

## **A SHOT AT PERFECTION**

Lucid dreaming, the subject of many hours spent in abstract thought, is a state wherein a person's mind realizes he is dreaming and attains the ability to manipulate the dream without lapsing consciousness. It's like a higher form of imagination, one that lets you actually see what you're visualizing as if existing right in front of you. I've had a few lucid dreams every now and then, and each is an awkwardly fulfilling experience. I'd go around doing things that I'm either too afraid to do in real life, or things that I've never had the opportunity to do, or things that simply aren't possible. I would have the satisfaction in the truth that pain, embarrassment or criticism didn't exist in this pseudo-reality, as long as I didn't want them to. Of course, I had to wake up at some point, and this just made Monday mornings all the more cruel. I say the following with the risk of coming off childish and immature, but heck, I wanted to live in those dreams. I wanted the real life to just be a lucid dream where we could just will all the war, famine, pollution, murder, and every conceivable wrong thing that's going on in our planet to vanish forever. I wanted the idealistic life of everyone saying "Please" and no one ever having to hear words that if stated here would just look like asterisks and ampersands. And beyond good manners, I wanted the life where the image of sunlight wafting through leaves, water rushing down streams, and birds flying against an untainted sky not just obtainable through the children's channel.

Maybe we're not so far off.

When God made the world, he created this flawless realm, unspoiled and undistorted. NAPA. Earth itself was an embodiment of His perfect love and omnipotence, and it was to be the ideal home for us humans, whom He intended to be without blemish as well. Our newspaper headlines remind us otherwise, with their boldfaced 48-point proclamations of murder here, bombing there, and political corruption just about everywhere else making sure that we know we don't live in *that* world. Even as preschoolers we would learn that the contrast between the should-have and the do-have is because of that legendary first sin involving the first humans and a serpent. Eating forbidden fruits apparently does not bode well for humankind.

The effects of this half-victory of evil are still very much visible in present time. That fruit is the reason behind the brokenness of our lives today, and it's why our world is not completely the paradise God had originally made. I once overheard a schoolmate questioning why God made cancer, typhoons, earthquakes, and death and I struggled to find an answer myself. I argued that these are by the devil's hand, yet I still found myself wondering why God had not simply written over these flaws in His creation.

Then it hit me.

Okay, maybe the world isn't perfect, but are we? Ever since Adam committed that first sin, we became a people of shortcomings, held back from embodying God's ultimate will until He finally saves us at the end of time. We are a broken family divided by country borders and races when all we really are is God's people. While

some of us strive to take humanity a step towards our salvation, many others pull us a mile back. It's not that God is flawed. It's just that *we* are.

In the midst of all the chaos, we take refuge in the fact that sin isn't all-powerful. It has not overpowered our faith for the simple reason that it has not conquered us. The signs are obvious, if you look for them. Just the fact that we have a conscience is proof that we still live in God's world. The devil did not replace our world with its own. Regardless of how plain wrong life can sometimes be, we still live in the world God designed, merely scarred by the effects of sin.

It is in those untouched corners of the world where this could easily be seen. These places are where sin has no grasp, and where the intended beauty of the world remains the same. Since by the first trespass, only humans were corrupted, the world itself stayed the same as long as it avoided man's destruction. In Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, he writes that Eden, the top of the Mount of Purgatory, shows the innocence of the world before sin. Hard as it is to say, living in a metropolis where "polluted" is a general adjective of "air", that innocence still exists in nature. It is this shot at perfection, this reflection of God's planned paradise that we should learn to value. Beyond (But without disregarding) practical reasons often cited by environmentalists to respect nature (Think global warming and climate change), we need to open our eyes to the pure sacredness involved. Are we really so blinded by our own attempts at perfection that we can't see it in what God Himself made?

I'd like to hope not.

People would label the love of nature as pagan. I find this far from true. Did not God create nature, and did He not ask us to love His creation? It is very unsettling that people would put forth these claims, going against the very basic lessons that are supposed to be instinctive for us Christians. *They* say we should only worship the Creator. *I* say, how can we do so if we disregard what He *created*? How do we praise an artist without admiring his works? How can we compliment the chef for a meal we refuse to call worthy of compliment itself? And finally, how can we love God when we cannot love the reason why He *is* God?

“To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival.” -Wendell Berry, 1934-Present

I could quote a million more moments of wisdom and it still wouldn't be enough to stress how true it is. It escapes me how countless people can still be so dismissive on environmental issues when acting on these is the only thing we can do to save our home. Is it simply because they fail to see that without the Earth, we wouldn't survive? Is it because they believe nature is ours to possess and that we could do whatever we want with it and not have repercussions? Or is it because they realize all these things, but are just too apathetic to help?

Too many people have the mindset that they themselves have no need to provide assistance to a movement already taken up by many. They think that the help they *don't* give wouldn't matter compared to the help others *do* give. They say a single act is meaningless and only if everybody helps would it make a difference. They would

follow it up, stating that one act is still meaningless when among everybody else's. Pshaw. An Everybody is a Nobody without the Somebodies. A person who doesn't work to achieve his potential because others are there to do it is like a runner refusing to take even a step at gun start because Ussain Bolt will take the gold for the team. That gunshot is our planet crying for help. Listen to it, because our failure to hear the sound of that metaphorical gun could just be as fatal as a real one.

Our environment has been the sole source of life for humanity. It has also been a source of hope. We see the goodness of the Lord when we see the serenity in nature. Heck, it's the source of everything on our planet. *But, isn't God the source of everything on our planet? Exactly.* He lives in nature. Our environment is a manifestation of Our Lord. The perfection in the Lord's design of our world is not just in aesthetics. The perfection is in how the world provides everything we need for our worldly lives. God designed a world so perfect that it works in harmony for us to receive His love in the forms that allow us to become his soldiers, living out His intentions. I refer once more to The Divine Comedy wherein Dante, whilst in the Sixth Circle of Inferno, states that the only true sources of wealth are nature, and the human work derived from it. How can we look on with indifference when this precious gift, the provenance of anything we might find *more* important to save, is being destroyed? Asking for a reason to save the environment is like asking for a reason to live. It's not just about what we *can* do, anymore. It's what we *should* do.

There are only two words capable of describing our environment. Save it.