

# APPROPRIATE FOR ANY BLOSSOM DAY

(Continued from page 1.)

with the infinite Maker, one can "see" in and hear the music of the ancient wireless of the stars in their ceaseless praises, as John Keats wrote in the *Silent Trance*.

"Silence of stars, magnificently still,  
Yet ever chanting their  
Creator's skill."

The first argument that Paul laid down in his system of God's revelation of loving salvation for all who violated the eternal law involved all who might even question this truth, by holding it "in unrighteousness." As he declared in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans: "that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of the world since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity." Consequently they could have no excuse for not glorifying him as God. Then it came about that their thankless hearts "became vain in their reasonings," and settled down in senseless spiritual darkness that led them to grope about in idol worship.

Many of our defenders of the faith have been too slow in calling upon the natural sciences to confirm and even explain the Bible. The works of the Creator are the Word of the Father must agree, for the two are but opposite expressions of infinite love for man. Nature and grace may appear opposite, but they never oppose each other. With all the confusion of the present age this agreement remains so clear that there is no excuse for not finding God through his natural manifestations. The immediate knowledge of God's relation to all creation is not dependent upon intuition alone, for human consciousness, taking the form of dependable assurances, introduce our stubborn reasons to the necessary original cause of all things.

The close thinking naturalists have declared that there was an original worker, as the world-builder and man's maker; but some of them have contended that this fact would never establish the greater fact that he was the self-existent God. However, the very necessity of such a creator of man with all his spiritual and mental faculties demands the self-existence of a personal God. No other theory could establish any satisfactory conclusion as to the origin of man. The Bible repeatedly appeals to the works of God in nature to illustrate his power and goodness.

Here natural theology and the Christian revelation converse. The Bible declares: heaven and earth and man have an almighty maker. The latter reveals him who declares himself to be that very God, Almighty. These two factors belong to our study of God's revelation to himself and his program for the happiness of man, and they must be allowed to harmonize as originally designed.

Man's unperturbed natural faculties tell him of God and how he speaks through his handiwork. It requires only simple meditation and a star-tit heaven for the poet David to exclaim—

"When I consider thy heavens,  
The work of thy fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which  
thou hast ordained;  
What is man, that thou art  
mindful of him?  
And the son of man, that thou  
visitest him?"

As a sample of our modern wit, mention is made of the stanza by Mrs. H. B. Stowe: "Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh, When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee; Farther than morning, lovelier than daylight, Down the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee."

These evidences caught the poetic soul of Joyce Kilmer, whom America loaned to the nations in their death grip. Before his devout and penetrating mind left him, he wrote a gem of humble thoughtfulness, in his tree poem, that begins and ends: "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree. . . . Poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree." With the new birth of freedom, that nature receives with the returning spring, we are reminded of the exquisite lines of Matthew in *Isaiah's* Surprise, where the lily and the hyacinth teach a great lesson of scientific faith—

"A little bulb, uncouth,  
Rugged, and rusty brown,  
Have you some dew of youth?  
Have you a crimson gown?  
Plant me and see  
What I shall be—  
God's fine surprise  
Before your eyes!"

No student ever came to his final conclusions in a better way than did Saint Paul, nor after a more remarkable revolution in the processes of his thinking. After he had received unmistakable evidences that God could take the things of nature and demonstrate his spiritual powers through them, this apostle showed how Abraham obtained his immutable evidence direct from God whom he did not at all understand. But that inquiring pioneer believed him of whom it was written, that he could swear by none greater than himself, for there was none greater.

The Athenians readily perceived the force of Paul's argument regarding this "unknown God," whom he set before them. He reasoned regarding "the God that made the world and all things therein," and that "he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands." And while he encourages man's cooperative service he does not need any help in the sense of his limited ability to bring about his final consummation. For "he himself liveth all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the faces of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitations," as these nature worshippers also believed, and that in him they had their very existence.

It requires the whole man to understand God's messages in nature. There was no deeper solicitude in the instructions that Moses gave Israel than that they should not forget Jehovah as the giver of all good things. He cautioned them saying: "Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods and worship them." So also the cultured Greeks substituted nature worship so that spiritual things became their stumbling block and seemed foolish to them. Paul gave them the eternal reason in his letter to the church at Corinth: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The natural appetites must be held in check by the higher spiritual ambitions, and as one seeks to know the source of all good he is given the inner voice that tells him he is made of God. As the little crippled girl who was taken to New York City to see the wonders there for the first time. Upon seeing the great ocean, she exclaimed: "How wonderful! No body but God could have made that."

The innocence of that poor little girl enabled her to see the hand of God in nature. It is said indeed that people grow up in their lust for things and grow away from their maker. This idolatry of greed for good crops, forgetful of the giver, can be seen too frequently. I have seen it in the lower Skagit valley. It might seem excusable for a family that had been strangled in a desert place by the error of some land agent, to cry out: "Again no rain, but always killing frosts, for these years; is this the place God has forgotten?" But when men, who have harvested one hundred and fifty bushels of oats to the acre for a quarter of a century, when men will curse God because they miss a few dozen loads, this is rank idolatry. We are sure God hates such selfishness for which there can be no excuse.

Such turning to nature worship is so subtle and so awful that the preacher must continually sound some alarm against ingratitude. The Giver gives to all alike, but the abuse of this liberality has worked a world of evil. His ancient caution has been sounded in every land by the ways God speaks to man: "When full, beware, lest ye forget and deny your Maker, and carve out idols that may be suggested by your own lust." Our text is anathema against such human trifling.

Nature can never be trusted apart from its author, any more than man can be trusted. It is as Bryant wisely said: "She speaks a varied language." Scholarship left to its exclusive mentality can not arrive at any satisfactory information, though it be that of Brahma, of Plato, or Swedenborg. There must be a spiritual testimony, as well as a material one. It was Bacon who organized science with a belief in divine revelation, though he confined his system to the material sciences which tended toward rationalistic and material thinking. It was Emerson who found the key to this confusion that existed among sciences apart from a frank acceptance of God's essential part; he said, "Nature always wears the colors of the spirit." So whatever the spirit of the student, and the conditions about him, nature becomes conditions about him, nature becomes conditions about him.

When a man's ears are out of tune he is closed to the only voice that will make him to be at home with God in nature. He must be able to open his soul to the voices of God in his many forms of nature, or remain a stranger to the best of nature about him. How perfectly foolish it was of Comte to say, "The heavens declare the glory of the astronomer, not of God." Darwin was so interested in the origin of man that he lost his natural faculty for music, and Carlyle declared that to him the sky was "a sad sight." If those great students had been in harmony with the Maker of the world of sciences they would have learned a more complete story of creation. But natural theology, as well as the sciences, has evolved only erroneous theories. The climax of such thinking was pictured by Browning in the character of Caliban which he depicted to show the monstrous god evolved by human thinking.

It was one who knew the very heart of God who best told who made the world. For it was David, whose heart was in tune with the Infinite, who wrote the great anthem of nature in its ascriptions of praise to the Maker: "The heavens are telling the glory of God; And the firmament sheweth his handiwork."

All the days—a river of speech, Every night breathes out knowledge.

Perhaps there has never been a poem written that presents more of the detail of the worshipful attitude of nature, or more of the religious significance, than that choice production of Whittier, called "Nature's Reverence." The entire poem is worthy of careful study for devotional purposes. Certain stanzas are selected to suggest the true spirit of nature:

"The harp at nature's advent,  
Has never ceased to play;  
The song the stars of morning  
—sung  
Has never died away.

And prayer is made, and praise is given,  
By all things near and far;  
The ocean looketh up to heaven,  
And mirrors every star.

It's waves are kneeling on the strand,  
As kneels the human knee,  
Their white locks bowing on the sand,  
The priesthood of the sea.

The blue sky is the temple's arch,  
It's transept earth and air,  
The music of it's stately march,  
The chorus of a prayer.

So nature keeps the reverent frame  
With which her years began,  
And all her signs and voices  
—shame  
The prayerless heart of man.

Whatever revelations science may disclose hereafter, and whatever eternal truth Revelation may establish more clearly, there must never be the attitude of antagonism displayed that marked the religious quest for scientific truth in the past. The works of God and His Word are in absolute harmony and should be left to vindicate each other. When the interpreter of nature finds his final key facts and the translator of the Bible so adjusts his conclusions as to correctly express the mind of the Infinite, each shall find how near of kin they are and how greatly God knew his creative plans. We may well go back to John Milton, the poet of the eternal, for his stately lines that present another phase of this great truth—

"These are thy glorious works,  
Parent of Good,  
Almighty! Thine this universe  
frame,  
Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how  
wonderous, then!  
Unspeaking, who sittest above  
the heavens  
To us invisible, or dimly seen  
In these thy lowest works; yet  
these declare  
Thy goodness beyond thought,  
and power divine."

Science and faith should begin to draw more closely together because they are vitally concerned with the same setting up of the new order; which is no other than that old order of God's eternal power and divinity. But there is another very serious reason. This serious demand for all alert students of facts and of faith to work together is that destructive radical miasma that is spreading down over all lands. This senseless, fearless disregard of all existing order seeks to blast the foundations of all natural as well as spiritual certainties. While one may say the foundations of God stand secure forever, and that in every age of destructive fire and criticism aid has arisen from unexpected sources, now seems to be the day for all who hope in the Almighty to associate themselves. In schools and in churches, in business and in society, we must check the high-powered disregard that is spreading down like poison gas upon our youth.

Science recently called upon faith to help defeat the military iconoclast and together they saved the world from complete wreckage by the World war. Today less seen wars are raging and more damaging results must come upon us if these giants of faith and science fail to combine in a new program of recognized amity and common agreement. More than ever it would seem that now is the time for reason and religion

to recognize that the entire world is nothing other than God's infinite expression of His love and generosity to man.

The present abandon of restrictive laws, even of human welfare, and the selfish appropriation of every possible advantage, by mature men and women, as well as by the young, constitute the really awful danger of our times. It is essentially the denial of the God-consciousness in his works of bounty and grace, and is as idolatrous as is disclosed by any of the pages of ancient history. Unless this mad race for radical and selfish advantage is successfully met soon we have a very discouraging outlook for our youth in the days of their maturity and leadership. In their zeal for a new form in which to express their thoughts misguided youth have already veered from the simple paths of faith that saves and brings the faithful into the possession of the manifold laws of nature. And they have begun to blaze out new trails that must lead them to ruin, and opposition to Him in whom we live and move and have our being."

The reign of terror in France was the Titanic illustration of the truth of this underlying principle we are urging. Men had become enthusiastic in their conceit as a lion that has drawn blood for the first time. In their lust for selfish liberty they sacrificed every rational principle and knew no love that might thwart their fiendish purposes. They had gone mad for liberty and readily caught up lust and license and debauch as harlots of infidelity and hugged them to their ruin. They were like Sampson in yielding to the flattery of their success, but they put out their own eyes, and eventually ground in a terrible mill of justice, and went down with the common ruin of that reign of godlessness. In any age it is a calamity for any considerable number of people to put God out of their plans, and this is one of the worst ways of forgetting God.

All who set out to discover new things in nature stumble in the darkness without the Word of God as their lamp and guide. As John Wesley wrote of Madam Guyon, "The grand source of all her mistakes was this, the not being guided by the written Word." It is but a step from the rejection of the Word of God to the denial of any rational interest in the universe. When one becomes riotous in his egotistical quest for some new independent theory in his worship of things, it is a very natural thing for him to cry out, there need be no God. In the after years Madam Guyon came to realize her path had not only taken her away from God, but also from the proper understanding of the things about her; and in her banishment she was awakened. As she wrote:—

"My country is in every clime;  
I can be calm and free from care  
On any shore, since God is there.

"While place we seek, or place we shun  
The soul finds happiness in none;  
But with a God to guide our way  
'Tis equal joy, to go or stay."

In our subject of finding God in the natural forms about us, we find some intimate and tender bearings on our happiness as we study nature at short range. If it be true that a man is best known in his inner home life; then we should look for the influences of his yard and garden upon him. If it be true that a man who never smiles is a liability to society, so is he who can not walk in the garden alone with God and talk intelligently with the Infinite. Our thought was beautifully expressed by George Herbert, as he wrote of his much loved garden.—

"One is nearer God's heart in a garden  
Than any where else on earth."  
It is said of some people that they are possessed of a rare faculty of understanding others. It is a wonderful trait of spiritual character to be able to understand people; and it is usually found with a certain class. Those

who have an understanding trust in God are most likely to reveal the faculty of understanding people. There is a reason for Bishop Quale being so universally enjoyed. He shines still with that understanding of nature that makes him a universal brother. But this is possible because he had such a trustful understanding of God. He saw everything as "God's out of doors," and scintillated his thanks about the prairie at sunrise or the burrowing prairie dog.

There is no plight more pitiable than the state of soul of those who work upon nature and yet refuse to be introduced to the God of nature. There would be no exodus from the farm if more farmers would try to understand the message of the open country as did Elizabeth B. Browning, in her lines.—

"The foolish fears of what may happen  
I cast them all away.  
Among the scented grass,  
Among the new-mown hay;  
Among the husking of the corn  
Where drowsy poppies nod,  
Where ill thoughts die and good are born,  
Out in the fields with God."

The dean of engineering in a great university said that those who apply themselves to that department of science are seldom agnostic in their relation to God. They see so many great and marvelous phases of nature that are beyond all their understanding that they are forced to believe in a rational Creator, for they can not conceive of the earth coming by chance. Students who bury themselves in the theories of mere human philosophy may forget God, but those who must struggle to surmount chasms and tunnel mountains do not. How strange it seems for any to seek the order of plant life and yet contend that there is no Author of these marvelous forms! There is no rational unbelief, as a knowing author wrote.—

"There is no unbelief;  
Whoever plants a seed beneath  
the sod  
And waits to see it push away the  
cloud—  
He trusts in God.

"There is no unbelief;  
For thus by day and night unconsciously  
The heart lives by the faith the  
lips deny.  
God knoweth why."  
Every agnostic and troubled doubter needs the heart of living things to infuse better life and wisdom into him. As Maurice Hewlett wrote, "garden-making is as near as a man may get to the divine functions." However, it requires the reverent mind and a genuine appreciation with the ambition to bring nature to her best expressions. It was with some such thought that the writer rated garden-making, for in the same sentence he declared it must be properly allied to architecture. It was Thomas Brown, the Manxman, who wrote of his rational faith in the necessary Creator.—

"A garden is a loveable thing,  
God wot;  
Rose plot,  
Fringed pool,  
Ferned grot,  
The very school  
Of Peace; and yet the fool contends that  
God is not!  
Not God in gardens, when the eve is cool?  
Nay, but I have a sign:  
'Tis very sure God walks in mine."  
From all the known facts of God's concern for us in the material world, we go forward into

the unknown, by faith. We have already conquered the last enemy of life when we begin to live in Christ. He is ever giving his assurances in the springtime, in the sprouting grain and the bursting buds, that though a man die he shall live again. While we get positive spiritual evidences through faith in the risen Savior, yet we have helpful analogy in the transitions in nature. We shall not perpetrate the fallacy of putting forth buds as a direct proof of our immortality. It is a great error to wave a bouquet at Easter time to convince serious audiences. These recitations of spring growth can never fully resemble our resurrection, but they tell us of God's mighty hand in nature. All the world of created things struggles to give adequate testimony, of its kind, that God is the author of the resurrection. And He who gives the seasons their new birth of flowers, and cares for the birds and the lambs, can awaken mankind into the resurrection life.

It would seem that God staked His all for the awakening of self-centered souls in His revelations of the resurrection powers. For there seems to be no hope of winning any man to faith in Christ who boastfully continues to deny the voices employed to bring him to the knowledge of our bountiful Creator, especially those voices that sing the glories of the resurrection of spring life. It is suggestive that those whose ears are shut to nature's pleadings are themselves soon forgotten. Men must have faith, and faithless men are set aside. We are ever treasuring the memory of John of Damascus for his eternal Easter hope, as we sing.—

"Tis the spring of souls today;  
Christ hath burst his prison.  
From the frost and gloom of death  
Light and life are given.  
All the winter of our sins,  
Long and dark, are flying  
From his light to whom we give  
Thanks and praise undying.  
Everything that really has  
breath does praise the Lord. The  
motive of every flower is to glorify God, and the only adequate response from man is his best acclaim of gratitude. As Robert Grant wrote.—

"Thy bountiful care what tongue  
can recite?  
It breathes in the air, it shines  
in the light,  
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
And sweetly distills in the dew  
and in the rain."  
William Cowper approached the authorship of material things in the right way, with an open mind that could hear God speak to him. In the song beginning, "God moves in a mysterious way," he gives the key to all that stubborn barrier that shuts so many from the glorious thing of finding God through his natural providences. It is the evil heart of unbelief.—

"Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan His works in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain."  
Nature has but one ministry, and that is to clarify its maker, and everywhere her visible forms declare the providences of God, and these manifestations solicit our unbelief with reverent obedience. There must be harmony between man's heart and that of the Almighty to catch the harmonies of nature. It is here where poets are born. While some prose souls can satisfy themselves that there is no message from God in the forms about them, no soul has been able to express itself in poetic lines in a masterful way without awakening to this mysterious oneness.

God is in the world manifesting His love and power in the forms of nature. That stately soul of Bryant could see the guiding hand that directed the waterfowl.—

"There is a power whose care  
Teaches thy way along the  
pathless coast,—  
The desert and illimitable air,  
Lone wandering, but not lost."  
"He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless  
sky the certain flight—  
In the long way that I must tread  
alone,  
Will lead my steps aright."

At this season of the year when so many are seeking health and pleasure in the open roadways and the forests must be remembered that this most worshipful hours under the mighty trees of his favorite locality. One can not read Bryant's Forest Hymn with any serious thought without craving the same understanding of God's revelation of himself in his handiwork. After a stately account of this theme, he says.—

"Thou hast not left  
Thyself without a witness, in  
these shades,  
Of Thy perfections. Grandeur,  
strength, and grace  
Are here to speak of Thee.  
"My heart is awed within me,  
When I think  
Of the great miracle that still  
goes on,  
In silence, 'round me—the perpetual work  
Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed  
Forever."

After meditating upon God's power in the tempest and in death, and the milder forms of his works, he brings a good conclusion for all who want to discover the hand of God in nature—

"Be it ours to meditate  
In these calm shades thy milder majesty,  
And to the beautiful order of thy works,  
Learn to conform the order of our lives."

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**LOOK AHEAD, IS PLEA OF TREE ASSOCIATION**  
(Continued from page 1.)

stration forest to Syracuse university. The primer has been translated into Italian by the forestry association of that nation, and millions of trees have been given by the American organization to help reforest the battle areas of France.

"European countries long have established forest policies," Pack said in his "Forest Week" statement. "Lord Lovat of the British forestry commission has visited this country on a tour of investigation. They are all looking a hundred years ahead, and so must we in the United States, because lumber is the cornerstone of all industry."

"Census figures just given out show our population gain to be about a million a year. That means that there must be a continuous flow of forest products all the time. Our national safety depends upon it."

"Our idle land must be put to work. We are helping to put the battle areas to work again. Great Britain is alive to the situation. The biggest attempt to reach the coming generation has just been completed in the distribution of the forestry primer which tells the economic importance of trees. The census figures are a warning we must heed if we are to hold our economic supremacy."

## Peasants Foresee Very Mild Summer This Year

Berlin.—AP.—The profusion with which new shoots are growing on pussy willow trees this spring is regarded by peasants in the lowlands as a heaven-sent omen that the summer will be comparatively free from heavy rains and floods which last year destroyed crops worth millions of dollars.

The pussy willow in many parts of Germany, as in Europe as a whole, supplants the palm branch in Catholic church services on Palm Sunday. Blooming twigs which have been blessed in church are covered the year around much as the palm.

Stop, look, and listen to our appeal. If you are not absolutely satisfied with your laundry problem, call 165. Hand work our specialty. (4)

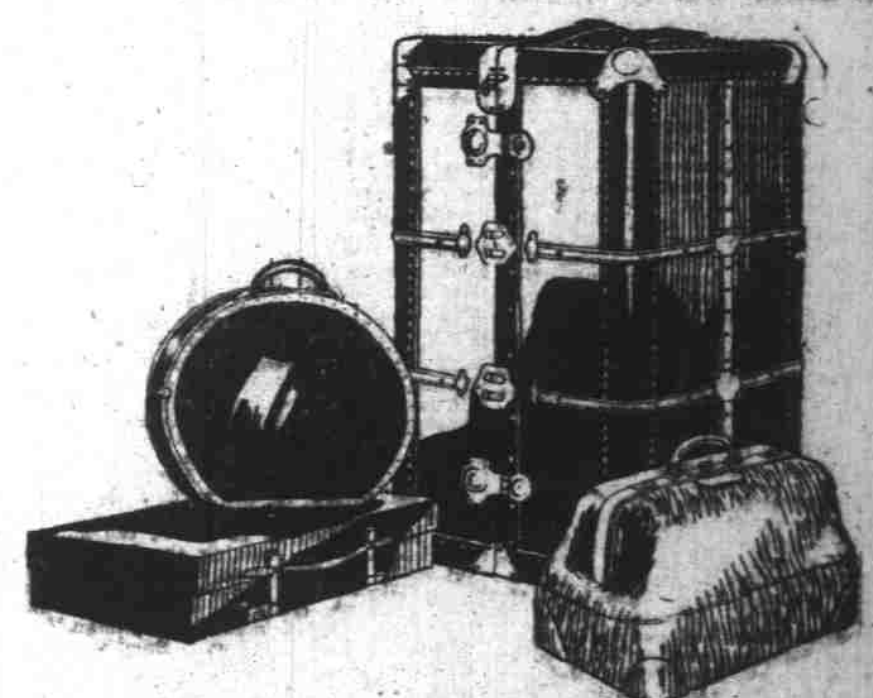
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