

“Lessons from the Flowers”

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E. J. Waggoner

“Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous.
God has written in the stars above;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us.
Stands the revelation of His love.”

Last week we spent a little time together “among the flowers,” and this week we will speak of a few of the simple lessons that they teach us. “God is Love;” and so whatever reveals God to us brings a message of love. And this is what the flowers teach us in many ways. One of the first things that they teach us is that the Creator likes to have things beautiful. Everything in the Garden that God planted was “pleasant to the sight.” Eden means “delight;” and this shows us that God delights in what is beautiful.

When the Garden was complete, He rested and was refreshed by the perfect beauty of His new creation. “The Lord taketh pleasure in His people; He will beautify the meek with salvation.”

All the beauty of creation is the revealing of the beautiful life of Jesus that is in all His works. He is “altogether lovely,” and so whatever reveals Him must be beautiful.

The beauty of the flowers is not an outward decoration, something that can be put on for special occasions, or worn only when some one is looking. It belongs to the life, and to a part of the flower itself, and not a mask to hide its defects. So it is always there, whether anyone looks or not. The hidden rose is as beautiful as that which grows in the full view of every passer-by.

The God of beauty wants to train His children to love what is beautiful so He has “spread beauty round us everywhere;” and He says, “Whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things.”

One great reason for this is that “by beholding we become changed.” So we must train our eyes to see what is beautiful, and our minds to think upon it, remembering always that “the beauty of all created things is but a gleam from the shining of God’s glory.” As we learn to see His image in it all, the reflection of His lovely face, we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory. Then the Lord will take pleasure in us, and be refreshed by beholding His own perfect beauty reflected in us.

There is much that we may learn, too, from the fragrance of the flowers. This, like their beauty, is a part of their life, and not something put on, like we put scent on our handkerchiefs and clothing. It comes from within, and they breathe it out continually because it is their very nature.

And so it is when Jesus, the sweet "Rose of Sharon and Lily of the Valley," abides in the hearts of His children, the fragrance of His life will make His presence known to all.

"As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul
All Heaven's own sweetness seem around it thrown."

As we "consider the lilies, how they grow," we may learn how, like them, to become beautiful, and sweet by having the life of Jesus unfolding in us unhindered. He says: "I will be the dew unto Israel; He shall grow as the lily."

You know that God wants us, as we see His works, to learn His ways. All things that He has made, and in which He is still working, are to teach us of His ways of doing things. And a beautiful lesson of love and courtesy the flowers teach: that is, not to be content with doing only what we think the necessary things; but to do everything in the very best and sweetest manner possible, in the way that will give the greatest pleasure to everybody: For

"God might have made the earth bring forth
Enough for great and small.
The oak tree and the cedar tree,
Without a flower at all."

Take, for instance, the apple tree, the cherry tree, and other fruit tree in whose spring beauty we have lately taken so much pleasure. Think of the exquisite fragrance of the orange blossom and other flowering plants through which God hands us our food. See how in doing this He has so accompanied the gift with "an odour of a sweet smell;" and so much that it is "pleasant to the sight."

Is not this a beautiful, royal way of doing things? This is Love's way, and "the royal law," the law of love, written in the heart is the only thing that can make us like our Heavenly Father in this. As we are the children of the great King of glory, He wants us to learn His own royal, kingly way of doing things, so that from seeing our good works men will "glorify our Father which is in Heaven."

Not only to the obedient and thankful is He kind, but He is equally good to all. He makes His sun to shine, sends His rain and gives His flowers for just and unjust, even for the unthankful and the evil.

As we dwell in His house to behold His beauty, as we enquire in His great temple of nature to learn His ways, His Spirit will come upon us and make as like Him.

Shall we not learn from Him to do everything in the loveliest way that we can? Shall we not, by inviting Him into our hearts; let love make beautiful our simplest actions, kindness shed its sweet fragrance over in our words and deeds, and learn

to do our most for the pleasure and happiness of all with whom we have any dealings?

“For O how God must love us,
And this poor world of ours,
To spread blue skies above us,
And deck the earth with flowers.”