perfect unison that those who witnessed it considered it miraculous. At times **the glory of the Lord would so shine** from the pulpit that the evangelist or pastor would flee from it to keep from being completely overcome. Many testified that they could not stand the brightness of the glory of the Lord that came upon some meetings.

Thousands of young converts spread out all over the land preaching the good news they had found. They had no credentials or authority from men; all they had was the Holy Spirit and that was all they needed. The Book of Acts was happening all over again. Small children won many souls for Christ. New converts were leading large prayer meetings and Bible studies. At times these Bible studies and prayer meetings would all empty into the streets at the same time, and march around the town together singing praises to the Lord until the early morning hours.

The largest and most influential newspapers were soon almost completely dominated by news of the revival. Headlines of crime, violence and scandal were replaced by conversion counts, news from the meetings, the words to new hymns and revival maps detailing where the Spirit was moving with the greatest intensity. The advertisements for liquor disappeared and the large advertisements were all bought by Christian publishers trying to keep up with the need for Bibles and hymn books.

Conversions in the Welsh Revival were not just statistics, they were new births. Men and women were so radically changed that

being "born again" was not just a cliché it was a reality. The new believer's first encounter with the Lord was not the promise of blessings, it was a profound comprehension of his own sinful condition. When moved by the Spirit to come to the wells of salvation, they did not just raise their hands in the back of the building to acknowledge their "decision," they were racked with such a holy desperation for the mercy of the Savior that they tumbled to the floor as if in physical pain. Those under conviction would sometimes writhe in their own tears until they gained the assurance of forgiveness; then their grief would turn into a joy of an equal depth that would be impossible to contain. As the meetings began to disband, often at two or three in the morning, new converts just could not leave and would continue singing, praying and at times laughing uncontrollably until the prayer meetings started at sunrise.

How The Revival Affected Society

The effects of the revival on the nation of Wales are remarkable in all of history. Some of the cities and towns that had seemed on the brink of anarchy, with violent crimes increasing out of control, during the revival did not record a single arrest. Others would record but one or two for such crimes as drunkenness in public. Many of the jails and prisons were literally empty.

Before the revival there had been almost a plague of drunkenness and gambling. During the revival taverns were either closed or turned into meeting halls. Instead of wasting their earnings on drinking and gambling, workers started taking their wages home to their families. Because of the conviction of the Holy Spirit, restitution became a fruit of repentance and outstanding debts were being paid by thousands of young converts. These two factors alone resulted in a substantial economic impact on the whole community.

The famous Welsh singing festivals which had been so popular closed down during the revival because their famous vocalists, such as the "Sankeys" and "Alexanders" were now singing hymns in the revival meetings. The theaters and football stadiums likewise closed down for lack of interest. Political meetings were canceled or abandoned. Many of the elected officials, even those from London, abandoned their seats in parliament to participate in the revival meetings. Businesses rounded upon honorable trades and products prospered. Those that traded on vice went out of business. Possibly never before in history has an entire society been so profoundly transformed by a spiritual revival in such a short time.

How the Revival Affected The Church

The most significant result of this revival on the church was that all church prejudices and denominational barriers completely collapsed as believers and pastors of all denominations worshipped the Lord together. The quarrels of local Christians were either forgotten or instantly healed, appearing incomprehensible and petty in the light of the Lord's glory. One outstanding characteristic of the revival was the confession of sin, and swelled over from the unsaved to the saved, who were all broken down and humbled by the revelation of the cross of Christ. Bitterness and resentment seemed unthinkable as all were compelled to gaze upon the Lord's great mercy and love. This unity was not caused by persecution, but by the glory and presence of the Lord. This was a profound historic example of how all of our individual crowns will be cast to the feet of the Lamb when He enters His church.

Churches that had struggled to keep the doors open for the few saints who would attend their services were now faced with the problem of how to contain the multitudes that were causing even the prayer meetings to overflow. There was not a single congregation in Wales that was really prepared for the magnitude of this revival. Some of the pastors strove to serve all of the new converts and see that they were properly incorporated into

congregations, but to most the revival was "gloriously out of control."

Some of the pastors quickly burned out by trying to do too much. In fact, it is probable that the revival could have lasted much longer had the leaders paced themselves better. No revival can last if the workers do not learn to rest. True revivals bring many strains upon congregations and Christian workers that few are prepared for. Almost every church or mission in the country grew dramatically, frequently doubling or even quadrupling in membership, and many maintained these members for years after the revival ended. But multitudes who were touched by the revival and had a genuine encounter with the Lord were also lost again to the world because there were not enough workers to care for them spiritually. It is hard to take the time to equip other workers and ministries in the heat of revival. Had this been done before the revival it is certain that even many more of those who committed themselves to the Lord during this time could have been established in the faith and truly added to the church. The eternal record will almost certainly establish that the Welsh Revival, like almost every other revival in history, paid a dear price in lost fruit because of church leadership's failure to heed the mandate of Ephesians 4 that the ministry of the church is given to equip the members who are to do the work of the service.

The Fire Spreads

A true revival cannot be kept local. Revival is like a fire that is carried by the wind its sparks will ignite the dry wood and grass in

every direction that it blows. Sparks can be carried by letters, phone calls or newspapers but most of all it is carried by people. Localities that were far removed from the center of the Welsh Revival, broke out into revival just at the news of what was happening in Wales. In many of these places the awakening seemed to be just as intense as in Wales, but it is probable that the spiritual temperature of the entire world was raised a few degrees by this great outpouring of the Spirit.

On April 8, 1905, nearly ten thousand miles away in Los Angeles, California, a young man named Frank Bartleman heard EB. Meyer preach. As he described the revival that was going on in Wales and his meeting with Evan Roberts, Bartleman later wrote: "My soul was stirred to the depths, having read of this revival shortly before. I then and there promised God He should have full right of way with me; if He could use me." Later Bartleman, James Seymore and Pastor Smale read the book *The Great Revival In Wales*, by S.B. Shaw and G. Campbell Morgan's tract *The Revival In Wales* and were stirred to earnestly seek the Lord for revival in Los Angeles. In May they were sent 5,000 pamphlets titled *The Revival in Wales*, which they distributed in the churches. Though some denominations would not even acknowledge that the Welsh Revival was from God, it is probable that every church, movement and denomination was influenced and changed to some degree by this mighty outburst of God upon a lowly and needy people.

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The Glory in Heaven

Our final revelation of Glory is seen in heaven. Look with me.

Revelation 21

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them and be their God...

One of the seven angels...said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel.

John then describes a symmetry to the City that is a mandala shape, suggesting once again a penultimate meaning. All the while we are viewing this City, which is also the Bride, we are half consciously expecting to see the abode of God appear in the form of a temple or palace of some sort with the Shekinah somewhere inside.. After all, that is where God and His glory have always been found in the Old Testament. The vision surprises us, however, when we read...

²²I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

There *is* no enclosure for God. And the Glory is not hidden. This is the picture of the ultimate development of God's Bride--a City bathed in the Glory and in unbroken intimacy with her Maker. Who is this Bride and City? Very likely it is the true universal church glorified at some future date in history. However, there is much to suggest that not only is this historical, but it is psychological as well. For the major Biblical symbols (archetypes), as I perceive them, are unique. They seem to be metaphors for truth in three different realities. Whereas Greek and Roman archetypes in the form of their mythology of the gods have become appreciated in psychology for their description of universal human patterns, their claim to truth can only be made in the psyche and perhaps spirit realm. They rarely were considered historical. The orthodox Christian faith on the other hand, claims to speak truth in history, in the soul, and in the spiritual sphere, the same symbol often speaking in all three spheres. This is an important difference between Christian and pagan archetypes.

New Jerusalem in Our Hearts

So if we see the New Jerusalem image as true in the soul, what can we conclude? One thing is that in the same way the New Jerusalem is depicted as the ultimate expectable environment literally, it represents the ultimate arrangement God would have for our soul. The soul would be acting as a container of the divine Glory in such a way that God's Glory could be seen without curtains, boundaries, and rooms of any kind to separate it from its interaction with us. We would interact with and contain the Glory light, but we would not lose our separateness and identity in the process. This image is unlike Hindu concepts of the ultimate expectable state, nirvana. We are *not* God like the pantheist imagines, but rather He dwells within us in intimacy as a husband with a wife. We reflect His Glory as the buildings of the New Jerusalem reflect light.

This inner arrangement as ideal is echoed in other parts of scripture as well. Most directly, II Corinthians 3:7-18 shows us the earthly process we undergo to move us toward the ideal.

(In Christ, the veil that separates our awareness from the glory of God is removed.) ¹⁸And we, who with unveiled faces all contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

The removal of barriers and growth in consciousness of the Shekinah occurs as a Spirit empowered process as we contemplate God's Glory and become like Christ. How consistent with the direct teaching of scripture we find the psychological message of this image!

What Happened to the Sea?

I direct your attention now to another fact about this inner ideal in Revelation 21:1. There is *no sea*. What in Psyche's name could be the inner interpretation of this fact? I have already mentioned that psychologically, the "sea" universally represents the unconscious mind. With a little reflection, it is easy to see why. The sea is a foreign environment to the human ego. There is a border between it and the sunlit world of ego consciousness. The boundary is penetrable, but it is difficult to go beyond it very far. Things under the sea are hard to perceive and indistinct, but much life comes from the waters, and existence as we know it depends upon them. These things are all true of our unconscious mind as well. Indeed, a common symbol for human consciousness is a boat on the water.

So what is a psyche without a sea? It is a soul that has been fully sanctified and is without an unconscious to limit and befuddle it. The unconscious exists as a result of the fall. It was placed there by God to protect us. This is alluded to in Genesis 3:21 when, after humankind's Parents experienced their first negative emotion, shame, God covered their nakedness. The slaying of the animal was the first example of a sacrifice for sin. Further, the animal skin covering is a type of the veil that separates the Holy of Holies and Shekinah from the worshipers' sight. Psychologically, this veil is alluded to in the II Corinthians 3 passage above and is very much like the layers of our unconscious mind that hide our vision from the consciousness of God. The veil's protective nature is seen in the story of the Israelites asking Moses to cover his face since they could not bear to look directly at the Glory (Exodus 34).

Psychologically, in order for a man to approach this degree of freedom from the unconscious, the conscious ego must have grown very strong, must be humble and righteous, must have healed all inherited defects and sin, and must have resolved all wounds of childhood without leaving any broken parts behind. This one must have become conscious of all the mind's instinctual patterns as they arose and successfully disentangled their conscious self from the instincts' tendency toward extremes, mastering each developmental stage that was encountered. In short, this person must have the "mind of Christ." I have not yet met such a person, but the vision of such a one has been shared by sagacious believers through the eons. We saw one of these in the expanded Adam and Eve story earlier. C. S. Lewis's similar vision of a bright pre-fall man is found with his usual clear profundity in *The Problem of Pain*.

Then, God caused to descend upon this organism, both on its psychology and physiology, a new kind of consciousness which could say "I" and "me", which knew God, which could make judgments of truth, beauty, and goodness, and which was so far above time that it could perceive time flowing past. This new consciousness ruled and illuminated the whole organism, flooding every part of it with light.... Man was then all consciousness. Since the processes of decay and repair in his tissues were similarly conscious and obedient, it may not be fanciful to suppose that the length of his life was largely at his own discretion.... And God was to such a man no slippery, inclined plane. The new consciousness had been made to repose on its Creator, and repose it did. God came first in his love and in his thought, and that without painful effort. In perfect cyclic movement, being, power and joy descended from God to man in the form of gift and returned from man to God in the form of obedient love and ecstatic adoration: and in this sense, though not in all, man was then truly the son of God, the prototype of Christ, perfectly enacting in joy and ease of all the faculties and all the senses that filial self-surrender which Our Lord enacted in the agonies of the crucifixion.

In both these passages, pre-fall man is viewed as being imbued with a divinely derived glory much like we saw Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. The fall is seen as limiting or obscuring that from us. The "veil" is the symbol representing that which obscures our consciousness from the Holy Light and vision of God. In the Adam and Eve story, the veiling of consciousness is concretized as the cherubim with the flaming sword that guards the garden entrance and a gloomy

cavern in which God assigned Adam to live. Sanctification, therefore, can be viewed as an effort on the part of God and souls to remove the veil and return our conscious intimacy with the light of God as depicted in Revelation 21.

How's My Temple?

The relevance of this discussion for those of us seeking to experience God inwardly is great. Visualizing the goal of our development is an absolute must if we are to endure the hardships of the pathway there. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18). Or as my Navigator mentor put it, "He who aims at nothing will hit it every time." That God wants us to approach this goal is clear. A reminder of a few scriptures will make this apparent.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to *his purpose*. For those God foreknew he also predestined *to be conformed to the likeness of his Son*. (Romans 8:28-29).

And we all, with unveiled face (a symbol for consciousness) beholding the glory of the Lord are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (II Corinthians 3:18 RSV).

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts (i.e. inward center) to give us the *light of the knowledge* (i.e. consciousness) *of the glory of God* (Shekinah) in the face of Christ. (II Corinthians 4:6).

We see now how God desires our inner temple to be a home for His Glory in which he does not dwell behind castle walls or temple veils but rather radiates his light throughout an entire city. All the inhabitants of such a city would be sanctified, for these are the overcomers whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Revelation 21:7, 27). Now that we have developed a more precise understanding of God's ideal arrangement of our soul, we can use this to compare the symbols that arise from our own souls and assess where we are in the journey and discern where we need to go.

The First Things In Life

What I and others find is that when we attend to the symbols arising spontaneously from our souls in dreams, fantasy, and meditations is that they often give insight about our pilgrimage to God. *This inner journey is intended by God to be our primary focus in life*. If the Kingdom of Heaven is within us, then when Jesus said, "seek *first* his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33), he meant that this particular journey is more important than even our livelihood.

These understandings have been key in my and others' efforts at predisposing our souls to receive awareness of Shekinah and of God. I hope your heart is hungry. For many this is such foreign territory and so "impractical" from the "rational" and busy external emphasis of our time and culture, that the mind rebels and the heart is perplexed. If I have done my job well, perhaps your reason has adequate justification for continuing. If the Spirit has made you interested and hungry then blessed are you "who hunger and thirst for righteousness," for you will be filled. (Matthew 5:6).

The Circuit of Glory through Our Hearts

One more image has helped me understand the operation of the Glory. That is the electric circuit. Sandi Patti visualizes the process in the making of music.

It's your song, Lord.
You created the gift that we bring.
It's your song, Lord;
You created music so we could sing.
**So we'll send the melody right back around;
We'll make a perfect circle with the sound.**

It's Your Song Lord
by Sandi Patti, Billy Smiley and Claire Cloninger

God starts the music, it inspires our hearts, passes through us, expresses itself through us, and goes back to Him to His glory. So it is with God's light, love, and Glory; its source is inexhaustible, and the more we share it, the more that passes through us. One other important analogy to electricity is **we must be connected to the source**. And like with manna and electricity, if you don't replenish your supply daily, it's no good. **We need daily replenishment of God's Glory**.

The other way Glory is like electricity is, when you give the love of God away, you always get more back. You are less likely to get depleted when the love you give is Holy Spirit love. Now if you are not well connected to the source because you have let the demands of the world and the *seeming* duties of life keep you away from connection time with God, you can get depleted. If you are not listening to God but some parental "should", you can get depleted. But there is a wonderful way to love other people that requires no special expertise, but only your soul connected to the Spirit of God and a little focusing of the attention. Yet it is a true ministry of Jesus akin to giving a cup of cold water in His name; and it is one that replenishes as well as gives. It's called being present. Sue Monk Kidd describes her experience.

The Apron Lady

An experience I had while I was a public health nurse describes for me what this kind of presence is, though it is only now, many years after the event, that I have come to understand what happened that hot summer day.

I hadn't embraced my job wholeheartedly as I should have, and as I stomped up some flimsy steps to a wooden boarding house under the smokestack of a nearby factory, I expected this visit to be like the others--awkward, dreary, boring. I would fill out the report on the old man who'd had tuberculosis, be sure he was taking his medicine and slip away as quickly as possible. A stout woman opened the door at my rap. She was wearing a white organdy apron that draped over her like a curtain with big ruffles trailing over her shoulders. I could hardly introduce myself for staring at that apron. The apartment was as tidy and grand as she was. She had spread round little crocheted doilies on everything. I could see a box of yarn beside a faded chair with another doily in the making, though for the life of me I couldn't figure where she would put it.

No, her husband wasn't there, she said. Then she looked at me and said, "Would you like some lemonade, dear?" I tried to think of some excuse. I didn't want to sit down with a stranger and make polite small talk. My eyes roamed the room as I groped for something to say. I saw she had an open Bible displayed on the mantle. It sat on a doily, naturally. I smiled at it and something thawed in me. "Sure, why not?" I answered, surprising myself.

We sipped lemonade facing each other in chairs drawn close together in front of a rotating fan that blew hot Georgia air in spurts and made the ruffles on her shoulders flap. I forgot my report and the distractions that had followed me all week. I forgot the way I'd expected to be. I even forgot time itself. Instead I sat back, let go and concentrated on the unique person in front of me.

I listened--really listened--as she spoke about her husband, the way he coughed through the nights so the bed springs squeaked, and how she sat in her chair and crocheted while the sound raked her with fear. I found myself telling her about my work and the helplessness I sometimes felt when I knocked on doors where there was nothing but suffering. That was something I hadn't even known myself until I told her.

Time deepened. I saw her and heard her words as if I had just been born. She talked about when her last sister died and a few tears trickled across her wide face. Amazingly, tears welled up in my eyes ... because she loved her sister ... because she seemed to miss her so. And when she saw my tears, she reached over and held my hand. I don't know how long we sat there, just holding hands, looking at one another, mystified by the intimacy we were sharing. But I remember being penetrated with her presence. It filled the moment.

Before long she broke the silence and refilled my glass. I finished the lemonade and left. She stood on the porch and waved till I was gone from view. I can see her still, flamed in my rearview mirror, wearing her apron.

I did not know it until I sketched that encounter in my journal years later, but she had been with me ever since. I even got the

peculiar feeling that she had come into my life for the very purpose of teaching me what it means to be present to someone. Now it was the fullness of time, and God seemed to say to me in that silent voice of His: "Search the experience. Search for the threads which wove the delicate sense of presence into it. Then you will begin to understand about being present to Me."

It seemed an odd way to approach something so lofty as being present to God, sorting through an experience with an old lady in a boarding house, but I entered into it nevertheless.

Being Open

Being truly present to another requires that we open ourselves to them as I had opened to the apron lady. I hadn't wanted to sit down and spend time with her, but when I did I opened a way to be present to her. I forgot the report I came to fill out, all my inhibitions, even time. I let everything go and relaxed before her, becoming emptied and willing to let in the unique person before me.

So with God we must be willing to pause, to clear away the distractions, the inhibitions and whatever else fills our minds, and stand unoccupied, vacant and free before Him, desiring to let Him in.

A group of scholars came to see a religious teacher. The teacher surprised them by asking what seemed obvious. "Where is the dwelling place of God?" They laughed among themselves and replied, "What a thing to ask! Is not the whole world full of his glory?" But the teacher smiled and said, "God dwells wherever man lets him in."

Until I open myself to God He is not present to me, just as the woman wasn't really there at all until I opened to her, until I made time and inner space to be with her.

One evening not long after Christmas, I was driving home from church thinking of the apron lady and about how I had opened up and let her into my life. Suddenly I made a decision that here and now I would open myself to God. I would put aside the thoughts and preoccupations that kept me from being present in these moments with Him. I would simply make myself available.

Mentally I cleared away the worries and details pressing on my mind, saying them out loud and imagining them blowing out the car window onto the cold black currents of air. I was driving by a yard where a giant evergreen strung with tiny white Christmas lights blazed like flames and cinders in the darkness. On an impulse I parked the car on the side of the road and watched the tree for a while until it began to look for all the world like a burning bush. "Come, Lord Jesus," I prayed. "I open myself to You. Maranatha." Then I cranked the car and drove home, with the warmth of God deep in my bones *knew* that God was wherever I opened myself to Him, in church or beside an evergreen. Being open to Him was pausing and inviting Him in. It was going about with "Maranatha" ("Come, Lord") on the tip of your tongue.

Surprised by Joy
Sue Monk Kidd

Holy Hugging

I once treated a woman for several years who seemed to translate feeling states into imagery quite well. In moments of deep rapport with me and others when the heart was open and love was shared, she would comment, "We're particling". By this she meant she saw little particles of light much like Disney portrayed from Tinker Bell's wand, traveling from her heart to the others' and back again. It was uncanny how she would notice that phenomena visually at the exact same time I was feeling a glow warming my chest. It was rather like a hug was happening in the spirit without there being any physical touch. This is the phenomena of "giving presence" that Ms. Kidd conveyed so well. It is a kind of holy hugging in which glory is shared from heart to heart and each is energized by the other and by God. The circuit of glory was complete. And the synchronicity of my feelings and her visual expression taught me that the Glory is a real *thing* and not just an abstract concept.

Further evidence of the tangibility of Glory in love is seen in the work of Dr. Franz Veldman, a Dutch scientist. Dr. Veldman teaches parents to make loving contact with their unborn child. A mother and father communicate with their fetus

by placing their hands on both sides of the womb. If they send their love especially through the hands on the right side of the womb by focusing their imagination there, the child will begin to move over to the right side and curl up its neck under those hands. If they then send their love through the hands on the left side of the womb, the child will move to the left side and curl up. If the parents communicate with their child in this way each day at the same time and then miss their "appointment", the child will begin to kick, as if protesting the loss of the special communication it has learned to expect.¹ The power of Glory-love is seen in another of my patients who struggled with bulimia and social phobias for many years. She had received some help through considerable psychotherapy with others and two years with me, but she still binged and threw up almost nightly. We had been discussing the Glory, and she had begun experiencing it in prayer when she rather suddenly realized something most important. She had always felt she had little to offer others in relationships, and felt she must entertain people in order to get them to like her. When she realized she had the ability to minister Glory to those she was around, she realized she had something valuable to give. This idea was an incredible liberation. Since that time she has felt more comfortable in relationships, and there have been virtually no further bulimic episodes. Connecting to and catching the vision of the Glory was her turning point.

Being Present with the Glory

In order to help you begin being present to God if you have not already, I include this simple teaching on prayer used greatly by God through the history of His renewed church. Written by Madam Jeanne Guyon, a French believer of the 1600's, it has been distributed by the thousands in many languages. I hope you, too, will find it appealing

I would like to address you as though you were a beginner in Christ, one seeking to know Him. In so doing, let me suggest two ways for you to come to the Lord. I will call the first way "praying the Scripture;" the second way I will call "beholding the Lord" or "waiting in His presence."

"Praying the Scripture" is a unique way of dealing with the Scripture; it involves both reading and prayer.

Here is how you should begin.

Turn to the Scripture; choose some passage that is simple and fairly practical. Next, come to the Lord. Come quietly and humbly. There, before Him, read a small portion of the passage of Scripture you have opened to. Be careful as you read. Take in fully, gently and carefully what you are reading. Taste it and digest it as you read. In the past it may have been your habit, while reading, to move very quickly from one verse of Scripture to another until you had read the whole passage. Perhaps you were seeking to find the main point of the passage. But in coming to the Lord by means of "praying the Scripture," you do not read quickly; you read very slowly. You do not move from one passage to another, not until you have *sensed* the very heart of what you have read.

You may then want to take that portion of Scripture that has touched you and turn it into prayer.

After you have sensed something of the passage and after you know that the essence of that portion has been extracted and all the deeper sense of it is gone, then, very slowly, gently, and in a calm manner begin to read the next portion of the passage. You will be surprised to find that when your time with the Lord has ended, you will have read very little, probably no more than half a page.

"Praying the Scripture" is not judged by *how much* you read but by the *way* in which you read.

If you read quickly, it will benefit you little. You will be like a bee that merely skims the surface of a flower. Instead, in this new way of reading with prayer, you must become as the bee who penetrates into the *depths* of the flower. You plunge deeply within to remove its deepest nectar.

Of course, there is a kind of reading the Scripture for scholarship and for study--but not here. That studious kind of reading will not help you when it comes to matters that are *divine!* To receive any deep, inward profit from the Scripture, you must read as I have described. Plunge into the very depths of the words you read until revelation, like a sweet aroma, breaks out upon you.

I am quite sure that if you will follow this course, little by little you will come to experience a very rich prayer that flows from your inward being.

Let us move now to the second kind of prayer, which I mentioned earlier.

The second kind of prayer, which I described as "beholding the Lord" or "waiting on the Lord," *also* makes use of the Scripture but it is not actually a time of reading.

Remember, I am addressing you as if you were a new convert. Here is your second way to encounter Christ. And this second way to Christ, although you will be using the Scripture, has a purpose altogether different from "praying the Scripture." For that reason you should set aside a separate time when you can come just to wait upon Him.

In "praying the Scripture" you are seeking to find the Lord in what you are reading, in the very words themselves. In this path, therefore, the content of the Scripture is the focal point of your attention. Your purpose is to take everything from the passage that unveils the Lord to you.

What of this second path?

In "beholding the Lord," you come to the Lord in a totally different way. Perhaps at this point I need to share with you the greatest difficulty you will have in waiting upon the Lord. It has to do with your mind. The mind has a very strong tendency to stray away from the Lord. Therefore, as you come before your Lord to sit in His presence, beholding Him, make use of the Scripture *to quiet your mind.*

The way to do this is really quite simple.

First, read a passage of Scripture. Once you sense the Lord's presence, the content of what you have read is no longer important. The Scripture has served its purpose; it has quieted your mind; it has brought you to Him.

So that you can see this more clearly, let me describe the way in which you come to the Lord by the simple act of beholding Him and waiting upon Him.

You begin by setting aside a time to be with the Lord. When you do come to Him, come quietly. Turn your heart to the presence of God. How is this done? This, too, is quite simple. You turn to Him by *faith*. By faith you believe you have come into the presence of God.

Next, while you are before the Lord, begin to read some portion of Scripture.

As you read, *pause.*

¹Matthew Linn, Sheila Fabricant, Dennis Linn, *Healing the Eight Stages of Life* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988). pp.34-35.

The pause should be quite gentle. You have paused so that you may set your mind on the Spirit. You have set your mind *inwardly--on Christ*.

(You should always remember that you are not doing this to gain some understanding of what you have read; rather, you are reading in order to turn your mind from outward things to the deep parts of your being. You are not there to learn or to read, but you are there to experience the presence of your Lord!)

While you are before the Lord, hold your heart in His presence. How? This you also do by faith. Yes, by faith you can hold your heart in the Lord's presence. Now, waiting before Him, turn all your attention toward your spirit. Do not allow your mind to wander. If your mind begins to wander, just turn your attention back again to the inward parts of your being.

You will be free from wandering--free from any outward distractions--and you will be brought near to God.

(The Lord is found *only* within your spirit, in the recesses of your being, in the Holy of Holies; this is where He dwells. The Lord once promised to come and make His home within you. (John 14:23) He promised to there meet those who worship Him and who do His will. The Lord *will* meet you in your spirit. It was St. Augustine who once said that he had lost much time in the beginning of his Christian experience by trying to find the Lord outwardly rather than by turning inwardly.)

Once your heart has been turned inwardly to the Lord, you will have an impression of His presence. You will be able to notice His presence more acutely because your outer senses have now become very calm and quiet. Your attention is no longer on outward things or on the surface thoughts of your mind; instead, sweetly and silently, your mind becomes occupied with what you have read and by that touch of His presence.

Oh, it is not that you will think about what you have read, but you will *feed* upon what you have read. Out of a love for the Lord you exert your will to hold your mind quiet before Him.

When you have come to this state, you must allow your mind to rest.

How shall I describe what to do next?

In this very peaceful state, *swallow* what you have tasted. At first this may seem difficult, but perhaps I can show you just how simple it is. Have you not, at times, enjoyed the flavor of a very tasty food? But unless you were willing to swallow the food, you received no nourishment. It is the same with your soul. In this quiet, peaceful, and simple state, simply take in what is there as nourishment.

The "Glory Cloud" Prayer

The final reading I offer you is from perhaps one of the most famous books on prayer in the Christian genre. It is called *The Cloud of Unknowing* and it was penned by an English monk in the 1500's who preferred to remain anonymous. Recognized around the world, this small book has helped perhaps millions of God's children learn to simply "hang out" with God and open themselves to His transforming love and Glory. The form of contemplative prayer he espouses often does not come immediately, and meditation and intercession can be still profitable, however at least *some* of your time spent in this manner, I vouch, will prove a deepening blessing.

This is what you are to do: lift your heart up to the Lord, with a gentle stirring of love desiring him for his own sake and not for his gifts. Center all your attention and desire on him and let this be the sole concern of your mind and heart. Do all in your power to forget everything else, keeping your thoughts and desires free from involvement with any of God's creatures or their affairs whether in general or in particular. Perhaps this will seem like an irresponsible attitude, but I tell you, let them all be; pay no attention to them.

What I am describing here is the contemplative work of the spirit. It is this which gives God the greatest delight. For when you fix your love on him, forgetting all else, the saints and angels rejoice and hasten to assist you in every way though the devils will rage and ceaselessly conspire to thwart you. Your fellow men are

What about distractions?

Let us say your mind begins to wander. Once you have been deeply touched by the Lord's Spirit and are distracted, be diligent to bring your wandering mind back to the Lord. This is the easiest way in the world to overcome external distractions.

When your mind has wandered, don't try to deal with it by changing what you are thinking. You see, if you pay attention to what you are thinking, you will only irritate your mind and stir it up more. Instead, *withdraw* from your mind. Keep turning within to the Lord's presence. By doing this you will win the war with your wandering mind and yet never directly engage in the battle!

Before we close this chapter, I would like to bring up one or two more points.

Let us talk about divine revelation. In the past, your reading habit may have been to wander from one subject to another. But the best way to *understand* the mysteries that are hidden in the revelation of God *and* to *enjoy* them fully is to let them be imprinted deeply in your heart. How? You may do this by dwelling on that revelation just as long as it gives you a sense of the Lord. Do not be quick to go from one thought to another. Stay with what *the Lord* has revealed to you; stay there just as long as a sense of the Lord is also there.

As you begin this new venture you will, of course, discover that it is difficult to bring your mind under control. Why is this? Because through many years of habit your mind has acquired the ability to wander all over the world, just as it pleases; so what I speak of here is something that is to serve as a discipline to your mind.

Be assured that as your soul becomes more accustomed to withdrawing to inward things, this process will become much easier.

There are two reasons that you will find it easier each time to bring your mind under subjection to the Lord. One is that the mind, after much practice, will form a new habit of turning deep within. The second is that you have a gracious Lord!

The Lord's chief desire is to reveal Himself to you and, in order for Him to do that, He gives you abundant grace. The Lord gives you the experience of enjoying His presence. He touches you, and His touch is so delightful that, more than ever, you are drawn inwardly to Him.

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marvelously enriched by this work of yours, even if you may not fully understand how; and, of course, your own spirit is purified and strengthened by *this* contemplative work more than by all others put together. Yet for all this, when God's grace arouses you to enthusiasm, it becomes the lightest sort of work there is and one most willingly done. Without his grace, however, it is very difficult and almost, I should say, quite beyond you.

And so diligently **persevere until you feel joy in it**. For in the beginning it is usual to feel nothing but a kind of darkness about your mind, or as it were, a *cloud of unknowing*. You will seem to know nothing and to feel nothing except a **naked intent toward God** in the depths of your being. Try as you might, this darkness and this cloud will remain between you and your God. You will

feel frustrated, for your mind will be unable to grasp him, and your heart will not relish the delight of his love. But learn to be at home in this darkness. Return to it as often as you can, letting your spirit cry out to him whom you love. For if, in this life, you hope to feel and see God as he is in himself, it must be within this darkness and this cloud. But if you strive to **fix your love on him** forgetting all else, which is the work of contemplation I have urged you to begin, I am confident that God in his goodness will bring you to a deep experience of himself.

This work is not time consuming even though some people believe otherwise. Actually it is the shortest you can imagine; as brief as an atom, which, as the philosophers say, is the smallest division of time. The atom is a moment so short and integral that the mind can scarcely conceive it. Nevertheless, it is vastly important, for of this minute measure of time it is written: "You will be held responsible for all the time given you." This is entirely just because your principal spiritual faculty, the will, needs only this brief fraction of a moment to move toward the object of its desire.

If you were now restored by grace to the integrity man possessed before sin you would be complete master of these impulses. None would ever go astray, but would fly to the one sole good, **the goal of all desire**, God himself. For God created us in his image and likeness, making us like himself, and in the Incarnation he emptied himself of his divinity becoming a man like us. **It is God, and he alone, who can fully satisfy the hunger and longing of our spirit** which transformed by his redeeming grace is enabled to embrace him by love. He whom neither men nor angels can grasp by knowledge **can be embraced by love**. For the intellect of both men and angels is too small to comprehend God as he is in himself.

Try to understand this point. Rational creatures such as men and angels possess two principal faculties, a knowing power and a loving power. No one can fully comprehend the uncreated God with his knowledge; but each one, in a different way, can grasp him fully through love. Truly this is the unending miracle of love: that one loving person, through his love, can embrace God, whose being fills and transcends the entire creation. And this marvelous work of love goes on forever, for he whom we love is eternal. Whoever has the grace to appreciate the truth of what I am saying, let him take my words to heart, for to experience this love is the joy of eternal life while to lose it is eternal torment.

He who with the help of God's grace becomes aware of the will's constant movements and learns to direct them toward God will never fail to taste something of heaven's joy even in this life and, certainly in the next, he will savor it fully. Now do you see why I rouse you to this spiritual work? You would have taken to it naturally had man not sinned, for man was created to love and everything else was created to make love possible. Nevertheless, by the work of contemplative love, man will be healed. Failing in this work he sinks deeper into sin further and further from God, but by persevering in it he gradually rises from sin and grows in divine intimacy...

And so do not neglect this contemplative work. Try also to appreciate its wonderful effects in your own spirit. When it is genuine it is simply a spontaneous desire springing suddenly toward God like spark from fire. It is amazing how many loving desires arise from the spirit of a person who is accustomed to this work. And yet, perhaps only one of these will be completely free from attachment to some created thing. Or again, no sooner has a man turned toward God in love when through human frailty he finds himself distracted by the remembrance of some created thing or some daily care. But no matter. No harm is done; for such a person quickly returns to deep recollection. [Recollection is the recollecting of all thoughts and refocusing them to the single thought of God].

And now we come to the difference between the contemplative work and its counterfeits such as daydreaming, fantasizing, or subtle reasoning. These originate in a conceited, curious, or romantic mind whereas the blind stirring of love springs from a sincere and humble heart. Pride, curiosity, and daydreaming must be sternly checked if the contemplative work is to be authentically conceived in singleness of heart. Some will probably hear about this work and suppose that by their own ingenious efforts they can achieve it. They are likely to strain their mind and imagination unnaturally only to produce a false work which is neither human nor divine. Truly, such a person is dangerously deceived. And I fear that unless God intervenes with a miracle inspiring him to abandon these practices and humbly seek reliable counsel he will most certainly fall into mental aberrations or some great spiritual evil of the devil's devising. Therefore, be careful in this work and never strain your mind or imagination, for truly you will not succeed this way. Leave these faculties at peace.

Do not suppose that because I have spoken of darkness and of a cloud I have in mind the clouds you see in an overcast sky or the darkness of your house when your candle fails. If I had, you could with a little imagination picture the summer skies breaking through the clouds or a clear light brightening the dark winter. But this isn't what I mean at all. When I speak of darkness, I mean the absence of knowledge. If you are unable to understand something or if you have forgotten it, are you not in the dark as regards this thing? You cannot see it with your mind's eye. Well, in the same way, I have not said "cloud," but *cloud unknowing*. For it is a darkness of unknowing that lies between you and your God.

If you wish to enter into this cloud, to be at home in it, and to take up the contemplative work of love as I urge you to, there is something else you must do. Just as the *cloud of unknowing* lies above you, between you and your God, so you must **fashion a cloud of forgetting beneath you**, between you and every created thing. The *cloud of unknowing* will perhaps leave you with the feeling that you are far from God. But no, if it is authentic, only the absence of a *cloud of forgetting* keeps you from him now. Every time I say "all creatures," I refer not only to every created thing but also to all their circumstances and activities. I make no exception. You are to concern yourself with no creature whether material or spiritual nor with their situation and doings whether good or ill. To put it briefly, during this work you must abandon them all beneath the *cloud of forgetting*.

For although at certain times and in certain circumstances it is necessary and useful to dwell on the particular situation and activity of people and things, during this work it is almost useless. Thinking and remembering are forms of spiritual understanding in which the eye of the spirit is opened [this is currently called active imagination, meditation, seeing in the spirit, or creative visualization] and closed upon things as the eye of a marksman is on his target. But I tell you that everything you dwell upon during this work becomes an obstacle to union with God. For if your mind is cluttered with these concerns there is no room for him.

Yes, and with all due reverence, I go so far as to say that it is equally useless to think you can nourish your contemplative work by considering God's attributes, his kindness or his dignity; or by thinking about our Lady, the angels, or the saints; or about the joys of heaven, wonderful as these will be. I believe that this kind of activity is no longer of any use to you. [Note: this comment was specific to the person written to and is not a general tenant.] Of course, it is laudable to reflect upon God's kindness and to love and praise him for it; yet it is far better to let your mind rest in the awareness of him in his naked existence and to love and praise him for what he is in himself.

If you will do this, you will feel God's Glory gradually grow as a flame in your heart. Two scriptures will serve to highlight the promise of this kind of prayer.

Peter begins his second letter thus. *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence...*(1:3). In this one phrase we learn how God's power is mediated to men. It's **through the knowledge of Him**. Now there are two kinds of knowing--cognitive and experiential. This "knowledge" in Greek is *epignosis*, which means "recognition by full discernment". It suggests something intimate, don't you think? However, if that is not clear enough for you, the Hebrew translation for "knowing" is also used for sexual intercourse. And you thought Jesus was only kidding about making you His bride!

The kind of love that comes to you eventually through this prayer is the kind that wraps you up in light and stirs the instincts to their core. It grows as we grow in abandonment to trust, much like abandonment enhances the feminine orgasm. With this in mind, go reread *Song of Solomon* and YOU be the Shulamite this time. Then seek the Lord in His Glory through the bond of love as in this prayer, and discover for yourself if what I say is true. Obstacles must sometimes be removed, but God rewards the diligent seeker.

One final form of prayer that connects to the Lord in His Glory very quickly is predominant in Eastern Orthodox tradition. It is "the Jesus prayer" and can be read about in *The Way of a Pilgrim* and the more modern *Centering Prayer* by Basil Pennington. This prayer is the meditative repeating of the plea, **"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me"**. Several Bible figures used this prayer when Jesus was walking amidst a crowd. Immediately each time, Jesus turned his attention from the noise and activity of the masses to address that one person's individual need. Fa. Pennington suggests that a shortened version of this prayer, the simple, loving or pleading repetition of the name of Jesus calls Him forth from His dwelling place in our spirit to minister transforming Glory to our naked, longing soul also. I have Bible teacher and prophesy scholar, Chuck Missler¹ to thank for pointing out to me this relevant promise in Malachi.

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, **and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.** (3:16)

He is putting those of us who ponder His name in a special book of remembrance. When we make books like that, we call them keepsakes. Could it be so special to God's heart when we love Him in this kind of prayer that He makes for Himself a keepsake? Didn't you when you were first in love? Think on it.

The Hebrew here is suggestive. *Chashab*, the Hebrew word for "think upon" means also to plait or interpenetrate, or to weave or to fabricate.² In contemplative prayer like this, there is indeed an interweaving of spirit, soul, body, and God in ways that are intimate beyond measure, ways one could never tell another fully, and ways that fill the deepest longings of our soul.

At this point, I will leave you to Him. He is quite capable of showing you the Way. He is like a magnet to you. Follow your intuitive instincts like the moth to the flame, and let yourself be woven through with his loving and cleansing light.

Blessings.

¹ Chuck Missler, Expository Commentary on Revelations, a tape series of teachings given at Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa obtainable through Koinonia House, PO Box D, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816-0347. See tape on Revelations 20.

² *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*