

Beautiful Savior

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.”

Psalm 19:1

California’s political problems serve as a reminder that man’s government will never be perfect. Furthermore, high taxes, housing costs and a slumping economy cause groaning for many inhabitants of the Golden State. Yet in spite of such difficulties, I can’t imagine a greater concentration of accessible physical splendor than in California. What more breathtaking spots could exist than Big Sur, Yosemite or the Central Coast? Where else can you traverse mountains and desert to the ocean within a few hours? With so much natural beauty, it’s no wonder that our state hosts millions of tourists each year.

California’s flourishing tourist industry is evidence of a universal truth: people are drawn to natural beauty, whether mountains, forests, oceans, or deserts. Yet though creation’s majesty is spectacular on a grand scale, we can also behold its splendor on a lesser scale. Smaller natural wonders such as a peacock feather, seashell or fragrant rose are all equally powerful to inspire awe among adults and children alike.

Indeed, creation declares God’s glory but the people flocking in droves to behold natural beauty may not recognize this. These masses don’t appreciate that the same Creator who fashioned beautiful Yosemite also gave us His only born Son. But natural mankind is confounded by spiritual Truth and avoids it, perhaps believing that “Heaven” means “humdrum,” where pious angels strum harps all day.

In reality, our view through the lenses of Scripture draws us to hope and long for our eternal home. Moreover, we understand that God, Creator of this beautiful earth created an even more breathtaking Heaven. So indescribably magnificent is Heaven that the Apostle Paul, having glimpsed it, was tempted to exalt himself, but was humbled by a thorn in his flesh (2 Corinthians 12:2-7). When John beheld the glorified Son of Man in a vision, he “fell at His feet as dead” (Revelation 1:17). So if natural men beheld God in Heaven, all would no doubt fall down and worship. But God, who admonishes against casting pearls before swine, chooses not to reveal Himself on earth in a way that forces man’s faith and worship. Instead, He eludes hardened hearts and reveals Himself only to those who first see Him through eyes of faith in Jesus Christ. Only then is the veil lifted from our eyes, allowing access to His eternal treasures.

Although our beautiful physical world is one of the things God has given us richly to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17), it serves a more noble purpose. Creation declares God’s glory; furthermore it proclaims by its structure and function that only by divine intelligence did it originate. Therefore, every person is without excuse (Romans 1), for creation serves to draw man into seeking the Creator. But those who instead harden their hearts willfully blind their eyes and miss the splendor God has intended to share with those who love Him. Through our redemption, the most beautiful Work of all, our hearts and minds are renewed so that we can be enlightened to know what the unregenerate world misses:

The sea is vast, and soothes the eyes that cannot see its end
The stars at night will kindle awe for minds that comprehend
Though all behold, not all believe the message that they send

The skies declare God’s glory to mankind who lives below
On earth, the plants, and animals affirm that this is so
But natural minds and hardened hearts will, sadly, never know

Because each one is born in sin; condemned, depraved and lost
Yet Christ, our God, became a man and died to pay the cost
That those who trust the risen Lord, from death to life may cross

The work of God to form the earth was fingerwork and light
The cost to pay for all man’s sin, a so much greater plight
Though glory of creation fades; His Word burns ever bright

Both earth and sky inspire awe, yet wordlessly they scream
To bend man’s ear and lift the veil from eyes that they may see
His Blood proclaimed, salvation gained for listeners redeemed

By Mary Nixon