

REFLECTIONS

Thoughts on nature and the Christian faith - 3/26/18



There is a cave in the Hocking Hills area of southeastern Ohio that is called the Rock House. The native blackhand sandstone has been carved out over the years by water to form a fascinating structure that has been a shelter for many people over the centuries. The original inhabitants were native American tribes who lived in this region before they were evicted by the early frontiersmen. For these people this cave was a place of shelter and peace. After they left other, less scrupulous, people used this cave. It became home to thieves and bootleggers. Eventually it became known as the Robbers Roost. What was once a place of peaceful tranquility became a den of thieves. As Jo and I explored this cave we experienced the original majesty of this place, a natural cathedral that had degenerated into a house of sin. Sadly, the same thing can be said of many American churches. The people these churches are supposed to heal have been robbed. They are robbed of grace and are given an external religion instead. What God has done in Jesus is stripped away and exchanged for things that we are supposed to do. Only ritual and morality are left behind after the gospel is stolen. Any addition to the gospel, or substitution for the gospel, constitutes theft. It means that what could be good is all that is left after what is best has been taken away. Political positions and morality rules have replaced the awe, praise, and humility that should characterize followers of Jesus. Jo and I sensed the presence of God as we entered this natural cathedral. Who we are became subordinate to who God is. Whenever that sense of awe and reverence is missing in our churches we will know for sure that we too have been robbed. - John