

“Light-Bearers”

The Present Truth – October 27, 1898

E. J. Waggoner

“And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; He made the stars also.” [Gen. 1:16]

God “giveth the sun for a light by day,” and the moon to shine by night. [Jer. 31:35] But you know that the bright moon which lights up the dark night and makes it beautiful with its clear beams, has really no light of its own. All the glory that shines from it is the borrowed light of the sun; it shines by reflecting the sun’s rays. So when the sun sets, and passes for a time out of our sight, we know that it is still shining somewhere, although we cannot see it, because the moon catches its rays and sends them down to us.

But did you ever think that the sun has really no light of its own any more than the moon has? All its light is borrowed also; it is the reflection of a greater light, of the Light, the only Light, in whom is no darkness at all. When we studied our lessons on the light we learned that Jesus is the true Light of the world, and all the glory of the sunlight is the reflection of the light of His face, the shining forth of His glory which He puts upon it.

And so, although we cannot see the face of God, we know that He lives and that His glory is still shining, because we can see its beams in the glorious sunlight by day and the soft beautiful moonlight by night. God makes the sun and moon and stars to be “great lights,” just by letting His own glory shine upon them. And this is how He makes His children to be, as Christ called them, “the light of the world.” [Matt. 5:14] They “shine as lights in the world,” [Phil. 2:15] only because He shines upon them and they reflect His light to others just as the sun and moon do.

As we see what the sun is to our world, how there would be no light, no heat, no beauty, no growth, and so no life without it, we see how all things come to us from God just through the shining of His face upon us. Then let us pray the prayer of the Psalmist, “God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us.” [Ps. 67:1]

Read the following piece which shows how dependent our world and all who live in it are upon the sun. But as you read remember that it is not the sun that is doing all these things for us, but He whose glory lights up the sun, whose hand guides it in its path through the heavens, and who is working through it to give life and blessing to us all.

“A Tender Plant”

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Long before the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten and beloved Son of God, came into the world as a little baby and lived here as a little child, the prophet Isaiah had written of Him, "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."
[Isa. 53:2]

Nazareth, the city where Mary and Joseph lived when Jesus was a boy, was a place with such a bad reputation, and so many wicked people lived there, that when Nathanael heard first of Jesus of Nazareth, he said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" [John 1:46] He could hardly believe that Jesus of Nazareth could be the Son of God, the Seed so long promised and expected.

Growing in such a soil, in the midst of such surroundings, Jesus was indeed as a "root out of a dry ground." But the power of God's own holy life was in this Seed, and nothing but purity and beauty could spring from Him. In the midst of sinners, He lived, even as a child, a life of perfect purity, "holy, harmless, and undefiled."

"From His earliest years Christ lived a life of toil. In His youth He worked with His father at the carpenter's trade, and thus showed that there is nothing of which to be ashamed in work. Though He was the King of Heaven, yet He worked at a humble trade, and thus rebuked all idleness in human beings. All work done as Christ did His work is noble and honourable. Those who are idle do not follow the example that Christ has given; for from His childhood He was a pattern of obedience and industry.

"He was as a pleasant sunbeam in the home circle. Faithfully and cheerfully He acted His part, doing the humble duties that He was called to do in His lowly life. Christ became one with us in order that He might do us good. He lived such a life of poverty and labour as would help the poor to understand that He could sympathise with the poor."

"He did not choose to be the son of a rich man, or to be in a position where men would praise and flatter Him. He passed through the hardships of those who toil for a living, and He could comfort all those who have to work at some humble trade. The story of His life of toil is written so that we may receive comfort out of it. Those who know the kind of life Christ lived, can never feel that the poor are to be despised, and that those who are rich are better than the humble." [The Youth's Instructor, November 21, 1895]

All the beauty of, this "tender plant" was just the unfolding of the precious Seed of which we have already learned, just as the flower is the unfolding and opening out of the seed that we sow in the ground. So when Jesus the Seed comes into your hearts, (and He has promised to do this if you ask Him,) this same life will unfold in you just as it did in Him when He dwelt in Nazareth. So as you read of the child life of Jesus, how He was obedient to His parents, and anxious to learn the Word of God from those whom He had appointed to teach it, how He "waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him;" how He helped His father in the carpenter's shop, and "increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man;" in all this God is teaching you what you too will be if this precious Seed is allowed to spring up in your heart. Like Jesus you will "grow up before Him as a tender plant," and no matter what your outward surroundings may be, like Him you will be "holy, harmless and undefiled," kept from the evil that is around you.