

“The Tree of Life”

The Present Truth – June 15, 1899

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We have talked together often of how everything in nature is teaching us something of the One who made it,—of Jesus the Creator of all things, who lives and reveals Himself to us in every one of His works.

I hope you will remember what we learned in the Spring about the seed; that Jesus is the true Seed from which the whole creation springs, the beginning of all things, and the end, for everything in the whole creation of God is just the unfolding of His wonderful life. In Him all fulness dwells, and “the fulness of the whole earth is His glory.”

Now let us see how He is teaching us this lesson in the trees that we now see around us covered with fresh green leaves, and many of them with sweet, fragrant blossoms, the promise of fruit and seed for the harvest.

Think of the thousands of these little leaves, and what it is that keeps them so fresh and green. It is the sap, the lifeblood of the tree, running through the twig upon which they grow, that carries life to them. If you take a leaf from the twig you will find that it will soon lose its fresh green appearance, and wither and dry up.

Suppose, then, that we break off the whole twig; would it and the leaves continue to live? No; for the twig, like the leaf, depends for its life upon something else, and this life is carried to it through the branch.

But the branch, like the twig, is only the channel for the life which flows through it, and it does not have life in itself. Remember what Jesus said about the branches of the vine, and this is just as true of every kind of branch: “The branch cannot bear fruit of itself,” because it has no life of itself.

Every part of the tree depends upon the tree from which it springs for its life, and if separated from the tree is nothing at all, for it soon withers and crumbles into dust. The largest bough as well as the tiniest leaf is nothing if cut away from the tree; it depends just as much as the little leaf, on the tree from which it has its beginning, for its life.

The water that the roots suck up from the earth becomes the sap or blood of the tree and circulates all through it, carrying the life of God to every branch and twig and leaf. For we have learned that all the water in the world is God’s own life poured out upon it, to give life to all His works.

See, now, what this is teaching us of Jesus, and how we are joined to Him, and depend upon Him for all things. The Word of God teaches us that Jesus is “The Tree of Life.” This wonderful Tree of Life fills heaven and earth, and its branches spread out into all God’s great universe. Every living thing in the universe [is] part of this wondrous Tree of Life. Nothing has any life of its own, the life of Jesus flows into all things, giving life and power. As the sap circulates through the tree, His life throughout all the world, and carries life to everything in it.

We take in the life of Jesus in our food, drink it in the water, breathe it in the air, and receive it in the life-giving sunlight. As the leaf and the branch live in the tree and by the life of the tree, so "in Him we live, and move, and have our being," and so does everything that lives and moves, as much the tiny insect and frail blossom, as all the great works of His hands.

"That delicate forest flower,
With scented breath, and look so like a smile,
Seems, as it issues from the shapeless mould,
An emanation of the indwelling Life,
A visible token of the upholding Love,
That are the soul of this wide universe."

All things spring from Jesus, as the leaves and branches from the tree, and all depend on Him each moment for their life.

But, dear children, there are so many who will not believe this, who think that they have life in themselves that will last for ever. And so they will have nothing to do with Jesus, who is their life, and the Giver of every good gift that they have.

But what would happen to the leaf, the twig, or the branch, if it refused to be joined to the tree from which it gets its life? It must perish, and being good for nothing, be destroyed. And this is just what must happen to all who will not have Jesus to be their life; there is no other life, and so there is nothing for them but death and destruction.

Jesus now gives life to all, to those who do not love Him, as well as to those who do; He makes His sun to shine upon the evil and on the good, and sends rain upon the just and on the unjust.

But when He comes there will be a separation, a cutting off from the Tree of Life of all who will not have Jesus to be their Saviour and their life, and like the withered and dead branches of a tree, these will be destroyed. But all those who love and choose Jesus will abide for ever rooted in Him, and bearing precious fruit to His glory.