



**O** **WORSHIP** *the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.* (Psalm 96:9)

The Holy Bible is filled with the most beautiful vocabulary of any book known to man. It is not only a book of history, of science, of romance, of spiritual complexity, but also a book of beautiful expressions of natural beauty. But before we delve into any aspect of that beauty which it proclaims, perhaps we should first define natural beauty.

There is really only one meaning of beauty and that comes down from the Father of Lights. Men may believe beauty is some vulgar presentation of a woman whose morals may, or may not, be Godly. Or of some crude amalgamation of lines and spheres on canvas that resemble nothing at all of natural origin. In fact, some modern concepts of art actually distort the natural beauty found in creation, and demeans the art of the Father whose fingers produced the original.

A great art critic named Frederick Ruckstuhl wrote the defining work on art and beauty in 1925 entitled, Great Works of Art and What Makes them Great. Ruckstuhl points out beauty is an expression of the perfection of God. True art mimics the beauty with which God has endowed his Creation whether animal, vegetable, or mineral. The beauty of any work of art is measured by the degree to which it resembles the natural object which it depicts. But no work of a man's hand can fully depict the beauty of God's original. A painting that wonderfully expresses the beauty of a rose cannot match the beauty of the original. A canvas painting is only two dimensional while the original is three dimensional. But, you may say, we are now able to copy a rose in three dimensional aspect and perspective. Still it falls far short of the original. A rose has life and inner beauty. It has fragrance and appeal which attracts the honey bee and the butterfly. Beauty is expressed in all of the works of God, and the best of man's effort can only imitate that

beauty. Picasso was a fraud. His deformed art actually is blasphemous to the works of God. True beauty is settled deep in the human heart. It is more like a ruby than a diamond.

All of the Godly works of man are imitations of the greater works of God. We seek His favor by our righteous works, but we yet sin. We try to adhere to His Commandments, yet we fail miserably in thought, word, and deed. We must still strive to express our love for Him in our living, our work, our art, our society, and, most importantly, our worship of Him. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.* (Psalm 29:2) Have you considered Godly worship to be beautiful? If not, perhaps you need to examine your purpose and motive in worship. Worship is not man-centered, but God-centered. The music in worship must be Holy, not worldly. We do not make up allusions to worldly pleasures in song. We use Godly hymns and songs that glorify God – not man! Classical hymns are full of biblical truth and doctrine. They help us to remember God's Word at all points of our awakening hours. It is not only the lyrics that must reflect a Holy reverence, but the music itself must evoke spiritual feelings of Heavenly import. Music can be reverential, or it can be immoral.

Do you remember the event in the Old Testament when Godly song was used to defeat a terrible enemy? *20 And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. 21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever. 22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. 23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. 24 And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.* (2 Chron 20:20-24)

God is due our most devoted reverence in all that we do, and especially in worship: *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.* (1 Chron 16:29)

Our lives should reflect the beauty of the Lord shining through our frames of clay. There is a certain sweetness that one feels when first meeting another Christian. You KNOW the person immediately as a close friend. Being Christians, we must present an image of the One of whom we bear our being. We should be like Him in every possible gesture and deed for His countenance and manner is sweet: *His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.* (Song 5:13)

We should have pure hearts that are attracted by pure expressions in worship. We are the white lilies of the field in purity. *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.* (Matt 5:8) True beauty radiates outward from the inward treasures of the soul.

The color of love is that of sacrifice – CRIMSON, as the red, red rose of summer. *“Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.* (Luke 7:47) The rose is a symbol of love, and its thorns represent the sacrifice that attends love, much like the Crown of Thorns our Lord suffered. The measure of our love is evidence of our election in Christ.

Kindness is much like the beautiful and tender-petalled carnation. There are no thorns there, but fragrance and tenderness to the touch: *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted,*

*forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Eph 4:32) Kindness is merely another function of love.*

Humility may be expressed in the lowly violet. Its color expresses royalty – but not that royalty of its own, but of its Maker. Humility is rare among great kings, but it was profusely expressed by the King of Kings. *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:2-3)*

*"To put one's self on a level with those whom we exhort, gives weight to one's exhortations (compare 2 John 1:1,2) Peter, in true humility for the Gospel's sake, does not put forward his apostleship here, wherein he presided over the elders. In the apostleship the apostles have no successors, for "the signs of an apostle" have not been transmitted. The presidents over the presbyters and deacons, by whatever name designated, angel, bishop, or moderator, &c., though of the same order as the presbyters, yet have virtually succeeded to a superintendency of the Church analogous to that exercised by the apostles (this superintendency and priority existed from the earliest times after the apostles [Tertullian]); just as the Jewish synagogue (the model which the Church followed) was governed by a council of presbyters, presided over by one of themselves, "the chief ruler of the synagogue." - Compare Vitringa [Synagogue and Temple, Part II, chs. 3 and 7]).—Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*

We all associate the color blue with loyalty. Being loyal to one another, we do not forget the duties of love, kindness, and protection that we owe others. That loyalty may be best expressed by the blue 'Forget-Me-Nots' that lovers flaunt as hints of fidelity. *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well. (2 Tim 1:16-18)*

*"The faces of some saints are like fresh flowers on a spring morning, while others resemble a damp fog on a November day. The latter chills, while the others cheer and gladden." FE Marsh, Pearls, Points, and Parables (1908)*

To be only a bud of clover in the House of God should be sufficient to our eternal bliss and joy.