

“Lessons from the Trees”

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“And on either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month.” This beautiful life-giving tree was in the midst of the garden that God first gave to man for his home. You will remember why He took it away from him after he sinned; “lest he should put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever.”

Yet there were left in the earth many other trees “pleasant to the sight, and good for food,” and all of these also were to give life to man. The trees and the vines give forth in fruit the life that God is giving to them, that through them He may give His life to us. In all the fruits of the earth God is giving us His own life.

Think again of what we learned last week,—how the life of God, which He sends upon the earth in the showers with which He waters it, is drawn up through the roots of the tree, and carried to every part of it, running through every branch and twig and leaf.

This life of which the trees are full, has been lately shown in the sweet blossoms with which many of them have been covered. Perhaps you have seen in the orchards the beautiful clusters of pink and white apple blossoms, the little cherry blossoms, and other flowers that have beautified the trees and filled the air with fragrance. Now these are all falling, for they are not the end but only the beginning of the giving forth of the tree’s life for the benefit of God’s other creatures.

“First the trees blossom, and then they unblossom;
And then there is a left but a little green ball
That will biggen and brighten and sweeten and ripen,
And bounce in the basket, an apple, next fall.”

If you remember our Spring lessons about the flowers, the bees, and the butterflies, and how these are used by God to cause the “fertilization” of the plants, or to make them fruitful, you know that the pretty blossoms that so much delight our senses, and the honey that is found in them, are really only an attraction for these insects, so that the pollen, the flower dust which the seeds need to make them fruitful, shall be carried from one blossom to another.

For some of the plants the wind does this work of carrying the yellow pollen dust to fertilise the ripening seeds, but such plants have small colourless and scentless blossoms, that we should hardly call flowers at all.

So you can see that in all this and beauty, the real object is fruit. In it all we see the working of the same Word of life that multiplies the birds “that sing among the branches,” and makes them bring forth their young ones every Spring season. For the same Word said also in the beginning: “Let the earth bring forth the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth.”

Read Matt. 21:18-20, and see what became of the fig tree upon which Jesus found no fruit, "but leaves only." See also what He says in John 15 about unfruitful branches: "Every branch that beareth not fruit He taketh away," "and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." The fruit tree or grape vine that bears no fruit is good for nothing, fit only to be destroyed.

Did you know, dear little ones, that you are little trees that Jesus has planted in His garden, and that He wants you to bear fruit that shall give life to others? Of all who are His we are told "that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."

All "trees of righteousness" are trees of life, because righteousness is life, just as sin is death. In the first realm we read of the one who loves the Lord and walks in His way, that "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." Jesus wants you to be so filled with the Spirit of life that, like the trees, you will give out the sweetness of it in life-giving fruit, "the fruits of righteousness," "the fruits of the Spirit" of which we read in Galatians 5:22, 23: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Jesus has promised to give the Holy Spirit, which brings forth all these lovely fruits, "to them that ask Him." Ask Him for it, dear children, and believe that He gives it to you, for His promise cannot fail.

Let His Holy Spirit fill you with good fruits, that through your love and gentleness, your joy and peace, your longsuffering and patience, those around you may taste the sweetness of the Lord's life, may see that He is good, and learn to love and trust Him for themselves.

"The bird that soars on highest wing
Builds on the ground her lowly nest,
And she who doth most sweetly sing
Sings in the night when all things rest
In lark and nightingale we see
What honour hath humility."