

Have You Lost the Wonder?
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

“Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, the man I might have been.” John G. Whittier

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard told a parable of a wild goose. With its mates, this goose was flying northward in the springtime and happened to land in a barnyard where some tame geese were feeding. He liked the food so well that he stayed for an hour, then a day, then a week and finally stayed an entire summer.

One day in October, he heard a familiar honking sound high overhead as he recognized the call of his former companions as they winged their way southward. His eyes sparkled, his heart beat faster and he rose to join them. But alas, he had become so soft and heavy that he could rise no higher than the eaves of the barn.

This happened every spring and autumn as he tried unsuccessfully to meet his companions on high. But finally, the day came when his old companions passed over and he paid no attention to their call whatsoever. So he spent the rest of his life in a barnyard when he could have soared on high.

What a parable of how the soul can have God-given dreams and ideals; but a tragedy when they are never fulfilled. Let us not settle down in the barnyards of this world, when only eternities values can really satisfy.

We need to keep the sense of wonder that we had in days gone by. Perhaps that longing for a better life was awakened at a marriage altar, by a baby's smile or a mother's deathbed. Let us beware of the hardening of the heart that brings irreverence for the dreams of youth.

How true, for many of us are the words of Thomas Hood:
“I remember, I remember the fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance, but now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heaven than when I was a boy.”

Do you remember the flood of emotion that came over you when you were reading a book which told of some noble, unselfish life, and you said, “I want to be like that man or that woman?”

Do you recall the day when you were close to the grave, with little hope for recovery? You said in your heart that if God spared your life, you would give him your best.

Do you remember the day when you made a sacred vow before God? Do you remember how the burden of guilt was lifted from your heart? You gladly surrendered your life to God for time and eternity.

If you find yourself rather off from heaven now you can be assured that if /when you come back, you can be assured of God's welcome. Oh, marvelous, patient, kind, all-loving, all-seeking, all-forgiving love of God in Christ.

*"Prone to wonder, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it for thy courts above."*

Robert Robinson