

THE BEATIFIC VISION

Mt 5:8; I Cor 13:12; I Jn 3:2; Rev 22:3-4

I. THE WONDERS of the EYE

- A. From William Paley to Michael Behe scholars have been amazed at the complexity of the eye—retina has 130 million receptor cells, muscles constantly shifting to enable clear focus; 2 eyes enable depth-vision
- B. Dr Ming Wang (Harvard MD; MIT Ph.D. in physics): “The very complexity of the human eye is, in fact, the most powerful evidence of the existence of God.”
- C. Francis Crick acknowledges enduring, perhaps fathomless, mystery of eyes

II. THE WONDROUS EXPERIENCE of SEEING—keenest/finest of senses

III. THE WONDERS of the GOD-TO-BE-SEEN (i.e. THE BEATIFYING ONE TRUE GOD)

- A. Objective Reality: God as HE IS
- B. Primarily: a direct Intuition, a face-to-face beholding, understanding inasmuch as humanly possible (not as He knows Himself)
 - 1. N.T. Texts: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Mt 5:8). “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (I Cor 13:12). “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (I Jn 3:2).
 - 2. Heavenly sight “supernaturally perfected by the light of glory” beholds Him
- C. Secondly: seeing and understanding creatures as God-created manifestations of His Glory
 - 1. Mysteries accepted by faith on earth now unveiled
 - 2. Persons beloved on earth now manifest in fullness

IV. OUR WONDERFUL (e.g. ENJOYABLE) SUBJECTIVE RESPONSE

- A. At seeing Truth (“Aha, I See!” **Understanding**): joy; happiness; bliss; “enjoy Him forever;” we know/understand/see truth when we see the essence/form of existing beings, joining together our mind and reality; Aristotle: “by nature we desire to know,” and are pleased so doing
 - 1. Thus geometric propositions pleasing when shown, whether in Euclid or in cabin construction
 - 2. Personal, pleasurable epiphanies:
 - a. Study: Toynbee; Augustine; Aquinas; MacIntyre
 - b. Experience: Rome conversation; film “don’t die chief” response;
- C. At seeing Goodness (“Oh, that’s so Good” **Approbation**); joy; happiness; bliss; “enjoy Him forever;” we know/understand that being as being is good (*esse qua else best bonum*)—thus, following His creative work, “God saw that it was good.” (Gn 1:25), and we delight to see new-borns (both babies and puppies)
 - 1. Thus we too rejoice to see Natural Flourishing Creation—sunshine; wheat; racehorses; human beings
 - 2. Artifacts—cabin foundation square; Royal Gorge suspension bridge rightly built; good tools
 - 3. Artisans—artists; craftsmen; farmers; teachers; doctors; writers; homemakers; rhetoricians
 - 4. Relationships—marriage; teacher-student; friends
- D. At seeing Beauty (“Wow, that’s Amazing!” **Awe**) ecstasy; joy; happiness; bliss; “enjoy Him forever;” we delight when discerning “that which, when perceived, pleases or gives delight,” thus delightful, utterly-other, *objective* reality
 - 1. Important ingredients:
 - a. Harmony—“due proportion;” thus desire to straighten crooked pictures on wall
 - b. Integrity/perfection—realized potential; thus happy when see gifted athletes perform
 - c. Brightness—clarity, radiating the fullness of being, manifesting glory of masterpiece
 - 2. Thus we rejoice when beholding beautiful things:
 - a. Nature’s splendors: sunsets; mountains; female/male form & figure
 - b. Architectural masterpieces: Gothic cathedrals
 - c. Musical masterpieces: pop; folk; classical; Gospel
 - d. Poetic masterpieces: Psalms; Virgil; Dante; Eliot