

Today is Trinity Sunday, when we think upon God as Father Son and Holy Spirit. It is one of those days for standing back and taking a look at the big picture, for thinking of the wonder of God, the wonder of this world and our place in it.

As I have mentioned before, my own path to faith came through my interest in science. One of my key memories is of an ‘A’ Level Physics class. My physics teacher, himself a devout member of the Church of England, had been talking of the order of the created world. He then challenged us, ‘Don’t tell me that that is all down to chance.’

A number of years ago, I was sharing this memory with a colleague and he added, ‘Yes, but we don’t just worship an engineer.’ What he was emphasising is that there is more to our understanding of God as creator than one who simply makes, who constructs this wonderful world in which we live; who once the job is finished disappears to take on his next job. Our understanding of God from the very beginning has embodied the concept of relationship.

Our reading this morning from Proverbs gives expression to this idea of relationship between the creator and the creature. We read of Wisdom, the first act of God’s creation, brought forth before mountains, before seas, before the beginning of time. We have this picture of Wisdom there with God, as witness, as fellow worker with God,

<sup>30</sup>then I was beside him, like a master worker;  
and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing before him always,  
<sup>31</sup>rejoicing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in the human race.

And so there is something essentially personal about Wisdom; in our reading she is referred to in the feminine. There is a delicacy and a tenderness in the language that is used; daily his delight, rejoicing, delighting. Wisdom is one in whom and through whom God addresses, relates to and encounters his creation. life, and the life was the light of all people.

So my friend was right – we worship far more than an engineer.

We are challenged, as we look at the world, as we marvel at the beauty of nature whether it be in the sun, the majesty of the night sky or the intricacy of a snowflake, the delicacy of a flower or the amazing world of the atom; we are challenged to look beyond all that to the God behind it all. We move from the question of the ‘how’ of creation to the far more profound ‘Why?’

My search for meaning and purpose in the world eventually moves into the sphere of encounter – as is the experience of any of us who have looked at a sunset or night sky and have been moved to wonder how all this came to be and have proclaimed in their hearts ‘How great thou art!’. For you never encounter a thing – you encounter a person.

We hear a great deal these days of the importance of living in harmony with creation. Many of the problems of the environment, global warming, pollution, disposal of nuclear waste are seen as symptomatic of our failure in this regard. To truly live in harmony with creation I need to live in harmony with my creator. This is where the personal dimension of creation, the commitment of the creator to his creation becomes so important. Amidst all the demands for attention in our busy world, we so often miss out on the importance of this need for harmony with our creator.

It is here that I find the Sabbath teaching of the Old Testament gives me much food for thought. It has its setting in the Exodus and the entry into the Promised Land. With promise came responsibilities and limitations on the use of the land that were summarised in the Sabbath regulations. We are all familiar with the weekly Sabbath. This was to be a day of rest not just for human beings but also for the animals that were owned by the community. On that day they are to do no work. The Sabbath is to be a day when human beings do not intervene in nature, a day on which to recognise nature as God’s creation and to respect it accordingly.

But in addition to the weekly Sabbath, every 7<sup>th</sup> year was to be a Sabbath year in which the land was not to be cultivated. This is a reminder that the earth belongs to God and not to man. Of course agrarian societies have long recognised the value of fallowing, of periodically resting the land – otherwise the land is exhausted, leading to soil erosion, reduction of yield and, in many parts of the world, famine. But our demand for ever cheaper and more plentiful food, the farming community has been driven to use more and more fertilizers, weed killers and pesticides. Some years ago I recall an old farmer complaining to me, ‘We’re killing the land.’ In our demands for increased convenience, increased luxury, the mineral resources of the earth are being exhausted at an alarming rate, the effluent from our factories and our ever increasing refuse, is polluting this beautiful planet.

To go back to our psalm:

- 4 When I consider your heavens, the | work of your | fingers, @  
the moon and the | stars that | you have or|dained,
- 5 What is man, that you should be | mindful | of him; @  
the son of man, that | you should | seek him | out?

On this Sabbath day, this day of rest from work, this day of worship, let us give God the glory for this wonderful world in which we live, for the love he has shown us in Christ. Let us go back out into the world and see the world in which we live as God’s gracious gift, held in trust for future generations.