

"The Birds of the Air"

The Present Truth – June 8, 1899

E. J. Waggoner

The Lord Jesus is teaching us precious lessons in everything that He has made, and He has especially told us to "Behold the birds!" In the Spring we learned how He is working to multiply them in the earth, how at this season the birds, taught by His Word which is working in them, build their wonderful little nests, and lay in them the eggs which develop into baby birds.

During the past month or two, the trees and bushes have held many of those tiny cradles full of dear little living creatures. You may have seen the happy parents flying home to their nests with food for their little ones, or hovering over them with anxious love and care, to see that all their needs were provided for.

The mother bird devotes herself entirely to her young ones. From the time that the eggs are laid she scarcely leaves the nest at all, except for a short "constitutional" each day for the good of her health, while the father bird takes her place on the nest. To "the queen of the air," always on the wing, this must be a great sacrifice, but love makes it sweet, and these Spring seasons when her nest is full, are the happiest times in her life.

But now the time comes for the little ones to leave the nest, to try their little wings, and find their home in the air; for this is what God made the birds for, "to fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." The parent birds, you will see if you are able to watch them, seem to take great pride and pleasure in teaching the little ones to use their wings, encouraging them to make the first flight, and watching near to see that they do not get into danger.

God uses this to show His tender love and care for His children. He says: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings," so He guides and teaches and keeps His people. When the young eaglets are weary, the mother bird flies down underneath them, and catching them on her own wings, carries them until they are able to fly again.

The wings of the young birds soon get strong, and their flights longer and longer, until by the early autumn they are ready to fly away with the rest, over seas and oceans, to other lands where they spend the winter.

Did you ever think as you have watched the free, graceful flight of the birds, what a wonderful and delightful experience it must be? Of all the creatures that God has made, the birds seem to have the fullest and freest life. This is because they are the most filled with the air, which we have found to be the breath of God, His own life-giving Spirit. Read the article that follows this one on "The flight of Birds," and you will see how their bodies are formed so that the air that enters their lungs is

carried through the whole body, making them light, and bouyant and free, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." [Sorry, that article on the flight of birds was not available on the CD-ROM, but you can have help researching on the internet the flight of birds.]

But God did not mean that any of its creatures should have any advantage over man; for He made him His own son, in His own image, to be above all, and to have dominion over all. He was to have dominion over the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, as well as over the beasts of the earth. But in order to rule the "birds of the air," he must have dominion over the air; and in order to rule "the fish of the sea," he must have dominion over the water. He must be more free in the air than the birds, and more free in the water than the fish and other creatures that God made to live there.

This is how God made man in the beginning, but through disobedience he lost the image of God in which he had been made, and so lost his liberty and his dominion—his kingdom. But when Jesus came to this earth as a man, He had the dominion over all things, because He had the perfect image of God. He was the Son of God, and in His life we can see what is "the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

Jesus could walk upon the stormy waters just as easily as upon the dry land. He had dominion over the waters. And when there was "a great storm of wind," Jesus "rebuked the wind," and "the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." He had dominion over the air. Then after His resurrection, when the time had come for Him to return to the Father, He could rise right above the earth and ascend in the air with perfect freedom.

Dear children, if we now let Jesus come into our hearts, He will restore His own perfect image there, and make us indeed the children of God. Then when He comes, as He is soon to do, and it is clearly shown who have really become His children, we shall rise from the earth as He did, to "meet Him in the air." We shall be able to "soar to worlds unknown," even to the very throne of God, to be with Him for ever.