

All Ye Works of the Lord, Bless the Lord

A Rural Meditation from Daniel 3

Thomas Storck

Benedicite, sol et luna, Domino, benedicite, stellae caeli, Domino. Bless the Lord, O sun, bless him as you rise of a morning, bless him at the height of noon as we break from our labors, bless him in your glorious evening parting. Then let the moon bless the Lord. Bless him as a round disc bright in the sky, bless him as a slender crescent, bless him when engulfed in clouds and visible only from time to time. And let the millions of stars also bless the Lord, let the bright ones, the dim ones, the early rising ones, let all the stars bless the Lord.

Benedicite, omnis imber et ros, Domino, benedicite, omnes venti, Domino. The shower of rain coming upon our good crops, upon all animals of the field, upon flowers, upon birds, let each shower bless the Lord, bless him with your wet exuberance and your disdain for man's petty ways. And let each gentle dew, bright and wet of the morning, dew that wets our toes on the grass, may you, little fragile one, also bless the Lord in your littleness. And let the winds, the big wind, the full wind, the proud wind, let them bless the Lord in the fullness of their might. And for the small wind, let him likewise bless, in his small way, the Lord who created him also.

Benedicite, ignis et aestus, Domino, benedicite, frigus et aestus, Domino. Let even fire bless the Lord, fire that should warm us at our hearth, fire that will warm us and always be our friend unless we act in pride or folly. May you, fire, warm and friend-gathering, also bless your Creator.

Benedicite, rores et pruina, Domino, benedicite gelu et frigus, Domino. Next, may you little dews that cool our feet in the morning and the fall-bringing frosts that accompany the coloring of leaves, may you also bless the Lord. And may the cold that marks the shortening of our days, may you also bless the Lord.

Benedicite, glacies et nives, Domino, benedicite, noctes et dies, Domino. Ice, you who bless the Lord, may your crispness, your firmness, may they bless the Lord, may they remind us of the everlasting strength of the Lord, the God of us both. And may snow, the tender snow, the snow so white that covers the ground as our sins are covered by the Lord's absolution, may you also bless the Lord. May you bless the Lord on a morning when you cover the fields and trees; may you bless the Lord of an afternoon when our children are throwing you about at each other. May you always bless the Lord, beautiful creature of God. Days and nights, may you also bless the Lord. You, days, which usher yourselves in with a delicacy few but the early-rising farmer ever see, which proceed with the height of the sun and descend to your rosy place of rest; and you close-fitting night, you who

surround us, so far from city lights, with your friendly blanket and show us the secrets of the moon and the stars, may you also bless the Lord of all.

Benedicite, lux et tenebrae, Domino, benedicite, fulgura et nubes, Domino. May the glorious light of the morning, the sun over the land, the light of the noon, inviting us to the Angelus, the fragile light of the evening—may all of these bless the Lord. May you, lightning, striking across the sky, terrifying, showing us a power that we know is also in the hand of our Father and Creator, yes, may you bless the Lord. And gentle clouds, bless the Lord also. Clouds, whose shapes are fairy castles or ice cream cones, clouds who are gray and storm-bringing, wisps of clouds so far above that they seem to pay us no regard, all of you bless the Lord God of us all.

Benedicat terra Dominum: laudet et superexaltet eum in saecula. And may the land bless the Lord, may it praise and exalt him forever. May the land be able to bless the Lord, may it bless him by its fruitfulness, may it bless him by its rows of hedges in which birds and little animals dwell, may it bless by its old trees, at the edge of a fecund field. May the good land bless the Lord for the families that it supports, nourished upon its good grains, and giving back in tender care all that was taken from it, so that the land and the soil do not suffer loss.

Lord, you are blessed by all of these even now, even the land that groans under the burden placed on it by nature's wayward child, man-burdens of waste and chemicals, burdens of unnecessary paving that hide the soil from our sight, burdens of the air that hide the moon and the stars and the clouds from us. Lord, when will we join in praise with all of these your creatures, with your holy men and women in Heaven, with the souls who thirst as they await your presence? When together with all of these we make all created things one act of praise to your Name, Lord, then will the entire earth be part of that hymn that your three holy servants gave you in love and thanksgiving in the fiery furnace long ago.

Thomas Storck writes from Maryland.

