

CLOUDS

It was a day, like many other days, with little to set it apart from other days. Amy had just finished her ballet classes and was heading home, not in much of a hurry because it was a lazy, unhurried day. Amy is the sort of person that sees more than some others. As she walked along the narrow road she saw flowers that most others never, ever saw. She even noticed the daisies that flourished by the hundreds along the road and saw little details that others never see. This was not because her eyes were specially good. It was because she had trained the eyes of her heart and she saw with much more than her physical eyes and brain. She saw things with her heart and her Spirit. This hard for many to learn but those who learn it are ever so much better off. On this very day like many other days as Amy walked, strolled, perhaps even sauntered, she saw a familiar outline sitting under a tree kind of hidden by the Kentucky scrub oak. Amy stared at the man with disbelief. It sure looked like him but it couldn't be. As she drew closer he looked up at her and smiled and she KNEW it really was him, but how---? She ran to him and threw her arms around him and didn't wonder for awhile because the person just sitting all alone under the tree in the park was none other than her adopted Grandpa Dick. After a little while she began to question him. Why are you here? When did you get here? How long, etc., etc. He was very quiet, which was not really like him. It seemed there was something very important on his mind and he really could not visit until his job was done. Amy, sensing this, finally asked "Is there something really important happening? Is it anything serious?" "Yes," Grandpa Dick replied, "I am afraid that there is a very important task for us here. But first, go get Natalie." Now Natalie was Amy's sister and she was VERY busy today. She was out training her horse. She was VERY GOOD with horses and had finally gotten one of her own and she was working hard with him, training and exercising him. She would not appreciate the interruption. Nevertheless, if Grandpa Dick said it was important--well... And off she went in a run. "Come quick," she called as soon as she could see Natalie. Natalie was training her horse on a halter and rope with a small switch, walking him around and around, making him comfortable with her voice and her "nature." "Come quick," she heard and here came Amy, running with all her might. Immediately Natalie responded (but not before making sure her horse was safely tethered near water and hay) and they ran back to where Grandpa Dick was waiting, still under the tree in the park. He seemed to be talking to someone but there was no one else there. This was strange!

As they approached, he turned his attention to them, holding some small

objects in his hands. These objects were very hard to see. They knew he was holding something but as soon as they looked directly at them they sort of disappeared. It was really wild! "Here are some glasses," Grandpa Dick said. "They are special glasses. I wear physical glasses which help me to focus on physical things. I can see without them but I see very dimly and cannot see detail. These glasses I am giving you are glasses for the 'heart'. Without them you can see some things of the heart but with them you can focus more clearly. You can see much more and can see more correctly. You are each to wear these glasses for the entire day. No one will be able to see them on you because the one who made these glasses, has created them so that as soon as you put them on, they will be totally invisible. You will almost forget that they are on but you will see more than you have ever seen before. Tomorrow, at this same time, return here, and you can tell me what you have see." With that, he handed them each a pair of these wonderful glasses and disappeared. WOW!! He had never done THAT before. He just plain, old DISAPPEARED. Something special was indeed going on.

Now, I can not tell you everything that happened but I can tell you a little. I know that this is hard to believe but these glasses were indeed "magic" glasses. They had been prepared especially for these two girls as a "teaching" tool. You see, these girls, along with their brothers and sister had always been "home-schooled" and they were very comfortable with having home, garden, park and libraries be their school environment. This would just be one step up, their world would be their classroom. As they stood there wondering about how Grandpa Dick could suddenly disappear they saw an acquaintance coming down the road. I use the word "acquaintance" because he could not really be called a friend. As he approached they both saw that he seemed to have a cloud all around him. The cloud all around him was green. Not a pretty green, perhaps more of a sick green. It was hard to even see him because of the smoke all around him and I am SURE that it was just as hard for Harvey to see out through this cloud. This was curious because they had never seen this cloud around Harvey before. "What is going on here?" Natalie murmured. "I haven't got a clue," replied Amy. Harvey was a member of a Christian church and was considered very spiritual because he was always accusing others of being materialistic and much too concerned with prosperity. They were still wondering about Harvey when they spied old Mrs. Haggerty walking by. She too had a cloud, only her cloud was not a sickly green, it was an ugly dark brown color (I hate to tell you this but it looked a lot like sewage. They could almost smell it). Her cloud was very thick as though it had been gathering and growing for many years. Natalie was beginning to get an idea of what was going on but she wasn't very sure yet. Neither sister talked about it much with the other because it was just too strange. It seems that everyone they met was covered by some kind of cloud. On a few of the people

they met, they couldn't identify any particular color until they realized that some people were covered by more than one cloud. Some might have had five or six but the colors were so mixed that they just could not tell. They both wondered "How do these people see? These clouds are so thick and dark that it is hard for us to see their faces. Is it possible that they can hardly tell what our faces look like?" Surprisingly, not all of the clouds were ugly. Some people had beautiful clouds. When they got home they discovered that both of their parents had clouds all around them that neither girl had ever seen before, but their sister and brothers had no clouds at all. In fact, they just now realized--none of the very young children had any clouds. As Alice said in Wonderland "This is getting curiouiser and curiouiser." _ Their father's cloud was a very light pastel blue cloud through which they could easily see. In fact, it seemed as though they could see MORE CLEARLY through this cloud than they could see where there was no cloud. Now that was weird! All around their mother they seemed to be a very light, almost glowing, yellow cloud and this too, did nothing to hide or distort anything but seemed to enhance what one could see. "Some of these clouds are really nice," said Amy to Natalie. "I would really like to have some clouds all around me," Natalie replied, "but some of them --- yuuck!" "Tell me," said Amy, "I wonder what this is all about?" Well, time went on and the girls saw a lot, in fact they saw more than they really wanted to see. They saw angry, black clouds, swirling, dusty, gray clouds and even one or two dark angry red clouds. They began to "see" because of their magic glasses that some people really had problems and were pretty bad people. They began to divide the people into groups depending on what kind of "cloud" they wore and they decided that these glasses had been given them so they could tell who was "good" and who was "bad." This was exciting. They knew things about people that not even Mom and Dad knew and probably more than Grandpa Dick. They must be pretty special people to be given such an important job. With these glasses they could help everyone understand who to trust and who to stay away from. Wow!! This was terrific!!

The next day, they returned to where they had been given the glasses and, sure enough, Grandpa Dick had returned. Excitedly they began chattering and giggling, telling him all about what they had learned. They did not know exactly what the clouds meant but they knew which ones were "evil" and which were "good." They now knew who the "good" people were and who the "evil" people were and they could begin to warn everyone and... "Whoa, stop--hold on, little ones," Grandpa Dick chuckled. "Perhaps you have only learned part of the lesson. Let us talk about this for a little bit. Amy, where do you suppose that green cloud all around Harvey came from?" "Well, I suppose--probably--I guess it just came up from down inside him. I guess he was just 'that way' and we needed to be warned

against him." "What do you think, Natalie?" "I didn't think much about where they came from. I am not even very sure what they are. Can you help us understand, please?" "My dear, sweet granddaughters--how I love you and your gentle spirits. Of course I will help you understand but you must think with me, very hard, for a little bit, because what I am about to tell you is one of the very deep, deep things from our Father." "First, let me ask you to tell me what this scripture means...

"Now if you feel inclined to set yourself up as a judge of those who sin, let me assure you, whoever you are, that you are in no position to do so. For at whatever point you condemn others you automatically condemn yourself, since you, the judge, commit the same sins. God's judgment, we know, is utterly impartial in its action against such evil-doers. What makes you think that you, who so readily judge the sins of others, can consider yourself beyond the judgment of God." Phillip's translation. Romans 2

Both girls sat there stunned and the longer they sat, the more sheepish and ashamed they got. Finally, Grandpa Dick wrapped an arm around each of them and hugged them tightly. "Come, come, my girls. Don't be sad. This is a wonderful lesson and you are seeing, right to the heart of the matter. This is not a time for tears (for, by now there were several tears running down two faces) but a time for joy. The past is of no importance here. You are learning a lesson which is purifying your hearts and that is a beautiful thing to see. Let me help you to understand these curious things you have seen. Harvey, the one with the sickly green cloud desires material things more than is good for him. In fact, privately, he actually covets the possessions of others. As he longs for things he does not have, he begins to generate a cloud all around himself. The more he covets, the thicker the cloud and it has become such that whenever he looks at anyone else, he can only look at them through his own cloud of coveting and what does he see? He sees coveting. Now that other person may or may not have this problem but Harvey is convinced that THE WHOLE WORLD IS CAUGHT UP IN COVETING simply because he sees the whole world through his own cloud." "What was that cloud of Mrs. Haggerty?" Amy asked. "Oh, that was gossip," Grandpa Dick replied, "that is one of the good Christian activities. It is very respectable but you saw the kind of cloud that was generated. It was ugly and smelly and looked just like sewage. This poor woman has been afflicted with gossip nearly all her life and has made herself and others just miserable because of it." And so they went on and on with Grandpa Dick explaining about the dark black clouds of hatred and the deep red clouds of anger and violence. They discussed the purple clouds of lust and the orange clouds of spite but more and more they came to understand that it was what was inside the person that generated the clouds but as they looked through the clouds each person believed that others were guilty of the things they saw. Suddenly a very disturbing

thought came to Natalie. "Grandpa Dick, is it possible that we only saw the clouds which we have around us? That we never saw the purple clouds because that has not been a problem for us? Did we only see clouds that were like our own?" "Yes, Natalie. That is the exact truth. Not only do others see us through their clouds but we see them through our own which only adds to the problem. Can you see now why our Father, because He loves us so much, tells us not to judge others because when we do, we are really just judging ourselves. This is a warning, a protection." "Then why were we allowed to see these things," exclaimed Amy, "This is awful. I know things about people I really do not want to know and now I do not even know whether they are the guilty ones or whether I am. This is really hard!" "Let us look at it just a little differently," Grandpa Dick replied, "He is urging us to be compassionate toward others and he shows us things so that we will love them more and pray for them to get better. He never shows us the mistakes of others so we will blame them or condemn them but only so that we can love and help them." "Grandpa Dick, we do not want ANY clouds around us. Please tell us how to get rid of them!" both girls spoke at once. "Yes, indeed. Perhaps that was the real purpose of this whole experience," he said. "Well, we certainly know that darkness never gets rid of darkness and more clouds never get rid of clouds. The only way to get rid of darkness is to shine some light. Now we know that Jesus is the light of the world and so perhaps we should just make it our goal to let Him shine into our lives and burn off the clouds." And so it went until both Amy and Natalie came to understand that they had been taught a wonderful lesson in the home school of Father's house. When they were finished and about to take Grandpa Dick home--again, he just plain disappeared. Weird!!

About a week later, the girls asked Mom if they could call Grandpa Dick and talk with him. The answer was yes so they did, but even though Grandpa Dick was delighted to hear from them, he had no idea what they were talking about when they mentioned GLASSES.