

## REFLECTIONS

Thoughts on nature and the Christian faith - 2/4/19  
"Will it be well with you when he searches you out? Or can  
you deceive him, as one deceives a man?" - Job 13:9



During the drab winter months it's nice to see a splash of color wherever and whenever it can be found. This blue jay with its brilliant blue feathers is a case in point. I have always admired this bird, even though these jays can often be a bit bullish. But the truth is, blue jays are not really blue. We are being deceived. Ornithologists tell us that the pigment in blue jay feathers is melanin, which is brown. The blue color is caused by scattering light through modified cells on the surface of the feather barbs. So, what looks to us as blue is actually brown modified to appear blue. Quite a trick, right? We are deceived by a brown bird which appears to us as blue. Of course, it was God who created this illusion in order to bring more beauty into our world, but most other deceptions do not have such a salutary intent. We all have learned to be quite adept at deception in order to make us appear to others better than we are. The masks we wear have been in place for so long we have actually convinced ourselves that it is the mask, not what lies under the mask, that reveals the reality of who we truly are. And so, it turns out that the tricks we have so often used to deceive others have in fact turned on us and caused us to deceive ourselves. Coming out of a life of deceit is both painful and necessary for a Christian. It means admitting who we really are to God, to others, as well as to ourselves. But without this realization of what we have been hiding there can be no repentance, no conversion, no salvation. God blesses only those who come to him with empty hands and contrite hearts. Knowing God only occurs after one honestly knows oneself. We can deceive others, even ourselves, but never God. - John