



**F**INALLY, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. (Philippians 4:8-9)

*I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.*

Second Article of the Apostles' Creed

This is both a hymn for Catechism as well as for adult choir. Like all true hymns, it reinforces doctrinal truth and biblical counsel in verse and music. The author of the hymn is Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander (April 1818 – 12 October 1895) of Dublin, Ireland – also author of *There is a Green Hill Far Away* and *Once in Royal David's City*. The tune is one evoking the light joy of a child, *ROYAL OAK*, by Martin Shaw. I do not recall having written on this hymn previously, however, there are many things that slip my memory of late.

### **All Things Bright and Beautiful**

Refrain:

All things bright and beautiful,  
all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful:  
the Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,  
each little bird that sings,  
God made their glowing colors,  
and made their tiny wings.  
(Refrain)

The purple-headed mountains,  
the river running by,  
the sunset and the morning  
that brightens up the sky.  
(Refrain)

The cold wind in the winter,  
the pleasant summer sun,  
the ripe fruits in the garden:  
God made them every one.  
(Refrain)

God gave us eyes to see them,  
and lips that we might tell  
how great is God Almighty,  
who has made all things well.  
(Refrain)

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful: the Lord God made them all.* Any who cannot see the beauty in all Creation cannot see God either, for His character and nature are in evidence in all things created. The tiny ant has a purpose in cleaning the earth of decay. The vulture, too, has his designated role, mandated by Heaven, to cleanse the earth of carrion. The spider is small and unobtrusive, yet it gains access to where many of higher order are not able: *28 The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.* Proverbs 30:28 All these along with the butterfly, the peacock and the rose God made for its place and purpose. We need not be elementary catechists to appreciate the overarching meaning of the lines of this beautiful hymn. We need oft reminding of the grandeur, majesty and beauty in God's Creation.

*Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings, God made their glowing colors, and made their tiny wings.* The unfurling petals of a rose express the same revealing beauty of God's Word as we grow in knowledge and wisdom thereby. My wife and I sit on our back garden patio each morning before sunrise and listen to some of the most sublime music, sung by tiny birds and larger ones. The soft and tender voice of the dove calling to his mate is too wonderful to describe, and it reminds me of my first encounter with the wide panorama of nature when spending summers at my grandmother's (Granny Mae's) farm. The magic has not died in all those years. The propagators of false science who boast of great knowledge of life and death matters, of global and cataclysmic weather shifts, are still unable to make a tiny gnat to live; or to forecast, with 100% accuracy, the chance of rain in two days hence. None can yet make a flower of the splendor of a lily to grow from a seed to a blossom. *Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* (Matthew 6:28-30)

*The purple-headed mountains, the river running by, the sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky.* These are remarkable word-pictures that open our imaginations to behold the contrasts in tiny things of beauty to the enormous landscape of the earth with her snow-crowned mountain peaks, her lush green river valleys, and the tremendous mysteries of the sea-scape. What glorious colors of the sunrise that would put *Van Gogh* to shame for scheme and color.

*The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun, the ripe fruits in the garden: God made them every one.* How one relishes the coming months of winter when temperatures climb to intolerable levels in August; and then, in the bleak of winter, we can only imagine the pleasant days of a warm summer and a walk in the forest. My wife is in love with God's natural provision. She awakens often at 4 A.M. in late spring to go out to her cherished garden to see that all is well with the tender blades of fruit emerging from the ground there. The growth of such plants mimic the manner of operation of the God through the agency of His Holy Ghost. The seed contains life in itself – a tiny speck of the larger seed – a spark of its tiny heart. The seed is planted in faith that it will grow for the soil and environment have been made ready for it. The seed of life is much like the Gospel – full of life. When planted in the warm soil, the seed abides silently alone and in darkness. The gardener cannot see its germination. Many who have shared the Gospel with an abject sinner may believe his words have fallen on fallow ground since there is no immediate amendment of character. But there comes a day when the Holy Ghost who planted the seed in the first instant, begins to draw that life out of its incubation and cause it to seek more light. One day, the blade suddenly appears above the ground on its search for the light of the sun. All was done in the beginning in total darkness just as the beginning of God's Creation. *In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth; And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.* Each of us began in darkness before the Holy Ghost moved upon the waters of our heart and drew us to Him.

*God gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell how great is God Almighty, who has made all things well.* God did not stop creating after seven days. He works His wonderful miracles of Creation in the birth of every child as well as every animal. The flora of the mountain heights are also of His recent creation. It is true that God gave us eyes to see, and ears to hear; but how often those eyes and ears are spiritually blind and deaf to His wonderful voice and presence. Just as Hagar and Mary Magdalene were blinded by the tears of their sorrow, so are many of us blind to the wonderful plan of God being worked out through our trials, tribulations, and even victories. He does all things well!