



A new look at God's World

Imagine being given a gift by someone who loves you deeply. The box is marked "Handle with care - fragile" and you try to imagine what the box might contain that is so delicate. You open gingerly and find a world, - not a plastic globe - but a mesmerizingly real rotating planet earth exactly as in the photos taken from space.



With it is a DVD which has glorious images of the mountains, lakes, rivers, glaciers and the dazzling array of fauna and flora from the deepest seas to the highest peaks. It also comes with a book of instructions from the Maker - The Bible - a manual on caring for the earth and all its creatures. There is a greetings card with your name on it, and this verse:

"God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

You browse gently through the images and towards the end you see receding glaciers dated to the 21st c. and animals - scores of them - which are marked up as likely to be extinct by 2050. You pick up the bible and discover that every reference to the Earth, the Creator, natural world, all its creatures, - creation, fall and redemption - have been highlighted, along with plentiful guidance on living lightly and justly with the earth and its people. The book is astonishingly full of highlighted passages and phrases, punctuated throughout by Sabbath rest and renewal. The handbook has one great consistent theme - God made the world in all its splendour, power and diversity out of love. The Earth and all its creatures and humankind are bound to each other in a web of interrelationship with God. God gave the responsibility to care for His created works to humanity.

You close the book, gently lay down the planet, fold up the "Handle with care" paper and shut your eyes. You feel the desolation of the planet, the pain of the natural world, and the danger to every part of the Earth, for if the planet suffers, we suffer and we have nowhere else to go. You know it has to change. You know that you are required to be involved in the change.

Have we lost sight of ourselves as being a part of nature, part of God's creation? In our eagerness to "progress" and "develop" have we lost sight of the finite and delicate nature of the Earth and humanity's place in it? But Christ is our hope, our light into the darkness of this world. Following Christ opens new horizons and offers alternative yardsticks to the way we live. So we return to the Instructor's manual to rediscover ways of sustainable living, to restore the balance in God's Earth that we might live joyfully and simply in the garden He has lent us.

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