

# **"The Gospel of the Spring. Bees"**

*The Present Truth* – March 2, 1899

E. J. Waggoner

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all those that have pleasure therein."  
[Psalm 111:2] So let us look a little closer at the flowers, about which we were talking last week, and seek out some more of the secrets of His love that our heavenly Father has hidden there for us.

See how busily the little bee gathers the sweet store of honey that God has put there on purpose for it to feed on! But there is something even more sweet and precious hidden there for you,—the loving thoughts of God, which show how "His tender mercies are over all His works." [Psalm 145:9]

The Psalmist sang, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God." [Psalm 139:17] And as he thought upon the ways of God which His works made known to him, he said, "My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." [Psalm 104:34]

Let us learn from the bee to gather all that we can of the sweet secrets of God's love, from the flowers and all His other works, and store them up in our hearts to supply not our own needs only, but those of others also.

Where have the bees been biding all through the cold winter months? You have not seen any flying about, for there have been no flowers, and so no honey for them to gather. They have been safe and warm in their hives, where they have been drowsily resting, and feeding on the honey stored up in the wonderful little cells of wax of which their combs are made.

But no sooner does the mild spring weather cause "the flowers to appear on the earth," than the bees appear also, fresh and bright after their long rest, and ready for another year's work.

"To give you some idea of how well  
the little busy bee  
Improves each shining hour,"

a gentleman who has made a special study of them, and watched them very carefully, tells that "if you bring a bee to some honey, she feeds quietly, goes back to the hive, stores away the honey, and returns with or without companions for another supply. Each visit occupies about six minutes, so that there are about ten in an hour, and about one hundred in a day." And another, to show us how quickly the bees work, says that he has watched them visit twenty flowers in a minute.

In the long summer days the bees work overtime, to make up for the months when they do not work at all. Right up in the North, where the winters are longest, the summer when it does come is almost continual daylight, and the bees are able to work nearly all the time while the warm weather lasts. A gentleman who lately visited Finland, says that he noticed the bees out gathering honey at ten o'clock at night.

We spoke last week of the beauty and fragrance of the flowers, but now we can see something of their usefulness also. For through them God is providing food for the bees, butterflies, ants, flies, and millions of tiny insects. And even we ourselves like to make use of the stores that the bees have gathered from the flowers, for "What is sweeter than honey?"

But while it is true, and has always been easily seen, that the bees need the flowers and could not live without them, it is just as true, though not so easily seen, that the flowers need the bees just as much, and many kinds would die out altogether if it were not for the bees, butterflies, and other insects.

Some seed from the Red Clover plant was taken over to New Zealand and planted, but no seed came from it, and it died out. At last some Humble Bees were taken over and some fresh clover planted, and from that time it flourished and bore seed just like it does here. So you see that the life of the clover depended on the Humble Bees. Do you wonder how this can be? Let us see.

You must have noticed in a full-blown rose, the golden heart of the flower made up of little yellow grains, and in almost every flower you will notice something like this. Sometimes the yellow dust from the flowers is blown about, by the wind. You have often seen it, but did you know what it is, and what it is for?

This fine yellow flower dust is called "pollen," and though you may have thought it only useless dust, the very life of the plants depends upon it. For if some of the little grains should not reach the newly formed seeds in the little pod at the bottom of the flower, the seeds would not be any use at all, as they would have no power to bring forth say new plants and flowers. This dust is to fertilise the seeds to make them fruitful.

The strongest and best plants come from the seeds which have been fertilised by the dust or pollen from another flower of the same kind, and so in many plants it is not possible for the dust of a flower to fall upon its own seed.

But just when the pollen is ripe and ready to fall, a part of the flower is filled with sweet honey, which attracts the bee or butterfly. As he pushes his way in to get it, he brushes against the part of the flower that holds the dust, and carries some of it away with him to the next flower that he visits, where he leaves it behind to make the little seeds able to bring forth new plants.

You will see that this is not for the good of the plant only, for if there should be no more flowers, what would the bees do next year? So the Lord is really using them to help to provide the honey for another year. But they know nothing of all this. They go on their busy way, doing their day's work without any idea of how much depends on it, for the flowers, for themselves, for the baby bees at home in the hive, and for us, for what would the earth be without its flowers?

The bees like bright colours and sweet scents. These attract them to the flowers, and the stripes and bands show them just where to find the honey, and so save their time. The largest blossoms, with the brightest colours and sweetest perfumes, are sure to be visited and fertilised by them.

The gardener improves the flowers of the garden by taking seed from the finest flowers, and the bee is an unconscious little gardener, helping to make the woods and fields beautiful by taking the dust from the finest flowers to the seeds of the finest flowers, so that the new plants shall be strong and healthy.

You will soon hear the hum of many bees in the gardens, fields, and woods, and as you hear them and watch them at their work think of all these things, and as much more as you can find out of all that God is doing through these tiny insects.

Think of this wonderful little circle of blessing and helpfulness,—a wheel within a wheel,—the flower giving its honey to the insects, and thus really working for its own fruitfulness and increase; the bee serving and fertilising the flower, and thus providing a future store of honey for itself and other bees.

Then besides the sweet lesson of the love and wisdom of God who is really doing all this, who puts the honey in the flower and guides the bee to it, I am sure you will learn at least this lesson also: Our own greatest blessing, happiness, and prosperity, come through letting God use us to bring blessing and happiness to others.