

"All for Good"

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E. J. Waggoner

"None of us liveth unto himself." This is what the Word of God tells us, and perhaps you will understand it better since reading in our last paper of how all things are but as links in one great chain, a part of the great plan of God.

You see that this is true, not of human beings only, but of all things in this wonderful universe. Even the tiny grains of sand that make up the dust of the ground, each is fulfilling its own part in this loving purpose, and no doubt has a far more wonderful work and history than anything that you can imagine.

Try to understand, in all the things that you see around you, their relation to all the other things with which they are connected,—to see just the place and work that God has given to them and how they are fitted for it, and you will be astonished and delighted as you learn more and more of His wonderful wisdom and greatness, who even numbers the hairs of our heads, and without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls.

You will see that all things do indeed "work together for good." Even, as we found last week when we were talking about volcanoes, those things which have come upon the earth as the result of sin, are the best thing for it in its present imperfect, state.

The animal creation preying and feeding upon each other as they now do,—God is overruling even this for good; for some creatures now multiply so fast that they would become a plague and a nuisance if they were not kept down by other animals.

Think of the swarms of insects that would cover the ground if every insect egg became in time a perfect insect. Instead of this, most of them are eaten up by the birds when they are only tiny grubs. The butterflies alone lay so many eggs that the caterpillars which come from them would soon eat up every green thing if they were left undisturbed, and the autumn would bring no harvest,—no food for man or beast or insect. So they would even themselves be destroyed by their great number.

Suppose an insect lays fifty eggs (some lay a great many more than this) the fifty insects coming from them would bring forth a greatly increased number, and the third generation would probably be over a thousand! So you see that the destruction of even one insect is not an insignificant matter.

You have sometimes watched the spider at his work, and thought only of his cruelty and cunning, or perhaps admired the skill with which he weaves his snare. But you may never have thought how much your comfort depends upon his work; for if all

the flies were left to multiply, there would soon be a swarm like that which darkened the air of Egypt in the time of the fourth plague.

How useful, too, we find our cats to keep down the swarms of mice that would otherwise infest our houses. To show how all things, instead of living to themselves only, are "wheels within wheels" on which the comfort and happiness, and even the life, of other things depend, the question has been asked, What relation is there between the pastoral interests (the work of feeding or grazing cattle) and the number of cats in a district?

The cat is the great enemy of the field mouse, which in its turn is the enemy of the humble bee. This is the only insect that can fertilize the clover blossoms by carrying the pollen from one flower to another. So you see that the clover which feeds the sheep and cows, cannot flourish where there are no cats to destroy the mice which destroy the bees which fertilize the clover.

You will perhaps be able to trace out for yourselves some other links in this chain which is all about you. A well known naturalist recently told this little story of what happened when the ordinary course of nature was interfered with. Water cress is a favourite food of the caddis worms, but caddis worms are eagerly devoured by trout. The trout, in turn, have an enemy in the herons, which usually catch the fish after they have grown fat on caddis worms. It lately happened that a large grower of water-cress had three quarters of his crop destroyed by the caddis worms. It was found that trout which usually eat the caddis worm and thus save the water-cress, had been eaten up too soon,—before the time—by a flock of hungry herons, and the worms were left unmolested to destroy the water-cress.

As you go through this world you will see much to distress and pain you, for results of sin are to be seen everywhere and "sin when it is finished, bring forth death." So

"you in this fair world
See some destroying principle abroad,
Earth, air, and water full of living things,
Each on the other preying."

But remember always that the eye of love watches over all, the heart of love feels for all, and the hand of love is overruling all things for good, although you cannot understand how this can be. When "the young lions roar after their prey," they "seek their meat from God;" and He "hunts the prey" for them, and "fills the appetite of the young lions." But He cares just as much for the creatures with which He feeds them, for "the Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." Not over each species only, but over every single creature that His hands have formed, and we may be sure that He will do the best for each. He will permit nothing to happen to anything but what will be for His own glory, and

"His glory is His children's good,
His joy His tender fatherhood."