



'GLORYFAST'

By MAXINE WILLIAMS

YEARS AGO my mother used to soak printed yard goods in a salt solution to make the colors set. Even then there might be disappointment.

I remember two dresses she made of a lovely soft material, in a blue and green and pink small-plaid design, trimmed with hand-sewn lace. But no matter how carefully she washed them, in a short time the color was gone.

There was a glory that faded too. "The administration of the law . . . was so magnificent that the Israelites were unable to look unflinchingly at Moses' face, for it was alight with heavenly splendor" (2 Corinthians 3:7, Phillips). But that glory could not last, for it represented the Law which was to pass away as a means of trying to attain to the righteousness of God.

The veil over Moses' face was not put there simply because of the intense brightness of the glory. It also hid the fact that the glory was fading away. The Weymouth translation of 2 Corinthians 3:13 reads: "Moses . . . put a veil over his face to hide from the gaze of the children of Israel the passing away of what was but transitory. . . ." Because they knew nothing of a lasting glory to come, how disappointed they would be to see this splendor fade.

Sadder yet is the knowledge that for the Jews and for many others, the veil is still there. They do not know that the glory is gone (v. 15). They cling to the Law as their revelation from God: for although they cannot see the glory of it because of the "veil upon their heart," they mistakenly suppose that the glory is still there.

Times have changed. Housewives no longer soak material in salt solution. Many colorfast materials now will even withstand the rays of the sun.

There is also a glory that will never fade. We first learn about it when we turn to the Lord (v. 16). There is no veil, and there need be none, for this glory not only does not fade, it increases more and more until that day when it reaches its fullness in His presence (v. 18).

The King James Version translates verse 18 so that it seems that both we and God are looking into a mirror: and as we see His reflected image, we are changed. Each person has to decide what the mirror is, and many have presented it as the Word of God; but that is an arbitrary

decision. The Bible does not say this mirror is the Word.

Many modern scholars paraphrase this in a precious way in which the meaning of the mirror is very clear. The Phillips version reads: "But all of us who are Christians have no veils on our faces, but reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord." And *Living Letters* says: "We can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord."

How marvelous! This is no *reflected* glory that we look upon. *We* are the mirror! God shines His glory directly into our hearts, and we, like a mirror, reflect that glory. How much more satisfying to have His glory shine directly than to merely see its reflection!

There must not be a veil; for when there is something between, a mirror cannot reflect. "We all with open face. . . ." More than that there need be no veil, for the glory will not fade. "We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

People can gaze on us as much as they like; the glory will not fade. The more we let the glory of God shine into our hearts, the more of it we will reflect.

A mirror can reflect no more than is shining into it. Let anything other than the glory of God be before it, and that is what will be reflected. Moses' glory came from being in God's presence; we too can reflect His glory only when we have been in His presence.

The person who looks into a mirror is not thinking of the mirror; he is thinking of the image reflected there. The Christian with the "mirror ministry" of reflecting the glory of God will not be the center of attention; the glory of God as seen reflected in his life will be the focal point.

Paul told the Corinthians that "if that which was done away was glorious, that which remains is much more so" (v. 11).

Having such a glorious "mirror ministry" works a change in us. It enables us to speak plainly and fearlessly (v. 12). It keeps us from losing heart, from being despondent and discouraged (2 Corinthians 4:1). It makes us walk in honesty and carefulness in the sight of God (v. 2).

Praise God for His "gloryfast" gospel!