



There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1 Cor 15:44)

I suppose it is easier for man to understand those things he can both see and feel than those things which are revealed only by faith and theory. In fact, faith may begin by the evidence of God's hand in nature itself and the creative genius evident in that creation. This would be consistent with the theories propagated by Thomas Aquinas in his writings on 'Natural Theology.' Our Lord Himself taught from the standpoint of physical evidence in nature that points to a higher understanding of things spiritual. That is precisely the point of His use of parables and material objects to point to a higher spiritual truth that is not readily evident to those whose existence has been confined to the material considerations of life. The sacrificial death of our Lord and Savior, as well as the spiritual death of His disciples, may become more clearly defined in the mind of a farmer when he is made aware of the words of Jesus concerning the "corn of wheat:" *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.* (John 12:24-26)

Or, it may be presumed that a lady of the hearth will more readily grasp the spiritual truth of the Providence and Foreordaining will of God in selecting men, women, and children of every social and political strata for His Kingdom when she reads how our Lord makes comparison of those items of common household application: *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.* (2 Tim 2:19-20) Most of the Parables of our Lord centered on the plain and

mundane materials and circumstances of daily life. The first cardinal rule of teaching is to “teach from the KNOWN to the UNKNOWN” – not the other way around; and our Lord was the Master Teacher. The Prodigal Son, the Sower and Seed, the Dragnet, the Mustard Seed, etc. stand as witnesses at the bar to support this argument.

So, I believe that we should be able to see and witness the glory of God in the natural world as well as in the spiritual truths revealed in Holy Scripture. The glorious beauty of a morning sunrise, the contentedness of a bluebird on her nest, the way of the eagle in searching out his prey from great distances, and the loveliness of a child’s smile – all point to our Creator and His love for His Creation. I, therefore, believe I am on solid ground in pointing out some qualities (not all) of the heron in reflecting the ways of the true Christian, and contrariwise, the RED HERRING as an example, not to be followed, of many of our modern clergy who lead men and women astray from the truths of God. The true Word of God will offend the sinner, not make him feel satisfied with himself! This may conflict with the effeminate teachings of the false prophet, Joel Osteen, but so be it!

There is a beautiful city park within a five-minute drive of my home where my wife and I go morning and evening with a long circular walking path extending over heavily vegetated hills and through beautiful lakes. At one point in the walk, there is a small pond of perhaps half an acre that is the habitat of a four-foot tall blue heron (Old Grey Coat) and his snow-white mate (Princess of the Pond). (Note: Herons, unlike the lesser immoral man, mate for life). Though there are many larger lakes and ponds on the trail, this smaller pond is the preferred choice for these two beautiful birds. There are dozens of geese and ducks that dominate the other bodies of water, so I presume that the herons prefer the solitude of the smaller pond which they alone inhabit. Herons are known for their solitude and separation from other birds of a different stripe.

Often during our walks, my wife and I observe one of the herons patiently standing in the water waiting for his meal to swim close enough to be speared by his razor-sharp beak. He may stand thusly for hours.

Though the heron has no physical beauty to commend himself to the world when standing alone, he becomes one of the most beautiful and graceful of birds on the wing whose span is often more than six feet. In fact, gracefulness is one feature that symbolizes the heron.

How do the characteristics of the HERON suggest themselves to the Christian? Allow me to point out only six ways of the HERON that should also be the ways of the Christians:

Patience

Just as the heron waits patiently for extended periods of time for his meal, so should the Christian exercise patience in his service and expectations of the mercy and grace of the Lord. *In your patience possess ye your souls.* (Luke 21:19) If the heron loses patience, he will miss his meal. If a Christian is impatient, he will miss the blessing of God.

Hope

Just as the heron does not know, with certainty, that the waters will yield the meal for which he patiently waits; so, the Christian is not certain of the growth of the seed he plants in truth. The seed falls beneath the surface of the ground and is nurtured in darkness by the Holy Ghost. Yet, by and by, the blade breaks forth in search of the life-giving sun. So, the Christian plants the seed of truth and awaits the breaking forth of the Sun of Righteousness upon his labors. *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay*

hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. (Heb 6:18-19)

Faith

Faith is akin to Hope. Hope gives the desired outcome of faith. But there is another dimension of faith that is demonstrated by the heron – FAITHFULNESS! The heron is faithful in carrying out his role in nature instilled in his heart by his Creator at the moment of his creation. He is also faithful to his mate throughout life. These are commendable qualities for the Christian to emulate in the heron. Certainly, God commands a man and woman to be faithful in marriage just as He commands the Church to be faithful to her Bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is a gift of the grace of God to save: *Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.* (Luke 7:50) Faith is not our natural inclination – it is imparted by the Holy Ghost.

Perseverance

The heron is persevering – a natural characteristic of patience combined with hope and faith. He doesn't choose his place to seek food without the innate wisdom of his Maker. He knows the waters, and he knows his prey. So once his plan is set, he waits until it bears fruit. He is persevering in his dependence upon God to supply his victuals. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.* (Eph 6:18) God's time table may differ from ours. Do not lift your prayers on high and then turn to lose hope in their being answered in the best way for us.

Separation

It is a trait of fallen man to desire to be on the Broad Path which the world favors. It is paved with false hopes and crowded with those who place peer acceptance and greed at the forefront. Moreover, it leads downhill so is easy to tread. But it ends in destruction. The heron separates himself from others of his kind and lives a nearly solitary life (in the small pond). If he fails to find food, he has only himself to blame, and he prefers that. The Christian should separate himself from the 'madding crowd' and find solace in the Lord his God and others of like mind. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* (2 Cor 6:17-18)

Now I will turn a brief attention to the clergymen of our day who are Red Herrings. I use RED HERRINGS since many in our day confuse the term to be RED HERON. These profligate ministers are reprobates who deserve not much description. They are reprobates because they, like the Serpent of the Garden, know the Word of God; yet, deny its power in their preaching. They twist and spurn the meaning of God's Word to the point that it can no longer be identified as God's Word. They proliferate the broadcast of RED HERRINGS before the people – and I am not referring to anything 'fishy.' The Red Herring to which I refer is defined as: "[from the practice of drawing a red herring across a trail to confuse hunting dogs] : something that distracts attention from the real issue." Webster's Dictionary. It is no coincidence the Great Dragon who sought to devour the child of the Woman of Revelations 12 was RED! So are his minions of the pulpit today. I do not make reference to the many Godly, biblical preachers who stand fast on the Word of God, but to the adulterators of it - those who attack the sanctity of marriage – God's first institution of marriage between one man and one woman which He instituted to symbolize the same relationship existing between Christ and His Church in His second institution. *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!* (Isaiah 5:20) Or those who profess the murder of innocent blood in their mother's womb. Since you know who they are, and THEY know who they are, I will waste no more words on such scoundrels of the Mustard Tree.