

## **ONE OF THE MASTER'S FORCEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL LESSONS**

**"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow."  
– Matthew 6:28.**

MANY and varied are the precious lessons taught by the Master during His earthly ministry, and they never grow old. To the true disciple of Christ they are ever new, ever fresh. Whether He taught by the seaside or on the mountains or by the wayside, as He walked and talked with His chosen Twelve, His words of wisdom and grace come to us vibrant with meaning, pulsating with life, full of strength and power, cheering, encouraging and blessing our hearts.

In using these words under our consideration, our Lord, as was His custom, drew an illustration of something familiar to all His hearers. God's care over the lilies seemed a fitting reminder of His greater care over His own people, of His infinite Wisdom, Power and Love. He who so carefully supervised the clothing of the simple flower – which bloomed only to fade in a day – that its robes were more regal than the kingly vesture of Solomon, would surely provide for the clothing of those who trusted in Him!

### **SOME HAVE HIS PROMISE – SOME HAVE NOT**

Undoubtedly much that our Lord said to the Jews would not have been said to Gentiles; for the Gentiles were then under the general curse and condemnation – the whole world was alienated from God. The people of Israel alone had been brought back into covenant relationship with God, through the Law Covenant made at Mount Sinai; hence different words would be applicable to them. Having come into relationship with God, His promises were theirs. All things should work for their blessing – their cattle, their fields,

everything, would be blessed of the Lord, if they would be faithful to Him. Our Lord was, therefore, in line with this thought, exhorting the children of Israel to have greater confidence in God, greater trust in Him who had chosen them to be His peculiar people.

We, like the Master, should make a clear distinction between the persons to whom we would give consolation and assurances of God's care, and all others. We are to remember that some have come into His family and some have not! that some have His promises as theirs, and some have not. We are not to deceive others and to imply that they have a right to claim as their own, promises which were never given to them. Rather, we shall do them more good if we point out that these promises are conditional – only for those who make a covenant with the Lord under the special arrangement open during this Gospel Age. To the Christian this lesson of unfailing trust and confidence in God is a very important one, and to have learned it represents a very considerable growth in grace and in knowledge – in the spirit of love, which casts out all fear. It means a nearness to God, a fellowship with Him, which those who have not learned this lesson cannot enjoy.

## **THE WORLD'S HEAVY BURDENS**

To the people whom the Master generally addressed, the matter of providing for the necessities of life was a very important one. He rarely had the very rich amongst His audience, generally the poor; and the poor in Palestine and other Eastern countries find it very difficult to obtain food, clothing, etc. In many parts of the world today, especially in India, there are people who scarcely ever go to bed without going hungry; and to these the necessities of life are a very important consideration.

Our Lord Jesus indicated that this was so in His time, saying that the important consideration with most people was, "What shall we eat and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" They were anxious and worried. "After these things do the

Gentiles seek," said the Master. Their object in life was to procure food and raiment. That was the burden of their prayer. And even the Jews, though professedly the people of God, had not learned implicit trust in Him, but were to a large extent grasping after the material things, seeking chiefly worldly gain rather than the true riches. Our Lord said that His disciples were to realize that God knew what things they had need of before they asked Him, and should rest fully content in the matter of what God would provide them respecting their temporalities. Jesus wished them to be sure that God would so supervise their interests that they should not want anything really good and needful to them.

This seems to be the whole lesson that our Lord was inculcating in bringing in this illustration from nature – "Consider the lilies of the field." It was a forceful reminder that the things of the Kingdom were the things of paramount importance, and that in seeking these things first, they might have the assurance that all needed earthly things should be theirs.

### **PROPER CONSIDERATION OF THE LILY**

What is it that we are to consider about the lilies? "How they **grow!**" What does this mean? Jesus Himself answers, "They toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." That is, the lilies grow in a very reasonable way; they develop grace and beauty, and are adorned in robes of loveliness without putting forth unnatural, unusual stress or effort. They are not worried about growing. The lily does not wake up in the morning and say, "Now, I wonder if I can make another quarter of an inch today. I wonder if I shall be able to grow as fast and to look as beautiful as that lily over there; and I wonder what people will think about me." It simply assimilates what it can absorb from the earth, and from the atmosphere what God has provided for it there. It does not say, "I think that I shall go to another

place, I cannot grow here," but it does the best it can wherever it happens to be.

The lilies of Palestine to which our Lord referred were evidently not the kind of flowers that we generally term lilies, but were apparently of some other plant family, and a very numerous species, we should judge, [R5991 : page 342] growing everywhere. Those who are accustomed to the flowers of Palestine point to a common reddish flower which they think was meant by "the lilies of the field."

Our lesson, then, as New Creatures, is that since we have given our hearts to the Lord we are not to be worried, anxious, about the things of the present life. Nor are we to be over-anxious regarding our spiritual growth. We are simply to do our best, and trust the growing to Him. But we are to be particularly engaged respecting the things God has promised us as New Creatures in Christ, that we may make our calling and election sure and attain to the glories which our Father has in reservation for those who love Him. If we give our attention to these things, the Master assures us, the Heavenly Father will so supervise our affairs that we shall not lack any necessity of a spiritual kind or of an earthly kind. He will give us whatever of spiritual blessings and of temporal blessings we need as spirit-begotten children of God that we may finish our course with joy.

We are not to interpret our Lord's words to mean that we are to neglect our proper duties in life; that He would not have us do any more spinning or toiling than the lilies do; that He would not have us labor with our hands and our brains in order to care for our family, home, etc. Surely not! for these things are inculcated in the Word of God. Here, evidently, He is merely impressing us with the thought that while we are doing to the very best of our ability in harmony with the surroundings and conditions which God has provided for us, we are not to be worried. We are to be as free from anxious care

as are the lilies, to be fully content and to look up in faith to our Heavenly Father, expecting and accepting His providential care and overruling in all our affairs and interests.

"Just leave all with Him; lilies do, and they *grow*;  
They grow in the rain and they grow in the snow.  
Yes, they *grow*.

They grow in the darkness, all hid in the night,  
Or if in the sunshine, revealed by the light,  
Still they grow.

They ask not your planting; they need not your care  
As they grow;

Dropped down in the valley, the field, anywhere,  
There they grow –

In garments of beauty, arrayed in pure white,  
All radiant in glory from heaven's own light –  
Sweetly grow."

### **REST AND PEACE IN PERFECT TRUST**

God knows all about our circumstances. If we need to be transplanted to another place, into a different kind or soil, where our new nature can better thrive and expand, or where our reasonable, temporal needs can be better obtained, He can arrange for it. He knows just what is good for us, best for us, temporally and spiritually. It is our part to look for His leadings, not attempting to take the helm into our own hands, nor concluding that the Lord will never change our conditions, etc. If it is best for us that they shall be changed, He will change them, if we trust in Him; and surely, if we are His children, it is *His* will that we desire, not our own! We are to be perfectly restful under whatever conditions or circumstances we find ourselves, restful in the thought, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." – Matthew 6:8.

Will this not mean sometimes strong tests of faith and endurance, if the conditions of our lot are painful and hard to bear?

It may be such; but if the Lord's providence does not for a time offer a way of escape, we may be sure that the test will prove one of the "all things" that will work out our good, if we submit sweetly to His will and wait for Him to point out a different way, if it shall seem best to Him. Let us as lilies of His planting, bloom for the glory of our Heavenly Husbandman.

### **ASKING FOR DAILY NEEDS**

While Jesus tells us that we should ask, "Give us this day our daily bread," this is not a specification of what we would prefer to have in a temporal way. We are not to specify things that would be most pleasing to our palate. We are to leave that part to Him. We are merely to acknowledge that we are dependent upon Him for the necessities of life, that we are looking to Him, that we are waiting on His providence and will accept those things which His Wisdom provides as proper for us in connection with the instructions of His Word.

So on we go, growing daily, happy and content in God, and preparing for the Kingdom; for Christians who cannot learn now, under present conditions, to trust in God, would probably not be able to learn this lesson under other conditions. Present conditions are especially helpful, indeed, for those who would cultivate trust, dependence upon the Lord. In this respect we see that the poor have an advantage over the rich; and it was those who were poor, like the lilies of the field, that our Lord Jesus was addressing in the words of our text. And it is to those who are poor in spirit, who realize their own impotency, who long for the rest and peace that Jesus alone can give, who come to Him for this rest, that all the Master's gracious promises and lessons of wisdom, comfort and instruction are given.

"O flower of Heavenly birth, blooming in earthly soil,  
Taking on fairest hues from sun and wind and rain,  
Soon shall thy beauty grace the Heavenly realms Above,  
Transplanted to a fairer clime to bud and bloom again!"

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**"HOW LONG, OH LORD, HOW LONG?"**

How long, oh Lord, how long  
Shall weakness serve the strong?  
How long shall *Might make Right*,  
And darkness hate the light?

How long, oh Lord, how long,  
Till Truth shall crush the wrong,  
Till darkness turn to day,  
And sorrow flee away?

How long till wars shall cease,  
This turmoil end in peace?  
How long the sin-cursed Earth  
Await her second birth?

How long, Lord, must I feel  
The proud oppressor's heel?  
I'm weary of the night,  
I long for morning light!

I long to see Thy face,  
I long for Thine embrace –  
How long, Lord, till I come  
To my long-promised home?

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Not long, my child, not long;  
Be brave, be true, be strong!  
The Day-star doth appear,  
The Kingdom draweth near!

Look up, my child, look up,

The *last drop's in thy Cup!*  
Trust where thou canst not see –  
I soon will call for thee!

GERTRUDE W. SEIBERT.

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