

“In the Country”

The Present Truth – July 19, 1900

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Are you glad to shut up your school books, and put your slates away for a season, now that the summer holidays have come again? No doubt you are looking forward to happy weeks of freedom in the country or at the seaside; or if you be obliged to stay in the city, to long, pleasant days in the parks.

But although you will be out of your usual school-room for a time, remember that you are not, and never will be as long as you live, out of school. Each day brings its lessons, wherever you may be, and by them the Great Teacher is preparing you, if you will learn them, for the deeper lessons which you may learn by and by in His kingdom. For if you should live there for ever, you will always have something new to learn.

I hope you are so fortunate as to be able to say this summer, like the little girl in our picture, “My school-room lies on the meadow wide,” for this is a beautiful place to learn much of the wisdom of God through seeing His ways of working in nature. [No picture on CD-ROM]

Let us think of a few of the things that will be your teachers there, of whom you may enquire the way of the Lord by looking into the secrets of their life. For in each thing that God has created by His Word, His wonderful, deep thoughts are unfolding before our eyes, so that we may read them and learn to know Him.

Do you not see, then, that in the study of nature,—the works of God,—we are holding communion with our Heavenly Father, the Great Creator whose life and thoughts are revealed in them all?

The first thing you notice in the meadow is the grass,—the grass of the field. Gather as many different kinds as you can find, and see how God has clothed it with beauty. Think what it is that makes each blade and spear of grass grow and develop, “each after its kind.” It is the Word of power that God spoke to the earth in the beginning, “Let the earth bring forth grass.” Remembering this, you will see the powerful Word of God at work in the frail grass, forcing it up from the hard ground, and clothing the land with this beautiful soft green carpet.

Perhaps you will then be reminded of one of the reasons why God makes the grass to grow. We read it in the 104th Psalm, written perhaps by the shepherd youth David, as he watched his own flocks peacefully feeding: “He maketh grass to grow for the cattle.”

This brings us to something else very often to be seen in the meadow: the cows and sheep grazing on the fresh green grass that God has made to grow especially for them. Here is a lesson of His loving-kindness, who “satisfieth the desire of every living thing.” For of all that He has created we read in the same Psalm: “These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather; Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good.”

There is much that you may learn from the cows and calves, the sheep and lambs, the horses and colts, asses and foals, that you are likely to find in the meadow at different times. "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee." And the great lesson that they all teach is that "the hand of the Lord hath wrought this." Like the sun, moon and stars, these living, breathing, beautiful creatures are always proclaiming to those who will hear, "The hand that made us is Divine."

If you begin to look up in your Bibles all the passages that speak of the different animals that God has made, you will, I think, be surprised to find how much their Maker has told us about them in His Word.

The first lesson teaches their likeness to the grass of which we have been speaking, for they are formed by the same Word from the dust of the same ground. God who said, "Let the earth bring forth grass," said also, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after its kind."

So you see that there is a relationship between the cattle, and the grass upon which they feed; they are only different forms of the same Word of life, wherein we may learn different lessons of the Creator's wisdom, love and power. They both came from one place,—the dust,—and when the life that holds them in their different forms departs, they mingle together again in the same dust.

As the cattle feed upon the grass, the life that is in it passes into them and shows itself in other ways than in the grass. See what you can learn from each of the ways of God of His wisdom shown in their wonderful workmanship. His tenderness in their love and care for their little ones, the fulness and joy of His life in the fresh young animals of all kinds.

Then there are the flowers among the grass, on whose bright petals you may read sweet lessons of the love of Him who placed them there for you. And in these same beautiful blossoms there are wonderful secrets of wisdom hidden, like the honey, to be "sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

Perhaps if you carefully watch the bees, butterflies, and other insects at work among the flowers, you may find out some of the secrets,—wonderful links in the great chain of life,—and another time we may tell you more about them.