

The “Book” of Nature

As I write this chapter, it's a beautiful day in my home state of North Carolina. It's the kind of day that reminds me of Psalm 19:

The heavens are telling the glory of God;

The firmament proclaims his handiwork (Psalm 19:1).

Along with the written Word of God, the Bible, another great “book” is provided to us: the “book” of Nature. As Psalm 19 says, “the heavens are telling the glory of God.” This is true! Taking a real look at the creation of God can do much to fill your soul with glory and drive you to your knees in praise, adoration, and gratitude. This is good for your soul.

Now, simply reading the book of Nature without ever looking at the Bible would be a mistake. It is quite possible to elevate the goodness of God’s creation to the level of worship-worthiness; doing this is certainly not good for your soul. But just reading the Bible without ever pausing to drink deeply of the beauty of creation and to adore the God of creation would also be a mistake.

“Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made” (Romans 1:20).

In the words of one of my favorite poets, Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

*Earth's crammed with heaven,
and ev'ry common bush afire with God,
But only he who sees takes off his shoes—
The rest sit 'round it and pluck blackberries.⁷*

Do you see? Do you see goodness and grace of God in the everyday beauty that surrounds you? All Creation sings the praises of the Creator! Perhaps today you would benefit from stepping outside and considering the glorious testimony to God’s goodness provided by His creation.

*This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and 'round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world!
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.
This is my Father's world,
The birds their carols raise;
The morning light, the lily white
Declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world!
He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass, I hear him pass;
He speaks to me everywhere.*

If you aren't seeing that all of creation proclaims the praises of the Creator, I urge you to make space in your life to look again. Spend time considering the wonders of creation. Allow the order and beauty of the natural world to stun you. Let it sink deeply into your soul. For the same God who created all this beauty still reigns.

This is my Father's world,

*O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world!
The battle is not done:
Jesus, who died, shall be satisfied
And earth and heav'n be one.*⁸

⁸“This is My Father’s World,” Maltie D. Babcock, 1901.