

“Grass, Herbs, and Trees”

The Present Truth – October 5, 1893

E. J. Waggoner

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit, whose seed is in itself; and it was so.” Gen. 1:11.

How pleasant on a bright summer day to step on the soft green grass, to rest in the shade of the leafy trees, and to smell the fragrant flowers! How bright and pleasant the pansies look as they nod at us with their velvety heads! Oh, what a dreary place this earth would be without any grass, or plants, or trees! How thankful we should be that God did not leave it as it was at first.

You remember that on the third day, God gathered the waters together and caused the dry land to appear. But there was not yet a blade of grass nor a tree nor a flower,—just bare, dry land. Then a most wonderful thing occurred. God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, herbs, and trees;” and it did! All at once they began to come up everywhere out of the ground! And the hills, mountains, valleys, and plains, that a moment before were brown and bare, were suddenly covered with green plants, flowers, and tall, grand looking trees of every kind! The trees were much larger and more beautiful than trees now are, and there were no thorns on the trees and rosebushes, and no thistles and weeds among the grass, for God looked and saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good. How perfect and beautiful it must have been!

Even now our plants and trees are wonderful and beautiful. The trees and grass are not all alike, nor the flowers of one colour. You can find no two of them that are exactly alike; and yet nearly all are so pretty and useful that we can hardly tell which we like best. From them we get our wood, food, clothing, medicine, and many other useful things. Ask your mother from what your furniture, cotton and linen cloth, straw hats, flour, meal, sugar, corks, and India rubber are made. There are many strange things to be learned by studying roots, stalks, buds, leaves, flowers and seeds.

Just think; “how much is within a small acorn cup! When you hold an acorn in your hand, you hold not a small nut only. Folded within its tiny shell lie trees, and their children trees—even a whole forest. It is a great wonder to make a tree; but how much more wonderful to give to the tree the power to bring forth acorns that would make other trees, and they in turn to bring forth other acorns to make other trees for years and years!”

“A watch is, perhaps, one of the most beautiful and wonderful things ever made by man, but you might plant it in the ground again and again and it could never bring forth more watches. Does not this show us how much greater God’s work is than man’s?” Every tree, every plant, every flower, every blade of grass, and every tiny seed should cause us to think of the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator. And should they not fill all our hearts with joy, and our songs with praise, when we remember that He is our best Friend?

1. What kind of carpets have you seen?

2. What kind of carpet is on the hills and fields, valleys and mountains, in the spring?
3. Were the grass and trees and flowers always here?
4. When did they first begin to grow?
5. Who caused them to grow?
6. How? Gen. 1:11, 12.
7. Can man make them grow in that way?—Man cannot make them grow in any way; he can plant the seed, or young tree or plant, but God alone can make it grow. Man cannot cause even one blade of grass to grow.
8. Would the earth be so pleasant if all the trees and grass were exactly alike?
9. Were the first trees and plants as good as ours?
10. Name some kinds of grass.—Wheat, oats, barley, and rice are grasses.
11. For what are the grasses good?
12. What flowers have you seen?
13. What are they good for?
14. Name some kinds of herbs or plants.
15. For what are they used?
16. Name a fruit tree; an evergreen tree; a flowering tree; a cone-bearing tree; a nut-bearing tree; a fruit-bearing tree.
17. Of what use are trees?
18. For whom did God make all of these good things? Gen. 1:9, 30.
19. How can we show our thankfulness?—By thanking God in our prayers, by giving thanks before we eat, and by using the things in a way that will please and glorify Him.
20. Does it please and glorify God when we use our fruits, grains, and plants in a way that will make us selfish, unhealthy, and unable to do good work for Jesus?
21. Then should we drink strong drinks? Smoke and chew tobacco? Smoke opium? Prepare our food in a way that will make us weak or ill?
22. What does God say about our eating and drinking? 1 Cor. 10:31.
23. About what should every tree, and plant, and tiny seed cause us to think?
24. And when we remember that this great Creator is our Friend, how should we feel? Verily should we be glad?

"Strange Coats"

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Trees and shrubs wear the most wonderful coats. Just stop and examine them. Some are smooth and others are rough; some are brown, others green, still others a silver colour; some are plain, a few spotted, others striped, and many trimmed with the daintiest velvet, and the softest draperies.

What a perfect fit! The trees are entirely protected from top to base, from trunk to the end of the smallest twig. And yet there are plenty of the tiniest openings for ventilation.

Those trees and shrubs living in warm countries have thinner coats, and those living in cold places thicker ones.

Some trees get new coats once a year, and others wear the same ones all their lives.

"Well don't they wear out or get too small?" you say.

They would if they did not keep them so well repaired. As the trees grow larger they burst their coats open in different places but immediately fill up these rents with the cunningest patches set in so neatly that you cannot find a seam anywhere, no matter how closely you look. In this way they keep their coats in good order and large enough for their growing bodies.

In the winter the trees go to sleep and their buds are snugly tucked into their "winter cradles." Then they would freeze if it were not for the nice warm coats and softly-lined cradles which their Creator has given them and their buds. What are these wonderful coats called? How are the trees enabled to mend them? And what are the cradles for the buds? Why are the "winter cradles" in cold countries lined with a blanket of down, while those in warm countries are not lined at all? Do you wonder that God is called the loving Father of all His creatures?

A small microscope is a never-ending source of delight to the children, and reveals to their wondering view still more and more of the wondrous works of God.