



*s Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.* (Psalm 17:8)

To a mother cat, true beauty is in the precious countenance of her kittens. The same is true for a mother and child of the human race. Only a mother could perceive a wet, wrinkle new born baby as being beautiful. But, in fact, all of God's Creation has beauty. That beauty may be marred by sin and avarice, but the essence and stamp of its Creator is discernible even in the lowly ant.

An English dramatist, John Lyly, of 1588 wrote: ". . . as near is fancy to Beauty, as the thorn to the Rose." Shakespeare expressed his own sentiment on beauty in the same year as follows:

*Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,  
Needs not the painted flourish of your praise:  
Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye,  
Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues.*

But the lady who gave us the frank statement that "Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder" was Margaret Wolfe Hungerford in her book, *Molly Bawn* (1878).

Man has long attempted to define beauty, but one man's beauty is another's homeliness. The ability of the heart to comprehend beauty is directly proportional to that heart to know and appreciate the beauty of Creation and its Creator. The "*Apple of Thine Eye*" is still the best description of beauty in my opinion. This describes what God considers beauty to be, and it is a comfort to know that He considers the each of His elect to be beautiful for He calls us the "*Apple of His Eye*."

If you have ever wondered what the term means, allow me to give you my definition of Apple of the Eye. A mother watches her children constantly because they are her greatest possession. One who loves gemstones is constantly inspecting them with the meticulousness of banker. One who loves art can stand for hours admiring a great Masterpiece. But how does this relate to the Apple of the Eye? When we look intently at the object of our affections, that object is reflected in the pupil of our eyes. If we look closely at a mother whose eyes are fixed on her darling child, we will see a miniature picture of the child reflected on the mother's eye. That is how God perceives us. We are constantly under His watchful eye, and a tiny image of our countenance is reflected in God's eyes.

Beauty, apart from God's Creative genius, is undefinable. True art best describes the perfection in Creation for it mimics the perfection of beauty and glory in tradition.

But the vulgar abstract art of our time mars, instead of emulates, that beauty of God and His Nature. One of the most respected and reputable artists and art commentator of the past century, F.W. Ruckstuhl, had this to say of beauty and art:

*Next to What is God? The most serious question of the age is – What is Beauty? Because, strange as it may appear to the unreflecting, on the proper answering of that question depends the Character of our future civilization. . . . When we contemplate Nature it suggests to us that Beauty is the vestment and expression of the Creator; that He made the pursuit of the Beautiful the Supreme Law of the Universe; that every insect, shrub, and even crystal, senses and obeys that law and makes itself and environment beautiful; and that undeveloped and degenerate men alone violate that law. (Great Works of Art, and what makes them great, Ruckstuhl, F.W. 1925, pp 93)*

Abstract art defies the Creative Model of God by marring the perfection of beauty in Creation – whether abstraction in canvas, clay, stone, music, or even literature. The art of Picasso expresses a chaotic vulgarization of the true images that God has created in Nature. The decadence and degeneracy does not end with noses where ears should be, but gruesome and bloody depiction that should be banned to the public for their awful suggestions. Likewise, music which does not lift the soul to a higher plane nearer to God is not beautiful at all. Music should have melody, pitch, harmony and rhythm. The mind-bursting notes of heavy metal and rap are not spiritually uplifting, but rather the opposite. All of this modern rubbish that passes for art is a departure from what has defined art for the past six millennia. Even cave dwellers had a better concept of art than some that we see passed off as impostures of art today.

Is Beauty important? Of course it is because it expresses the perfection of God.  
*11 He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. (Eccl 3:11)* Yes, indeed – EVERYTHING!

*8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely (beautiful), whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. (Phil 4:8-9)* Based on God's Word, it seems Beauty is quite important since God Himself is Beautiful, and all that He has made is likewise.

I hope to be the Apple of god's Eye just as was David; and I pray that you, too, friends, will be the Apple of His eye. His eye is forever beholding those whom He loves and accounts His own. Of course, you are a cherished treasure for you were purchased at the greatest price ever paid for anything under the sun – the blood of the only Begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. His Church is, indeed, a Pearl of Great Price. God's only Begotten Son sold EVERYTHING that He had to purchase that Bride for Himself.

Though I have related it before, I wish to close with an illustration of a jeweler of some years ago who owned a jewelry shop in downtown Philadelphia. He was growing aged and had no heir to continue his busy after him; so he sought to find a young man to satisfy that expectation. He interviewed many hopeful aspirants and finally chose a bright and ambitious young man who added charm to an in-depth and technical knowledge of gemology. As he began to teach the young man the ropes of the trade, he one day allowed the young man to try his hand at selling the beautiful gems he had in stock.

One day, a well-dressed gentleman entered the shop seeking a wedding ring for his fiancée. He wanted the very best for his darling. The young jeweler took out the best diamond of the stock – and the largest. He explained to the man why this diamond was superb. He described the technical merits regarding setting, cut, color, and clarity. He

pointed out the absence of any obvious blemishes, and the high quality gold in which the diamond was couched. The gentleman was not convinced and began to make as if to go. The old jeweler, watching from his office above the shop floor, came down and said, "Allow me to present this gentleman with the beauty and quality of this stone." With that, he took the ring and described how beautiful it would look on the fair finger of his fiancée. He then held it up to the light and described the contrasting colors emitted by the stone as he turned it so that each facet would refract a different gleam. He described the permanence of the diamonds value, and how such a purchase would be a high tribute to the gentleman's loved one. He described how the high cost was no great sacrifice for someone that he loved for life. The man was convinced and purchased the diamond ring.

In a rush of disappointment and frustration, the young jeweler asked, "You are not even a trained gemologist. You do not know the technical merit of that stone, yet you were able to make the sell and I was not. Why?" The old jeweler, with a twinkle in his eye, said: "Young man, I admit that you know diamonds better than I, and you have a better education in knowing them; but there is a difference – you KNOW diamonds, but I LOVE diamonds. Love makes all the difference when it comes to BEAUTY."

We are all diamonds in the hand of God, our Master Jeweler. We may lack appeal and attractiveness in our plain boxes, but when God holds us up to the Light of Life and allows His radiant beams to permeate and emerge from every angle, suddenly, we have brilliance and a magnificent BEAUTY that we could never have supposed. As my favorite poet, Thomas Gray has written in *Elegy Written in a country Churchyard*:

*Many a gem of fairest ray serene  
The dark unfathomed depths of ocean bear,  
Many a flower is born to blush unseen  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

Being a child of God opens your life to beauty and joy unimaginable. Get out of the wilderness and into the byways of life. Rise up from the darkness of the Deep, and God will bring Light and Beauty to your tired soul.