

“God’s Water-Carriers”

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Nothing can live without water. Everything needs it,—the fishes live in it, the beasts drink it and bathe in it; the birds many of them, ducks, swans, and others, swim in it. And see how the little song-birds enjoy their morning bath, splashing the cool, refreshing drops all over their tiny bodies. The flowers, the trees, and all living things, need the water just as much as we do ourselves, and how could we possibly get on without it?

But there is only one way to get it, and that is from the clouds. “Oh, no;” perhaps you will say, “we have a ‘constant supply,’ and can get all the water we want just by turning on the tap.”

But where does this “constant supply” come from, and how does it happen that there is any water in the taps? It comes from the river; but where does the river get it? From the springs and mountain streams, which get it from the rain and snow that all falls from the clouds.

Yes; all the water in our springs and fountains everywhere, the broad rivers rushing to the seas and oceans, once floated over our heads in the clouds. Think, then, of how much importance are these “waters above the firmament,” and how thankful we should be to see the clouds, even if they do sometimes shut out some of the bright sunshine from us.

Read the eighteenth chapter of the first Book of Kings, and see how eagerly Elijah the prophet waited for the first sign of a cloud when one had not been seen for more than three years, and perhaps you will watch them with greater interest and thankfulness. For if we had all sunshine, and no clouds, everything would soon become parched and baked, and barren and dead; the earth would be a desert place where nothing could live.

But God works through the sun itself to form the clouds. We read of Him that “He covereth Himself with light as with a garment, and stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain.” The powerful sunlight, God’s glory streaming over the earth, itself creates this cloud curtain, which shelters the earth, and refreshes it with cool showers, and prevents it from being burned up and destroyed by its brightness.

“I gaze o'erhead,
Where Thy hand hath spread,
For the waters of heaven their crystal bed,
And stored the dew
In its depths of blue
Which the fires of the sun come tempered
through.”

Here we see again what we have noticed so often, how “all things work together for good.” This will remind you of what we learned about the frost itself forming a protection from the cold, making a warm snow blanket for the earth, and an icy sheet to cover the waters. Also of how the sun, by painting the flowers and other things with deep colours

makes them better able to endure its own heat. How gentle is our God in His greatness, and how fearless we may be in His presence.

But now let us see how the clouds are formed by the sun, and how God works through it to draw up the waters into the air in the form of vapours. You have seen the steam rising from a pan of water on the stove, or from the copper when it was full of boiling water. This is because when water gets to a certain heat, it changes its form, and passes into the air as vapour or steam.

The sunlight falling on the surface of the oceans, seas, rivers, and lakes all over the world, warms the water so that it evaporates, or turns into vapour. But why does this vapour rise upwards to the heavens, and float therein the way we talked of last week?

This, dear children, "the balancing of the clouds," is "the wondrous work of Him who is perfect in knowledge." When He made the firmament by His wisdom, and "stretched out the heavens by His discretion," we are told that God "made a weight for the winds," (the air) and "weighed the waters by measure."

He "measured the waters in the hollow of His hand," and weighed the air, and made them both exactly the right weight so that the watery vapours, being lighter, should rise and float in the air, just as a cork does in the water because it is lighter than the water. (Some time we hope to tell you more about the weight and wonders of the air.)

And these watery vapours form the beautiful cloud curtain that we see in the firmament above our heads. They are God's water-carriers. They take up water from the places where there is abundance; then, borne up by the air, guided by the hand of God, and carried upon the wings of the wind, they carry the water to the places where it is needed, and pour it out upon the thirsty land.

We must wait until next week to tell you more about the clouds and the rain, and God's beautiful bow that He has set in the clouds as the token of His love and faithfulness. Find in your Bibles all the verses you can that speak of these things. You will be surprised to find how many there are, and how much God tells us about His wonderful work of making the rain, and sending it upon the earth.

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."