

The old prospector stepped back and stretched, trying to work out kinks in his muscles that came from bending over and chipping away at the rock surface. It was such an effort to locate and separate the special rocks he was looking for. If successful, he could have a jeweler create something beautiful out of a common-looking stone – something with many facets that would both show off in the reflection and the transmission of light.

As he stood there thinking and looking at the enormous mountain of rock that stood before him, he realized that there was beauty everywhere – not just in a tiny jewel. He was in complete awe at the majesty of the world, and he loved the creation in its fullness. He also realized that he was only scratching the surface of the great mass that held the possibility of treasure. He might pick out a few treasures for himself, but he knew that there was a limitless supply that was likely beyond his reach.

He had been at this game long enough, however, to know that the deeper he dug, the more he could understand the content of the mountain, and the more he could appreciate how huge it might actually be. Sometimes when he saw a precious stone embedded in the rock face, he felt as though it were a window that he could see dimly<sup>1</sup> into a world beyond his own. And then he would think about God, who created it all.

He felt that he could understand the “surface” of God pretty well, as He put that part of Himself in language and actions that he was capable of understanding<sup>2</sup>. But he knew so little, and was not capable of knowing much more in our present state about the real depth of the “mountain” of God. It was something that kept him searching<sup>3</sup>, though, for he knew enough about True Treasure to pursue it with all of his heart<sup>4</sup>.

For the prospector, God was infinitely complex, yet beautifully simple<sup>5</sup>. He knew about Love and Grace, but could not comprehend fully how God could personally love him so much<sup>6</sup>. How could he love what he could not fully understand? He felt insincere when he claimed it. But he really did love God and His Goodness, and he looked forward to the time that he would be transformed and thus better able to understand.

He also came to realize that though he (and others) valued the stones that he scratched out of the mountainside, the value of Good was much, much greater, and it was everywhere around him – not just in the vein of ore that he was following. Like the mountain, or the whole earth, or the entire universe: its presence was eternal and immovable. It permeated the whole<sup>7</sup> though it was separate from it. And he knew that he must let God permeate his soul as well.

The prospector suddenly realized that he needed to get back to work. There were a few more possibilities in the rubble that he had hammered away from the mountain. He would pick out his treasures and take them home, where he would put them in his special sacred place, where he sought to emphasize as much of God’s glorious beauty as he could<sup>8</sup>.

1. consider 1 Corinthians 13:12, “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”
2. In optics there is something similar to this called “depth of focus”.
3. From one of the great searchers of all time: “I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.” Isaac Newton
4. Jeremiah 29:13, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart,” and Mark 12:30, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”
5. Thanks to Morris Womack for the first part of this sentence.
6. John 3:16
7. Think of Goodness as something like an “aether” that surrounds us and that we are immersed in; think of the inertia caused by the mass of everything in the universe.
8. This idea is reflected in the following quote by Mark Batterson: “Then we sat in awed silence as rays of light illuminated the Crayola colors of the canyon. It was like ultraviolet light revealing the Creator’s fingerprints. The more of God’s creation I experience, the more I am convinced of this: awed silence in the presence of divine beauty is a form of worship that is often deeper and truer than sung words.”

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