

“The Gospel of the Spring. The Equinox”

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THE EQUINOX

What does this word “Equinox” mean? perhaps you ask. You may have heard it talked about lately, as we have just passed what is called the “Vernal” or Spring “Equinox.”

It is made up of two Latin words meaning “equal nights.” About the 21st of March the days and nights all over the world are just equal, each about twelve hours long, and this is called the time of “equal nights,” or the “Equinox.”

But after this the days and nights get more and more unequal. The part of the earth that we live on the North, passes more and more into the sunlight and the days get longer. The South passes away from the sun, and the days get shorter and shorter; until, when it is midsummer with us, the longest day, it is midwinter in the South with the shortest day.

Then we pass again to the time of “equal nights.” About the 23rd of September is the “Autumnal Equinox,” when the days and nights are of the same length all over the world again. But after this the South passes into the sunlight, and we pass away from it. Midsummer in the South, their longest day, is our midwinter, the time of short days and long nights.

Now let us think for a little while what it is that makes these changes,—that governs the length of the day all over the world, and makes the four seasons, Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter.

You will remember that when God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament,” He said also, “Let them be for signs, and for seasons and for days and years.” And you know that the year is the exact time which it takes the earth to make its journey round the sun.

But this alone does not make the seasons; for if the earth were to travel round the sun in a perfectly upright position, there would be no change whatever. The days and nights would be always and everywhere just the same length, and some parts of the earth would have nothing but winter, while in other parts there would be continual summer.

The temperature in the part of the earth that we live on would always be what it is about the time of “equal nights,” the end of March and of September. There would never be heat enough to bring any of the fruits of the earth to perfection. So much of the plant and animal life of the world would be impossible.

To what, then, does the earth owe its changing seasons which bring in their turn “cold and heat, summer and winter, seedtime and harvest”? It is to what is called “the inclination of the earth’s axis” about which you have most likely learned something in your geography lessons.

Instead of being perfectly upright, the earth inclines, or leans, always towards the North. The North Pole, the uppermost part of the earth, points always to the North Star. Because of this the North Pole is sometimes turned towards the sun, and sometimes away from it, and this has an effect upon the whole earth, and brings the change of seasons all over the globe.

Stick a knitting needle through a ball of wool, or a pencil through a ball of string, and draw this round in a circle with the upper point of the needle turned all the time towards one particular object, and you will see that every part of the ball will be a part of the time turned towards the centre of the circle, and part of the time away from it.

Do you see then to what we owe the life and fruitfulness of the earth? It is to this secret drawing influence, this attraction from that part of the heavens that we call "the North," that turns the earth always towards it. It is this same drawing power from the North that makes the needle of the compass point always in that direction.

God's Word teaches us that "the North," "the uttermost North," is the dwelling-place of God, "the secret place of the Most High," from which He governs the whole universe. So it is from God Himself that this sweet influence comes, attracting and drawing the earth, making it incline to Himself. "He hangeth the earth upon nothing," and by His Spirit He guides and holds it in just the position in which it will get the greatest benefit from the life-giving rays of the sun.

Not our earth only, but all the great worlds that God has made He is upholding and drawing to Himself, and guiding in just the way that will bring them the greatest good.

This same sweet influence which attracts the earth towards God, is drawing every one, even every little child, who lives upon it, to Himself. As you feel this sweet influence moving upon your heart, drawing you to turn to God, to love Him, and to give yourself to Him, do not resist His gentle pleadings and grieve His loving Spirit.

Let Him turn you fully towards Himself, and guide you in all your ways, to bring the greatest blessing and happiness to you, and to make you a blessing to all around you.