



# Reflections

A fledgling bird chirps as he finds himself out of the nest and hungry, and if he's not a little more quiet he may become another's lunch. Such are the perils of life for the young bird as he now faces growing requirements for independence and more than a few little ones fall prey to predators who are also hungry and looking for food to fill their bellies. We might look and see a cute little fledgling, and his enemies, who we tend to look on as a type of evil, will look at him and see food. The creation that now exists under the curse of sin is filled with life and death relationships between predators and their prey and while we might feel a great sadness for the little bird that succumbs to death before his little life has really begun, we too exist in such a cursed creation.

Our little ones also face a creation that is under the dominion of the god of this world, Satan, and their future can be equally as bleak as the little bird. They are growing up into a world that has become violent, self-serving and hedonistic. There are predators about that would like nothing more than to ruin the life of our children. Jesus, when He walked the earth, made very clear that the little children were special to Him and that there would be a horrible price to pay for causing them to sin. *At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"<sup>2</sup> Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,<sup>3</sup> and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

*<sup>4</sup> "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."<sup>5</sup> "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me."<sup>6</sup> "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:1-6 NKJ)*

The little bird may or may not still have a parent bird to feed him and, if not, he is probably not going to survive. He doesn't appear ready to face a hostile world and survive. Children are not ready to face an uncertain future and without diligent parents they may never be ready. We, especially as Christian parents, are not charged with merely raising our children to physical adulthood but with also raising them in the fear and admonition of the Lord. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.<sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:<sup>3</sup> "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."<sup>4</sup> And*

*you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4 NKJ)* Children who are taught to be obedient, who are "fed" the "bread of life", and who are nurtured, loved, and encouraged, are then equipped to face life even with the predatory enemy lurking about. They will have been trained to seek God's help in every situation, to rely on Him by faith, and will have entered into a personal relationship with Jesus. Unlike the little bird calling for his mother, they will be spiritually mature enough to flourish with God's Spirit living through them, guiding them, and perhaps even calling them to a life of ministry.

If we look about us we will not have difficulty seeing the many young ones who have been left to the spiritual predation of Satan and his minions. Look at the young men and women in the entertainment industry and see how ill prepared they are to live productively. They are striving for attention, chasing after illusory pleasures, and facing the consequences of a prodigal lifestyle. They may possess physical beauty, wealth and even fame, but their lives are fractured and wasted. They are walking demonstrations of what can happen to a child who is not taught, trained, loved and disciplined. Sadly their parents are often just like them.

The greatest tragedy of our times is that the Church is producing young ones that grow up to become like their decadent heroes in the media, instead of growing up fully equipped to walk in relationship with God and completely prepared to someday become effective parents raising Godly children of their own. Watching the little bird getting eaten by a cat who heard him calling for his mother, is a perfect picture of what happens to a young one prematurely facing his enemies. How much worse it is to know that many of our children do not know the grace of God in Christ and if the Church of Jesus does not change this reality by, once again, raising our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord we will see the loss of a generation to the enemy.

The creation can become a profoundly graphic picture of life and death, predator and prey, and even though God's power is evident in that which He created, it groans under the oppression of death that was brought under the curse for man's sin. In Jesus, however, God has given us a way to live securely in relationship with Himself. Let's make certain that we lead our children into adulthood in His plan of salvation. Let's not leave them to the predator of this world. **Pastor Doug**