

Through a Glass Darkly



For He willeth that we be occupied in knowing and loving till the time that we shall be fulfilled in Heaven... For of all things the beholding and the loving of the Maker maketh the soul to seem less in his own sight, and most filleth him with reverent dread and true meekness; with plenty of charity to his even-Christians.

Julian of Norwich



THE ERRANT ROBIN struck the bedroom window with such force that some of what had been inside him was left behind on the glass. Not just a smattering of feathers, but something dark and smeary. As a result, he was left not just winded, but dead, on the ground below.

It is a common occurrence. Birds of all stripes and breeds see in the windows a reflection of the surrounding landscape and mistake it for the real thing. Imagining themselves in the clear, they instead slam into hard glass and, at least, lie stunned and winded for a while as they recover. Often, however, they break their necks, and die almost immediately.

Of course, even if they survive the collision, being left only winded and with a raging headache may not be the end of the little bird's troubles. While the chickadee or nuthatch sits there, gasping for breath and regaining his vision, he may become easy breakfast for a passing feline.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part...
For now we see in a mirror dimly...
Now I know in part...

Humility is an unappetizing meal that few willingly select from the menu. We would far rather expound on the small chapbook we know, than confess to the vast libraries we don't. Man's brain may be larger than a sparrow's, but in its earthbound form it is still too small to hold much of anything at all.

The brain's limited capacity is further reduced by all the questionable information we pour into it every day. Even when we pay a visit to today's storehouses of knowledge, the information we come away with is often so corrupted as to be of dubious worth. Pick a topic, any topic, and listen to the mindless drivel people think they know about it.

That which our eyes and ears take in is a dim reflection indeed.

We know so little of God. Some of us *think* we know much about Him, but compared to what there *is* to know, it fills but one page from the library.

...but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away
...but then face to face
...but then I will know fully

For the believer there will come a day, however, when all that there is to know about God *will* be known. There will come a day when our knowledge of Him will be not secondhand, but firsthand. We will look upon His face—even *that* seems impossible, from our small knowledge of Him—and learn all there is from the one and only Source.

Even before that glorious, unimaginable day, however, we can stop wasting time gazing at ourselves in cloudy mirrors. We can stop plowing headlong into hard reality when we think we know the way. We can stop listening to idiots, and those of well-meaning ignorance. We can stop piddling about with half-truths, and what-ifs, and uninformed maybes.

Our time here, where God has left us to serve Him and become like Him, is too brief to waste time peering into dark, beguiling glass.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12

