

But let him that heareth remember that, as has already been hinted, the special blessing of redemption was far from being intended to narrow down the minds of men, as seems often virtually to be taught, and make them blind to the blessings and bounties of Creation; but that the whole Creation, as replaced now upon the bosom of God by the grand act of redemption, was destined to be regarded by those who have the eye to see, as again very good; as the germ and bud of the new Creation, of the new heavens, and of the new earth, in the midst of which regenerate human spirits are to live and move.

If we are really the offspring of God, habitual recognition of God in all natural phenomena is without doubt a thing due to him, and by withholding it we rob him. We defraud also ourselves.

"I have often been asked," wrote a distinguished artist, lately deceased, "the secret of the life which has been, it is said, noticed in my landscapes. It is very simple. The Creator is to me a LIVING ONE, and as all is intimately connected in our natures, my work participates in the worship rendered by my soul to the author of all beauty and truth."\* Thus, in a great degree, it might be with ourselves. More full of grace do the fruit of the lips and the operation of the hands become, as we more habitually discern and unfeignedly enjoy, wherever we look—

"The light that never was, on sea or land,  
The consecration and the poet's dream."

That man loses much of the zest of life who has not learned to gaze upon the common objects and products around him, as the work of his heavenly

Father's hand. He that is wise and duly instructed in the things of God's kingdom, discerns there divine laws written, which, like the code more formally revealed, he desires to appreciate and obey; and more than this, to have them taught, and himself diligently to teach them, to his children, and literally to talk of them when he sitteth in the house, when he walketh by the way, when he lieth down, and when he riseth up.†

How completely in harmony with the line of thought suggested, is the *Benedicite*, or hymn, "O all ye works of the Lord," which for so many hundreds of years has been part of our Morning Service. During the first quarter or half of the present century, this hymn was seldom said or sung, probably from some narrow notion of the time that it was unspiritual, inasmuch as it busied itself only with the visible phenomena of earth and sea and sky, and sought motives there for blessing and praise to the name of the Most High. Since the beginning of the century, however, the phenomena of earth and sea and sky have been studied with very great minuteness and accuracy, with very great intelligence, and that by large numbers of persons. More vividly and truly, than perhaps in any previous age, has it consequently been seen, that in all these things there is nothing common or unclean, but rather a series of manifestations of the glory, the wisdom, the love, the marvellous power, the almightiness of God. It is fitting therefore, and in harmony with the age in which we live, that this hymn should again be sung. Its frequent use derogates nothing from the spirituality of our worship; it, on the con-

\* The same artist, Calame, late of Menton, in France, again writes: "I should be happy if I thought my portraits of the *Grand Alps* could cause the public to say that 'the heavens declare the glory of God.' In painting the *Harvest*, I sung in my soul the words of my old psalm—

*Et cette richesse champêtre,  
Par de muets accords,  
Célébrer l'auteur de son être  
Qui repand ses trésors."*

† The following characteristic sentences are from a recent letter of Thomas Carlyle's: "For many years it has been one of my constant regrets that no schoolmaster of mine had a knowledge of natural history, so far at least, as to have taught me the grasses that grow by the wayside, and the little winged or wingless neighbours that are continually meeting me with a salutation which I cannot answer, as things are. Why didn't somebody teach me the constellations, too, and make me at home in the starry heavens which are always overhead, and which I don't half-know to this day? I love to prophesy that there will come a time when, not in Edinburgh only, but in all Scottish and European towns and villages, the schoolmaster will be strictly required to possess these two capabilities (neither Greek nor Latin more strict!) and that no ingenuous denizen of this universe be thenceforward debarred from his right of liberty in these two departments, and doomed to look on them as if across grated fences all his life."