

"The Air"

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"Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men." Ps. 107:31.

Did you ever stand at the window and watch the trees? Did you ever sit beneath their shade and look up at the swaying branches, and listen to the music of the rustling leaves?

What makes the leaves and branches move back and forth? What makes the grass wave, and the dust fly? What upholds the little bird as he rests a moment in his upward flight? What wafts to us his merry song? Upon what float the music of the evening bells, the organ's swelling notes, and the voice of praise? What scatters the fleecy clouds and drives them withersoever it will? What catches the rays of sunshine and spreads their light along the shady side of the street, and in the lanes and houses where the sun never shines? and what causes it to linger long and lovingly on the sky after the sun has gone down? What slyly lifts your hat and pushes back the moist hair and cools your aching brow? What rushes into the house with you whenever you enter the door, and slips through the windows and cracks and keyhole, when the door is shut. What enters every room and cupboard and box as fast as you empty it? and even goes in and out of your lungs every time you breathe?

"Air?" Yes, it is the wonderful, wonderful, thrice wonderful air! So busy, and constantly doing the most wonderful things, and yet so clear that we can look right through it and not see it, and so pure, when fresh, that we cannot smell it. But we have heard it, and felt its power upon us, and have seen the wonders that it works, so we know of its presence and are led to praise our Heavenly Father for this marvellous gift. For He it was who gave us this great blessing.

Stand up straight and breathe hard. Hold your hand before your nose and you can feel the air as you breathe it out.

You could not live if there were no air to breathe, neither could your dog or kitten or bird or horse or cow, nor your trees or flowers or grass.

"Trees and flowers and grass! do they breathe, too?"

Yes, they breathe too. Their leaves are to them what our lungs are to us, and the tiny little pores or holes in the leaves are their noses. Put a plant or flower into a jar without air and it will soon wither and die.

But plants and trees do not live on the same part of the air that we and the animals do. When we breathe the air out it is very different from what it was when we drew it in. When you wash your hands you dirty and spoil the water in which you wash them; just so when our lungs cleanse our blood with the fresh air, they spoil and really poison the air so that it is not fit for us or the animals to breathe again. But how wise God is! He has made the trees and plants so that they need that very poison that we breathe out, and we need what they

breathe out. So they use the poison up and put into the air the very thing that it needs to make it all clean and pure for us to use again. And if there are not enough trees near us to cleanse the air, God hastens it off to some other place until it is cleansed and then hastens it back again. When the air is thus rushing from one place to another we call it "wind."

We therefore may always have all the good pure air that we need. It is from fifty to a hundred miles deep all round the earth,—a great ocean of air with the earth right in the middle of it. Everything would die if the air were taken away.

Do you see now, why windows were made in your house? They were made that the light and air might get in. The light can come in through the glass when the window is shut, but the air cannot get in much unless you open the window. You know how soon your head aches when you stay in a room where the windows and doors are kept tight shut. It is because there is not enough fresh air in the room. If a little did not get in through the cracks round the doors and windows, and through the door when people go in and out, you would die.

Tight clothing shuts the air out of our lungs as surely as tightly fastened doors and windows. We should therefore always have our clothing so loose that we may take in a good full breath.

Our cellars get full of bad, mouldy air if we do not air them and keep them clean and fresh, and then it comes up through the floor into the house and we breath it. We should always remember that we cannot smell pure, fresh air. If a room smells bad there must be bad air in it. We should never let apple peelings, spoiled fruit and vegetables, open dust-bins, or anything dirty stand about, for that also spoils the air. And if we live in spoiled air it will destroy our health the same as though we lived on spoiled food.

Air is good for many, many things which we have not time to tell you. Find out all that you can about it.

This wonderful air and wind was made on the second day,—the day after the light was made. It was created by the same kind heavenly Father who made the beautiful light, for hear what the Bible says: "For, lo, He that. . . createth the wind, . . . the Lord, the God of hosts, is His name." [Amos 4:13]

"Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" [Psalm 107:8]

Ask your mother to please read you that beautiful story in the Bible about how the wind obeyed Jesus when He was here on earth. (Mark 4:35-41.)

1. Did you ever have your hat fly off your head when you went out of doors?
2. Did you ever play with a kite, or paper balloon, or little windmill?
3. What made the hat fly off your head?
4. What carries your kite and balloon up so high, and turns the wheel to your windmill?
5. When it is not moving, but quiet, as it is in the house, what is it called?

6. Can you see air and wind?
7. Then how do you know that there is any?
8. Why can we not see it?
9. For what is the air good?—Name all the things that you can think of.
10. Suppose that all the air were taken away, what would happen?
11. Have you any windows in your house? Why?
12. Would you like to live on rotten apples and mouldy bread? Why not?
13. Is it any better for us to live on spoiled air?
14. Is it good for us to wear tight clothing? Why not?