

Publishing Editor's column

I LIVE a short distance away from an area known as the Norfolk Broads. For those who do not know it, this is an area of shallow lakes, marshes and slowly meandering rivers noted for its natural beauty and wildlife. It is also the centre of a flourishing holiday trade, with people hiring cruisers in which to tour the area, which is mostly accessible only by water. However, there is a spot near my home where it is possible to see something of this beautiful habitat by walking along a board walk, passing of an evening a number of holiday cruisers tied up for the night.

I took this walk one particularly beautiful June evening, admiring the abundant waterside vegetation, watching the water birds on the river, listening to the variety of bird song and occasionally watching a woodcock flying around overhead on its croaking display flight. I was struck by the flickering blue lights coming from the boats as holidaymakers watched their television sets, oblivious to the beauties of God's creation outside. Then, around a bend in the river, there came a replica of a Mississippi paddle boat, its presence announced by the thump of rock music, and full of passengers on some sort of outing, mostly drinking in its bar. Few on that lovely summer evening were actually enjoying the beauties of the scene around them, and we can be sure that even fewer were thinking of the One Who created all things.

It is true that television has done much to bring to people's attention the wonders of God's creation, enabling people to see the lives of all manner of creatures from every habitat on this globe. Many readers of this magazine will have enjoyed such programmes and marvelled at the wonderful works of our great Creator. It is true that they are often marred by references to evolution, but it is surprising how often the presenters are forced to use the language of design whilst carefully avoiding the obvious corollary, that design requires an intelligent designer, and there is only One Who fits this role. Valuable and fascinating though such programmes can be, however, I would suggest that they cannot really take the place of the personal contemplation of God's creation.

Psalm 104 is a very beautiful meditation upon creation. The author is not stated, but if it was David we can imagine him being inspired to write the psalm as a shepherd on the hills, able to see all around him birds and beasts, trees, brooks and valleys. He is not seeing it second-hand, as it were, described by unbelievers; still less is he distracted by the strident voices of modern entertainment. Right at the beginning he acknowledges the One Who created it all, saying: "O LORD my God, Thou art very great"; and part way through the psalm he pauses to praise God, in saying: "O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches" (v. 24). In our busy lives today we too should surely try to find time to experience for ourselves the wonders of God's creation which are near at hand in order that we might become more aware of the wisdom and greatness of the One Who made it.

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