



fingerprints

The Condition of the Heart

For the spiritually minded believer, everything points to God. God is all in all, and if we so choose to seek Him, we will find Him wherever we look.

WELL, YOU SILLY GOOSE. DO SOMETHING! I thought as I crouched in the early morning chill on the near side of the pond. The temperature was still in the thirties, and I wasn't dressed for being outside for long. But the Canada goose standing on the opposite shore was too perfectly posed for me not to slip out into the early morning damp to shoot a few pictures of him. As a model, however, he fell considerably short of "super" status. The most I got out of him was an occasional head-turn, but the rest of his plump body remained as still as a marble statue.

At long last, with the dampness seeping through my sneakers and my bare arms numb with cold, I gave up. I rose and began to walk up the rise, back to the house, grudgingly content with but a few static images of the large goose.

Just then I heard a thunderous fluttering behind me. The coy waterfowl had just been toying with me, waiting till I turned my back before going into action. I turned quickly, raising the camera to my face. I panned with the launching goose, and as he passed just a few trees away, I snapped the shutter. Then once more as he departed the property.

And I thought about the old hymn, *Sometimes a Light Surprises*.

Sometimes a light surprises
the Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord, who rises
with healing in His wings:
When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining,
to cheer it after rain.

Reflections
by the Pond

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In holy contemplation
we sweetly then pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
and find it ever new.
Set free from present sorrow,
we cheerfully can say,
Let the unknown tomorrow
bring with it what it may.

William Cowper



Some-
times we
stand there
waiting for God
to do something.
We wait. And we
wait. And to us the
Lord seems as blank and
motionless as a granite statue. *Do something!*
We plead, but it seems as if He has turned off
His hearing.

And then, just about the time we figure
our heavenly Father has lost all interest in
us—just about the time we have turned
away from our determined expectancy—He
surprises us by His grace. He takes wing
and reveals His beauty, His undying love for
us—and His flawless timing.

BEING EQUIPPED

AT ITS ROOT, the ability to discover God
in everything around us really comes down
to the condition of the heart. Is God in His
fullness a true and substantial part of our life?
Or is He just someone we meet with for an
hour or two on Sunday mornings?

"Tell the house of Jacob this, put out this
bulletin in Judah:
Listen to this, you scatterbrains, airheads,
With eyes that see but don't really look,
and ears that hear but don't really listen.
Why don't you honor me?
Why aren't you in awe before me?"

Jeremiah 5:20-22a The Message

Because God *is* gracious—in personality,
in behavior—He will let us slide by, meet-
ing with Him only occasionally at utterly

predictable times. In His grace, He gives His
children permission to live pretty much on
their own. God does not press His affections,
He does not force us into holy intimacy, but
permits us the self-injury of living *with* His
Spirit, but not *by* His Spirit.

Nothing of God is diminished by our
behavior. But *we* are.

Believers who spend little time with their
Lord are ill-equipped to discover Him in
their surroundings. Having little knowledge
of His personality, they fail to recognize Him
when He draws near; having little experience
with His behavior, they miss the evidence
when He works in their midst.

"The God who made the world and all
things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and
earth, does not dwell in temples made with
hands; nor is He served by human hands,
as though He needed anything, since He
Himself gives to all *people* life and breath
and all things; and He made from one *man*
every nation of mankind to live on all the
face of the earth, having determined *their*
appointed times and the boundaries of
their habitation, that they would seek God,
if perhaps they might grope for Him and
find Him, though He is not far from each
one of us; for in Him we live and move
and exist..."

Acts 17:24-28a

The spiritually minded believer—one
who actually *listens* to the Spirit dwelling
within—is better equipped to identify the
personality and work of God in unexpected
places at surprising times. The believer's
"sixth sense"—the Holy Spirit—quickens the
other five to detect the hand of God in the
otherwise mundane temporal occurrences all
around us.

The condition of the heart determines
whether we discover God at every turn,
or miss His handiwork and life-lessons all
together.

