

“The Gospel of the Spring”

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Some one has said that “the Book of Nature, like the Holy Word, has four gospels,—the gospel according to the Spring, the gospel according to the Summer, the gospel according to the Autumn, and the Gospel according to the Winter,—each proclaiming the goodness and wisdom and love of God.”

There is really only one Gospel, the “good tidings of great joy,” that “unto us is born a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.” Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all tell us the same good news of Jesus who “shall save His people from their sins.”

Paul tells us that the Gospel of Christ is “the power of God unto salvation.” And this is just what we may read in all nature. The four seasons,—Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter,—are in different ways all telling us the same Gospel.

Think what “good tidings of great joy” the first spring-time must have brought to Adam and Eve! How sadly they must have watched the fading flowers and falling leaves of autumn, and mourned over their sin which had brought death and desolation over the face of the fair earth.

But at last, at God’s appointed time, a change came. The leafless, and seemingly lifeless trees burst forth afresh into bud and leaf and bloom, the earth was covered again with its flowery carpet, and their wondering eyes could see life,—new life everywhere springing forth from the deathlike sleep of winter.

Oh, what hope and joy and courage this must have brought to them. The winter had taught them that “the wages of sin is death,” and shown them something of what death is. The spring brought the bright hope of the resurrection from the dead, through the promised Saviour, who has power over death. For it was His life that they could see springing from the dead in all the living things around them.

But for this, the winter would have been death indeed; there never would have been any more leaves on the bare trees, no more fresh flowers springing from the barren ground. So the seeming death of winter, followed by the new life of the spring, teaches us that through the power of the life of Jesus

“Death is hallowed into sleep,
And every grave becomes a bed.”

Now that the winter is passing, and the bright spring-time coming on, ask Jesus to anoint your eyes and open your ears, so that you may see and hear the message of salvation that He is giving you in this glad season.

You may read it in the trees, which have stood through all the winter season, the very image of death. The leaves are the lungs of the tree, through which it breathes. When the leaves are all gone the trees stop breathing; the sap, which is the life-blood of the trees, does not flow any longer, and there is no sign of life remaining. But the trees and plants

are not dead, only sleeping and soon they burst forth into life and beauty, all the more fresh and vigorous for their long rest.

You may read the Gospel in which in the seeds, which in the early spring-time you bury out of sight in the cold, dark ground, while you wait in hope and confidence that at the right time they will spring up and bloom.

“O to awake from death’s short sleep
Like the flowers from their wintry grave,
And to rise all-glorious, in the day
When Christ shall come to save.”

But you need not wait until Jesus comes, to know the power of His life in you. He wants you to know every day the power of His life to overcome sin, which is death, and to fill you with His own righteousness, which is life.

You may read this same Gospel also in the pretty moths and gay butterflies that after their long chrysalis sleep through the winter, will soon be flitting about full of joyous life; and in many other things that we cannot speak of now. But while this short season lasts, learn all you can of the “good tidings” that it brings, and we will try to study together a few chapters of “the gospel of the Spring.”