

## Column - Seedtime

They don't come anymore. The internet seems to have rendered printed seed and nursery catalogues redundant. Yet, I have happy memories of them.

When I was a boy, they began arriving in January. Some such as Henry Fields were full of colored pictures of tomatoes, cucumbers, cantaloupes and apple trees; others such as R.H. Shumway were illustrated with old-fashioned-looking line drawings. Regardless of the presentation, these catalogues reminded you spring was coming. They brought expectation and excitement.

I remember as a small boy letting this excitement get the best of me. One Saturday morning, while others were sleeping late, I started our 1950 Ford tractor and drove it out to the barn and into the field and began discing the soil. There was a slight mishap, though; I got too close to a barbwire fence and got the discing apparatus entangled. I don't remember if I got in trouble or not, but at least – at this point using my imagination – I had an excuse for over-eagerness. Blame it on those seed catalogues lying around the house!

There is something reassuring about the regularity of the seasons. Words found in Genesis 8:22 come to mind: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

Whatever is going on in the world, God's order and providence continues and prevails. Lady Bird Johnson once said that during the war when she and Nellie Connally were working in their vegetable garden out behind the Johnsons' 30<sup>th</sup> Place Washington home, “We hardly knew a war was going on.”

But beyond the present order, seedtime and harvest points us forward to an even more wonderful world, a world spoken of in both

Romans 8:19-23 and Revelation 21. There is coming a time when the veil between earth and heaven will be pulled back and all things put to rights. Paradise lost will be paradise regained.

We are not given a crystal-clear picture of what God's renewed and restored cosmos will look like, nor exactly what roll the redeemed will play in new creation. Rather, to quote British theologian N.T. Wright, we have a series of signposts pointing into a mist. Even so, from all we are told in scripture, all that is beautiful and lovely, praiseworthy and true, in our present world will be present and magnified.

Those illustrations found in seed catalogues along with the actual gardens which come forth from the seeds ordered from these books can – if we have eyes to see – point to God and His future for us. As we sink our fingers into the soil of this present world, may we glimpse the wonder of God's coming world.

*O HEAVENLY Father, who hast filled the world with beauty;  
Open, we beseech thee, our eyes to behold thy gracious hand in all thy  
works; that rejoicing in thy whole creation, we may learn to serve thee  
with gladness; for the sake of him by whom all things were made, thy  
Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer)*

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