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Eyes to See and Ears to Hear

About a week ago, on the river's edge at Beaulieu, a small gathering of parishioners took in a most beautiful sunset. Magnificent white clouds in various shapes moved slowly in procession. Gigantic in form, their size accumulated to eclipse the sky. But behind the clouds, through an opening of a greater depth, the sky appeared a pure dark blue. And through another opening, equally bright and clear, a pink sky peered through. Nothing was out of place. This beauty seemed in perfect harmony and balance. We stood together, at first quietly, but then in enthusiastic conversation, joyful in the creation, and grateful to our Creator.

No doubt many others in Savannah enjoyed the same glorious sight that evening. But often while nature is resplendent with the revelation of her Maker, we are too preoccupied to see it. Our focus lies elsewhere.

Wordsworth puts it this way.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

The world Wordsworth speaks of is not the whole realm of nature, but rather the very small sphere of our worldliness. For the worldly soul, time moves not by the regulation of seasons, but by our own desires, *getting and spending*. Our powers are spent and our vision eclipsed by pride and pleasures. We cannot see our sublime relation to Nature. And so often we miss nature's revelatory splendor. *We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!*

St. Paul speaks of this also in his epistle to the Romans. Creation offers us a portrait of God.

For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.

Through the images that are creation, the power and beauty of God

are evident. The great Architect has presented us with a grand design that shows us something of Himself.

But we have preferred our own imaginations to that of God, and the images of creation fail to move us.

What a foul fact it is that in our own age we drag nature into the economic and political frenzy that is the mind of this present world. We might be tempted to say that we are just too busy to see Nature as she really is. But I am afraid our condition is worse than that.

Actually it has been our choice not only to lay waste our powers by giving our hearts away, but to use this earth merely for our consumption. The consequence has not only been to misunderstand nature, but also to denature our very souls.

But there is another possibility, just as we found that splendid evening at Beaulieu. If we are to see nature in her splendor, if we are to hear the heavens declare their truth, what is it that we shall see and hear?

First of all, we shall see the glory of God as Creator. We shall see His goodness, for only such goodness can create such beauty. We shall marvel at the dexterity of His mind in creating such a multiform and harmonious universe. We shall be in awe at the power of His will that upholds all things by His command. And we shall bow before His mercy, for only His mercy allows us to partake in the joy of His goodness.

And secondly, we shall reflect on our place in this creation and the gift given us by our Creator to stand in the midst of so marvelous a portrait. It shall appear to us a most wonderful privilege to live as a creature in this world.

I suppose that when all is said and done, and our lives are wrapped up like a garment, one of the aspects of God's judgment will be to ask us what we have seen and heard. I may be wrong but I suspect something of this kind will enter into judgment, for our Lord tells us that by our words we shall be justified and by our words we shall be condemned.

What will we then report to Him of the great and magnificent works of creation? Will we tell Him what He already knows, that we have been made to live in the midst of so great and sublime a world, a world that declares the glory of God the Creator? Will our answer then echo our praises even now?

How we respond *now* to the heavens declaring the glory of God, when day to day utters speech, and night to night shows knowledge, will mark how we respond *then* at the sight of a new heaven and a new earth.

It will all depend then on the same thing as it does now. Our seeing and hearing will manifest the state of our souls. We shall show either the character of grace alive in our souls, or the abysmal darkness of pride. By our own way of seeing we shall reveal whether or not justice is at work within.

And for this justice within what is primary is humility, and the

recognition of who we are before God. In humility, we see our own creation in the hands of a good and beneficent Creator. We depend utterly upon his grace to be delivered from our blindness and to set our hearts free for Him. That evening, one glorious sunset reminded us all what is absolutely necessary for us to know, that His beauty is also merciful.

The Rev. Dr. Michael L. Carreker

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