

“The Gospel of the Spring. The Work of the Holy Spirit”

The Present Truth – March 30, 1899

E. J. Waggoner

Remember what we talked about last week,—the birds’ eggs, and how they are charged by the power of God’s Word into beautiful little living creatures. But there are some eggs that are never so changed.

If you should take away the eggs from the nest of any bird, or if the birds should desert the nest, they would become spoiled, and although there are such wonderful possibilities within them, they would come to nothing.

For although the eggs themselves are formed by the power of the Word of God, He has not made them so that they can of themselves produce the living bird. They must be kept in the nest where the mother bird broods over them with sheltering wing, and life-giving heat from her own body.

And in that, as in all things, God has a beautiful lesson for us. If you learn it carefully now, the birds themselves will continually remind you of it, so that you will not forget.

In the beginning,— (have you noticed how all our talks take us back to the beginning? This is because we are learning “the Gospel of the Spring.” Look in your dictionary for the meaning of this word, and we will talk of it again next week).

In the beginning, “the earth was without form and void.” Then God spoke to the earth and to the waters. You may read what He said in the first chapter of Genesis. He told the earth to bring forth grass and trees and living creatures; He told the waters to be gathered together into one place, and to bring forth all kinds animals, and birds to fly above the earth.

How could the earth and the waters bring forth all these wonders? They could not, of themselves, any more than an egg can of itself produce a living bird. But,—“the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,” and upon the earth, and so every word that God spoke was at once fulfilled.

The formless earth took just the shape that was in the mind of God, and brought forth grass, trees, and living creatures and creeping things. The waters brought forth great whales and all kinds of fish, and birds of beautiful plumage, able to fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

All this was not the work of the earth or the waters, but of the creating Spirit of God which moved upon them when God spoke. In the beautiful expression, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,” “the Hebrew word ‘moved’ refers to the movement of the wings of bird as it hovers over the nest.”

The mother bird broods in silence over her seemingly lifeless egg until the Word of God which is working there is fulfilled, and a perfect living bird is brought forth—a beautiful peacock, or a dazzling bird of paradise or humming bird, a pure white swan, or a sweet-singing nightingale.

God uses this to teach us of the work of His Holy Spirit,—how it moved and brooded in the beginning over the earth that was “without form and void,” until it was brought to perfection and filled with life and beauty, and “God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”

This is a lesson that will help you everyday. Do not forget that God made us from “the dust of the ground,” and that you have no more power in yourself to become like God and do His will than the dust over which you walk.

But when God speaks to the dust and His Spirit moves upon it, it becomes and does exact what He says. So when He speaks to you and you listen to His Word, His Holy Spirit will move upon your heart, and brood there until His perfect image shall shine forth, and He will see you “very good,” as He saw all His works in the beginning.

“Neighbours”

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Someone once asked Jesus the question, “Lord, who is my neighbour?” In His answer, Jesus told the story of the poor man who fell among thieves, and of the good Samaritan who showed mercy on him, while the priest and the Levite “passed by on the other side.” Read the story in the tenth chapter of Luke. This was to teach that the real “neighbour” is one who shows kindness and love to any who are in trouble.

Here is a story of some little birds who were just such “neighbours” to one of their number who was in distress:—

A gentleman in England, who lived in the country, had his attention called to a thicket of bushes near his house one day. He saw a number of birds there, whose loud cries and strange movements he could not understand.

He felt very curious to find out the meaning of it, so he crept close up to them and examined the bushes. There he found a female bird whose wing was caught in such a manner that she could not get away. Near by was her nest, containing several young birds. As she was kept a prisoner there, she was unable to get any food either for herself or her young ones.

He stood still, at a little distance, and out him watched what was going on. He saw a number of old birds come flying into the bush, bringing worms and insects in their mouths, which they gave first to the mother, and then to her young ones. She cheered them in their good work with a song of gratitude.

After watching this interesting sight till his curiosity was satisfied, the gentleman released the poor bird from her confinement. In a moment she flew to her nest with a merry song to her deliverer. And her kind neighbours, who had come to help her, flew away to their own homes, as soon as they saw she did not need their help any more, singing as they went a song of joy.