

# **“The Gospel of the Spring. Some Warning Lessons”**

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E. J. Waggoner

When God’s great Book of Nature, out of which we have lately been learning these beautiful lessons of the Gospel of the Spring, was first made, it did not have in it all the things that are now to be found there.

Here is a picture that never would have been seen if sin had not brought destruction and death into the world. For if the spider weaved his beautiful silken web in the beginning, it was certainly not for catching flies and other insects to kill and eat them.



No; at that time all was sweet peace and harmony, for every living thing was filled with and guided by the Spirit of God,— the Spirit of love, for “God is love.”

“Perfect love casteth out fear,” and so no living creature was afraid of any other, but all lived peacefully and happily together. This was because “love seeketh not her own,” but is always seeking to do good to others.

So every creature lived and worked, not for its own good, but for the service and good of others. As long as this happy state lasted, the Book of Nature taught but the one sweet lesson of love, the love of God, which was the life of every living thing.

Why, then, do we now see such a different state of things, the earth full of fear and violence, the animals preying one upon another, and even the tiny insects taking the lives of others to preserve their own.

It is because there is another spirit working and ruling in the earth, the spirit of Satan, which is the spirit of selfishness. When this first got into the heart of man, he began at once to look out for himself, instead of for others, to try to exalt himself. And as he was the king and ruler of everything in the earth, all living things soon began to be ruled by this same spirit of selfishness; each began to “seek its own,” instead of the good of others. This has been so plainly seen ever since that it has passed into a saying that “self-preservation is the first law of nature.”

Because the whole Book of Nature is so changed and marred by sin, we cannot rightly read it, and see God’s law of love so plainly written there, as in the beginning. So God has given us His Holy Word to guide us in our study of it. But those who try to read God’s wonderful Book without His written Word for their guide, are sure to go astray, and to be deceived by that other spirit, and the spirit of Satan, that is working there.

But when we let the Word and Spirit of God guide us, even in the saddest pictures and the darkest pages of His Book of Nature He will teach us the most precious lessons of His love.

Then, too, since Satan began his work of death in the earth, God’s children have needed other lessons than they would have if it had not been for this. So in letting the curse

come upon all His works, God is making each one of them teach us just the lessons that we now need. He is letting us see Satan's ways of working, and the sad results of them, so that we may learn wisdom, may learn to be on our guard, and to take refuge in Him from all the Snares of Satan.

Even in these little insects that we have been learning about, there are many warning lessons for us. There is the caterpillar, we talked about him last week you will remember, and how he is gradually changed by the power of God into a beautiful butterfly.

It was noticed that some caterpillars instead of changing into butterflies, seemed to give birth to numbers of little flies which flew out from the dead caterpillar. This was a great puzzle to naturalists for some time, but by close watching it was found that these flies really came from eggs which a certain fly, called the ichneumon fly, deposited in the caterpillar's body, piercing a hole through the skin for this purpose.

When these tiny eggs are hatched, the little grubs that come from them feed on the caterpillar's body, and eat up what would be the butterfly, and keep it from changing into the perfect creature that was meant for.

Think well over this, and see what you can learn from it of Satan's work in the hearts of little children like you. Is he not always trying to drop little seeds of evil into your hearts, that will grow, and eat up and crowd out all that is good and pure so that you can never be changed into the perfect and beautiful image of Jesus. Watch, and ask Jesus to keep you, so that he may not take you unawares, and get these deadly seeds into your heart.

But even if he has already done so, you know there is something in your heart that Satan has put there, something that is keeping down and destroying the good that the Spirit of Jesus has put within you Jesus can save you from it even now if you ask Him, for He has "power over all the power of the enemy."

Then there is the cunning spider, using the wisdom and the wonderful powers that God has given her, to lay traps and snare to catch and devour other little living creatures that are not on their guard against her. And lest the poor little struggling fly should escape after all, and how she binds it with thread after thread until it has no power left, even to struggle.

What a picture this is of Satan, who God made "full of wisdom, and perfect beauty, yet who has bent all the powers of his master mind" to deceive and ensnare and destroy. He is still busy weaving webs in which to catch little boys and girls, as well as men and women.

Sometimes he makes his web look very bright and pretty, as the spider's web does when the sun is shining on it, so that you may be tempted to go near to look; but before you know it he will have you tied up in it, with no help but in the power of Jesus to come and set you free.

We shall not be able to talk this week about these webs that he is weaving for you, but you will be able to think of some of them yourself, and if you ask your mamma she will tell you of others.