

The King's Garden. Sincerity
The Present Truth – August 1, 1901
E. J. Waggoner

SINCERITY

But lately some of the trees in the gardens and parks were covered with sweet-scented lilac blossoms. You saw them; were they not beautiful? Where are they? Gone, you say.

Yes; their frail beauty has faded, but are they altogether gone?—No; they have left something behind them; they have left an impression on your mind and heart.

“For every humble hedgerow flower that blows,
And every little brown bird that doth sing,
Hath something greater than itself, and bears
A living Word to every living thing.”

Someone once said: “I am a part of all that I have seen,” meaning that his character had been formed by all the things that he had ever seen, so that a part of all that he had ever looked upon still existed in him.

The truth of this should make us all very careful what, and above all, how we see. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” who is revealed in all the things He has made. Then the impressions made upon our minds by all His works will be sweet and holy.

The American poet, Whittier, after watching a glorious sunset until it faded, put this thought into the following beautiful verse:—

“But beauty seen to never lost;
God's colours all are fast;
The glory of this sunset heaven
Into my soul has passed.”

The lilac had a message. Did you read it? What did it say to you? You remember the beautiful shape of the spray, and how it was made up, not of one large blossom, but of many small delicately-formed ones. The beauty of the whole spray depended upon the perfection of every one of those tiny flowers.

In this the lilac teaches a lesson of truth and faithfulness. It tells that it is the little acts and words of our daily lives that make or mar the beauty of a perfect character.

"Behold Thou desirest truth in the inward parts," David said; and when truth is in the heart, every word will be true, and every act will be sincere. To make things appear to be what they are not, is to "bear false witness." So we may sum up the message of the lilac in the words of the Ninth Commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness." This is the seed which fills the King's Garden with the flowers of sincerity and truth.

Did you notice that the lilac had frequent visitors? The bees love it; you know why? It is because its tiny blossoms are full of sweet, pure honey; it is a storehouse from which they can gather rich supplies to fill the combs in their hives.

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste!
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

sang the Psalmist; and he told what it was that made God's Word so sweet to his taste.

"Thy Word is very pure,
Therefore Thy servant loveth it."

It was the perfect purity—the truth, fatness of God's Word, that made it sweeter than honey to him. So in the pure honey that fills its dainty cups, the lilac is teaching us the same sweet lesson of sincerity.

Do you know what God says of those who have lying lips that bear false witness,—those who do not speak the truth? "The poison of asps is under their lips."

Think how we dread the poisonous bite of the deadly serpent. You would not like such poison to be found under your tongue, would you? Then ask Jesus, who is "the Truth," to dwell in your heart; then you will have the truth that God desires in the inward parts, to fill your mouth with sweet words. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

When we were talking of the lilies, we found that their message is, "Be pure." The message of the lilac is, "Be sincere." Do you know the meaning of this word? It is from two Latin words which mean, "without wax."

It is thought by some that the word came to have its present meaning because it was used to describe honey that was perfectly pure. When it had been prepared and strained until it was entirely clear and free from the wax in which the bees had stored it, it was sincere, "without wax," nothing but honey.

So the word has come to be used to describe anything that is pure and true, and just what it appears to be—that which does not "bear false witness." Would you not like this word to be a true description of you?

It is the life working in the tree that fills the lilac cups with honey. And it is the same Life—the life of Jesus—that brings forth the flowers of truth in the King's Garden, and fills them with the honey of sincerity. No fair appearance, while deadly

poison lurks within, bears false witness in the King's Garden, but the sincere sweetness of Jesus fills all the beautiful blossoms with the honey of truth.

"The words of the Lord are pure words;
As silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

There is no "false witness" in His Word. It "is true from the beginning" to the end, as pure as silver or gold many times purified. And "the law of truth" is in the lips of His children, so that "in their mouth was found no guile." May you be among that happy company, for "a lying tongue is an abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are His delight."

Lessons from the Bees

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Now the bees are busy gathering honey while the sun shines and the flowers bloom. God has spread a rich feast for them in more beautiful dishes and cups than were ever made by the hands of the most skilful workman to adorn the king's table.

"God might have made the earth bring forth. .
Without a flower at all."

He might have fed the bees without the lovely colours and scents which give no do [them] much pleasure, and which must surely add sweetness to their feast and their work. Like all the rest of God's creatures,

"That thou givest them, they gather;
Thou openest Thine hand; they are satisfied with good."

God does not put the honey in their mouths or in their hives, but He teaches them where to find it, how to gather it from the flowers, and how to make the perfect little six-sided cells of the comb in which to store it for use in the winter when the earth will not bring it forth.

Watch the bees at work, and notice the flowers that they visit,—the sweet-scented and pretty-coloured ones. Suppose that in a beautiful, sweet-smelling flower, the bee should find no honey, but poison instead. Then that flower would be bearing "false witness," showing fair colours to lure living creatures to their destruction.

There is a plant called the Pitcher Plant that does something very much like this. It has a long, pitcher-shaped cup, which it fills with a sweet, intoxicating fluid. This is a snare to the insects, which crowd into it, and drink until they are too dazed to escape. Then the cruel plant closes over them, and sucks their life blood.

That plant is a false witness. Its fair form, and the attractive liquid within it, invite the insects to come in and feast and get new life; but they find death instead. See

how like this is the picture God has given up in His Word of the one who does not speak the truth:—

“There is no faithfulness in their mouth;
Their inward part is very wickedness;
Their throat is an open sepulchre;
They flatter with their tongue.”

Sometimes people flatter others in the hope of gaining something from them. Sometimes they speak fair words, but mischief is in their heart. There are false witnesses, seeking their own welfare at the expense of others, instead of, like the sweet flowers, attracting others by their loveliness, so that they may feed them and do them good.

There are some insects that feed on carrion—decaying matter. These flies are attracted by the most unpleasant smells, to the place where they will find what they most like. For them some pale flowers give forth a sickly odour to draw them.

But these the bee passes by. It loves purity and sweetness, and the most pleasant odours attract it to the place where these are to be found. Little children should be like the bee, attracted to those things that are pure and lovely, abstaining from all appearance of evil.

What teaches the bee where to find honey, so that it does not make a mistake and draw deadly poison instead from some plants which contain it? It is the same thing that teaches the birds to fly South in the winter, and brings them home again in the spring, the same thing that teaches the flowers to put forth their lovely petals, that “inspires their balmy odours,” and fills them with honey—the Spirit of God, which is the life and inspiration of all things that live and move. He guides the bee to the flower, just as He directs the bird in its flight over the pathless ocean.

It is the Spirit of God alone that can guide you in the right way, keep you from evil, and lead you into all truth. The Bible speaks of those who “approve the things that are more excellent,” because they are “instructed out of the law.”

The life of God is the law of the bee and the flower, and instructs each to grow and to go in the way that He would have it. And this same law of His life will keep you also in His way, if you will only let Him guide you. Then He will teach you to “approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere.”