

## Mid-Week Message

May 20 2020

Last week a friend and I were discussing how it seems that everything in nature is about a month behind. What is happening now used to occur in April. Since the rain we got last week the trees are starting to bud. I can hear the birds and the mosquitoes and apparently the ticks are out. Seems like summer is on the cusp of busting forth. The days are longer and the temperatures are on the rise.

Last week while I was puttering around I had a song stuck in my head. When I stopped and thought about it I realized that it was Beautiful Savior. Today after lunch I decided to do some spiritual reading for twenty minutes. At the end of one chapter was a section on Beautiful Savior. It seems that serendipity wants me to share this with you. Seems only fitting with nature bursting forth.

The chapter I was reading was on the writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins. This is what he has to say about this hymn:

Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks rise around; up above, what wind-walks! What lovely behaviour of silk-sack clouds! Has wilder, wilful-waiver meal drift mould ever and melted across skies? I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes, down all that glory in the heavens to glean Our Saviour.

Beautiful Saviour is a favorite hymn of many. In the second and third stanzas of this hymn, we sing that the creation is fair but that Jesus, Our Saviour is fairer still. The beauty of the world is second to the beauty of the Lord who, in love, gave Himself for us to redeem us.

Hopkins, too is reminded of the beauty of Christ in nature. Yet for him nature as it is observed in the fall of the year is one with Christ. Christ's presence in nature is what gives its beauty. So great, so powerful, so all-encompassing is the glorified

Redeemer in His love for our fallen world, that He penetrates it and makes it glow and shine. Hopkins looked up and saw the shocks of wheat—"stooks"—standing in the fields, the clouds scattered in fanciful patterns across the sky. All in the hills of Wales where he was staying at that time.

Many of us seeing the Lord depicted in paintings, have thought of Him beautiful in His humanhood. Others have thought of Him as beautiful in His sacrifice for us. Hopkins's visions of the Lord denies both of those images. Following the cross is the Resurrection. It is there that Christ joins the natural and the supernatural in glory. Looking at Christ in this way helps the imagination to see Him in many new ways. Help me to see with new eyes that I am surrounded with Your presence because You fill all things. Only then can I be drawn into You to know the joy of God. Amen