

1. Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that all people are without excuse. Romans 1:20
2. But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. Job 12:7-10
3. For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. Psalm 50:10-12
4. The divine art that is manifested in the structure of the world is not only to be seen in the sun, the moon and the stars; it operates also on earth on a reduced scale. The hand of the Lord has not neglected the bodies of the smallest animals – and still less their souls – because each one of them is seen to possess some feature that is personal to it, for instance, the way it protects itself.

Origen (185 – 254). Commentary on Psalm 1, 3 (p. 12, 1081), in *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, by Oliver Clement. New City Press, 1995, p. 217.
<http://www.orth-transfiguration.org/resources/library/writings-of-the-saints/origen-185-254/>

5. Nor has the hand of the Lord neglected the plants of the earth, each of which has some detail bearing the mark of the divine art, whether it be the roots, the leaves, the fruits or the variety of species.

Origen (185 – 254). Commentary on Psalm 1, 3 (p. 12, 1081), in *The Roots of Christian Mysticism* by Oliver Clement. New City Press, 1995, p. 217.
<http://www.orth-transfiguration.org/resources/library/writings-of-the-saints/origen-185-254/>

6. For once it has been granted that the Scriptures have God himself for their author, we must necessarily believe that the person who is asking questions of nature, and the person who is asking questions of the Scriptures, are bound to arrive at the same conclusions.

Origen (185 – 254). Commentary on Psalm 1, 3 (p. 12, 1081), in *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, by Oliver Clement. New City Press, 1995, p. 217.
<http://www.orth-transfiguration.org/resources/library/writings-of-the-saints/origen-185-254/>

7. Believe me, you will find more lessons in the woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you what you cannot learn from masters.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153). *Epistola CVI*, sect. 2; translation from Edward Churton, in *The Early English Church* ([1840] 1841) p. 324

8. And what is a merciful heart? He replied: The burning of the heart unto the whole creation, man, fowls and beasts, demons and whatever exists so that by the recollection and the sight of them the eyes shed tears on account of the force of mercy which moves the heart by great compassion. Then the heart becomes weak and it is not able to bear hearing or examining injury or any insignificant suffering of anything in the creation. And therefore even in behalf of the irrational beings and the enemies of truth and even in behalf of those who do harm to it, at all times he offers prayers with tears that they may be guarded and strengthened ; even in behalf of the kinds of reptiles, on account of his great compassion which is poured out in his heart without measure, after the example of God.

St. Isaac the Syrian (b. 640). *Mystic Treatises LXXIV* pgs. 507, 508.
https://archive.org/stream/IsaacOfNinevehMysticTreatises/isaac_of_nineveh_mystical_treatises_divu.txt

9. Creation is a bible whose letters and syllables are the particular aspects of all creatures and whose words are the more universal aspects of creation.

St. Maximus the Confessor (580 - 662). *Ambiguum 10*, p. 91, 1128-1129a. <http://www.bookofnature.org/library/OBN/hist.html>

10. Every creature has a special beauty proper to its nature, and when a man ponders the matter well, these creatures are a cause of intense admiration and enthusiastic praise of their all-powerful Maker. For He has wrought them all in His wisdom. ... He creates them tiny in body, keen in sense, and full of life, so that we may feel a deeper wonder at the agility of the mosquito on the wing than at the size of a beast of burden on the hoof, and may admire more intensely the works of the smallest ants than the burdens of the camels.

St. Augustine (354 – 430). *The Literal Meaning of Genesis, Book III, Ch. 14.22*, in *Ancient Christian Writers Series*, Issue 41, ed. John Hammond Taylor, Paulist Press, 1982, p. 90. <http://www.orth-transfiguration.org/st-augustine-354-430/>

11. Reading about nature is fine, but if a person walks in the woods and listens carefully, he can learn more than what is in books, for they speak with the voice of God.

George Washington Carver (1864 - 1943). From George Washington Carver National Monument.

12. “I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting system, through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in.”

George Washington Carver (1864 - 1943). Brochure from George Washington Carver National Monument.

13. ...to me, my dear young friends, nature in its varied forms are the little windows through which God permits me to commune with Him, and to see much of his glory, majesty, and power by simply lifting the curtain and looking in.

George Washington Carver (1864 - 1943). National Park Service. George Washington Carver National Monument *Trail Quotes*

14. Whatever you see, take care to consider it well, and you will not see it in vain. You shall find books and sermons everywhere, in the land and in the sea, in the earth and the skies, and you shall learn from every living beast and bird and fish and insect, and from every useful or useless plant that springs out of the ground. We may also gather rare lessons from things that we do not like. I am sure that Solomon did not in the least degree admire thorns and thistles, but he nevertheless found instruction in them. Wisdom has a way of gathering grapes of thorns and figs of nettles, and she distills good from herbs which in themselves are noisome and evil. Do not fret, therefore, over thorns, but get good out of them. Do not begin stinging yourself with nettle; grip them firmly, and then use them for your soul’s health. Trials and troubles, worries and turmoils, little frets and disappointments, may all help you if you will. Like Solomon, see and consider them well – look upon them, and receive instruction.

Charles Spurgeon (1834 - 1892). <http://www.bookofnature.org/library/ngb.html>

15. Believe one who knows: You will find something greater in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from masters.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 - 1153). *Letter to Heinrich Murdach*, quoted in *The Letters of Bernard* 106:107

16. Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a great book: the very appearance of created things. Look above you! Look below you! Note it. Read it. God, whom you want to discover, never wrote that book with ink. Instead He set before your eyes the things that He had made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that? Why, heaven and earth shout to you: “God made me!”

St. Augustine (354 – 430). Sermon 126.6 in the Angelo Mai collection, *Miscellanea Agustiniana* 1:355-68, ed. G. Moran (Rome, 1930), in Vernon Bourke, trans. *The Essential Augustine*, Hackett, Indianapolis, 1974, p.123. <http://www.orth-transfiguration.org/st-augustine-354-430/>

17. “The earth is full of Thy creation.” Of what creation of Thine is the earth full? Of all trees and shrubs, of all animals and flocks, and of the whole of the human race; the earth is full of the creation of God. We see, now, read, recognize, praise and in these we preach of Him; yet we are not able to praise respecting these things, as fully as our heart doth abound with praise after the beautiful contemplation of them.

St. Augustine (354 – 430). *Expositions on the Book of Psalms. Commentary on Psalm CIV.24*, No. 32, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* Vol. XII, p. 517, ed. Philip Schaff, Eerdmans, 1989. <http://www.orth-transfiguration.org/st-augustine-354-430/>

18. Attend to this, beloved. Who has arranged the limbs of a flea and a gnat that they should have their proper order, life, motion? Consider one little creature, even the very smallest. Consider the order of its limbs and the animation of its life and how it moves. How does it avoid death, love life, seek pleasure, avoid pain, exert diverse senses, vigorously use movements suitable to itself? Who gave the sting to the mosquito for it to suck blood with? How narrow is the stinger whereby it sucks? Who arranged all of this? If you are amazed at these smallest of things, praise Him who is great.

St. Augustine (354 – 430). *Commentary on Psalm 148. 8*. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Edition, Vol. VIII, “*St. Augustine’s Expositions on the Book of Psalms*,” p. 675, ed. Philip Schaff, Eerdmans, 1989. <http://www.orth-transfiguration.org/st-augustine-354-430/>

19. “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him.” Do not imagine that He was in the world in such a way as the earth is in the world... or the trees, cattle and men are in the world. He was not in the world in such a way. But how was He? As the master builder who governs what He has made. For He did not make it in the way a craftsman makes a chest. The chest which he makes is external to him; and when it is constructed, it has been situated in another place. And however nearby he is, he who is constructing it sits in another place and is external to that which he is constructing. ... But God constructs while infused in the world. He constructs while situated everywhere. He does not withdraw from anywhere.

20. He does not direct the structure which He constructs as someone on the outside. By the presence of His majesty, He makes what He makes; by His own presence He governs what He has made.

St. Augustine (354 – 430). *Tractates on the Gospel of John 2.10.2*, p. 69, in *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 78, CUA Press, 2010.

21. I want creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that wherever you go, the least plant may bring you the clear remembrance of the Creator....

St. Basil the Great (329 – 379). *Hexaemeron*, Homily V.2-3, “*The Germination of the Earth*.” In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Edition, vol. VIII, p. 77, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Eerdmans, 1989.

22. A single plant, a blade of grass or one speck of dust is sufficient to occupy all your intelligence in beholding the art with which it has been made.

St. Basil the Great (329 – 379). *Hexaemeron*, Homily V.2-3, “*The Germination of the Earth*.” In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Edition, vol. VIII, p. 77. Eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Eerdmans, 1989.

23. There is no doubt that the Lord would have us uninterruptedly occupied in this holy meditation; that while we contemplate in all creatures, as in a mirror, those immense riches of his wisdom, justice, goodness, and power, we should not merely run them over cursorily, and, so to speak, with a fleeting glance, but we should ponder them at length, turn them over in our mind seriously and faithfully, and recollect them repeatedly.

John Calvin, p. 168 in Allen J 1909, *Institutes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin*, Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

24. To be brief, therefore, let the readers know, that they have then truly apprehended by faith what is meant by God being the Creator of heaven and earth, if they, in the first place, follow this universal rule, not to pass over, with ungrateful inattention or oblivion, those glorious perfections which God manifests in his creatures : and, secondly, learn to make such an application to themselves as thoroughly to affect their hearts.

John Calvin, p. 168 in Allen J 1909, *Institutes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin*, Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

25. One meditates on creation in order to view and marvel at divine wisdom.

Thomas Aquinas.

26. The whole world is theology for us, because the heavens proclaim the glory of God.

Albert the Great. Quoted in *Albert and Thomas: Selected Writings*, Simon Tugwell, 1988, Paulist Press.

27. Christian people should surely have been in the vanguard of the movement for environmental responsibility, because of our doctrines of creation and stewardship. Did God make the world? Does he sustain it? Has he committed its resources to our care? His personal concern for his own creation should be sufficient to inspire us to be equally concerned.

John R.W. Stott, 1993, from the first Introduction to *Under the Bright Wings*, by Peter Harris, 1993 & 2000. Regent College Publishing, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

28. Bible study and nature study are both Christian obligations, a necessary response to God's double self-revelation in creation and in Christ.

From a sermon given by John Stott on the tenth anniversary celebration of the A Rocha Trust on September 25, 1993, at St. Paul's, Robert Adam Street, London, United Kingdom.

29. This is a piece too fair / To be the child of Chance, and not of Care. / No Atoms casually together hurl'd / Could e'er produce so beautiful a world.

John Dryden, *The Poems of John Dryden*, 4 vols., ed James Kinsley, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958.

30. He prayeth best, who loveth best/ All things both great and small;/ For the dear God who loveth us,/ He made and loveth all.

From *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834).

31. Whoever, therefore, is not enlightened by such splendour of created things is blind;
whoever is not awakened by such outcries is deaf;
whoever does not praise God because of these effects is dumb;
whoever does not discover the First Principle¹ from such clear signs is a fool.
Therefore open your eyes, alter the ears of your spirit,
open your lips and apply your heart so that in all creatures you may
see, hear, praise and worship, glorify and honour your God.

From *The Soul's Journey into God* by St. Bonaventure (1259).