

"The Creator"

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What is more beautiful than the rose the queen of flowers. charming the eye with its perfect shape and colouring, its rich yet delicate beauty, and breathing forth sweet odours? Yes, the rose is beautiful, but not with its own beauty. All its loveliness is but a dim reflection, a faint image, of Him who said, "I am the Rose of Sharon."

The rose is beautiful, but He is its beauty for He is seen in all the things that He has made. In Jesus Christ "all fulness dwells," and He "filleth all in all." He who made the rose fills it with His own beauty, but He Himself is more beautiful than the rose. He is "altogether lovely," and "the beauty of a created thing is but a gleam from the shining of His glory."

So as we see the fair beauty of His creation, and know that it is but a looking-glass in which His own beauty is reflected, we shall

"Learn to love with zealous, humble duty,
The Eternal Fountain of that heavenly beauty."

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

What is purer than the lily, or the delicate snow crystals, "the pure, white lilies of the sky," as they have been called? The lily is always the emblem of purity—spotless innocence. The whiteness of the snow is used by God to show the perfection of purity. But this exquisite purity and spotlessness are but another revelation of Him who made the lily and who sends the snow. Jesus says, "I am the Lily of the Valleys."

"The roses speak of the Rose of Sharon,
The lilies of Christ of the Vale;
And every sweet flower unfolds His power,
And His love that can never fail."

Only "the pure in heart" can "see God." His perfect purity is such that "evil cannot dwell with Him." Yet He invites us into His presence to abide with Him, and when we draw near, the power of His pure life cleanses away all our sin, and keeps us "unspotted from the world."

"Consider," says Jesus, "how the lilies grow; how, springing from the cold dark earth, or from the mud of the river bed, the plants unfold in loveliness and fragrance. Who would dream of the possibilities of beauty in the rough brown bulb of the lily? But when the life of God, hidden therein unfolds at His call in the rain and the sunshine, man marvel at the vision of grace and loveliness. Even so will the life of God unfold in every soul that will yield itself to the ministry of His grace,

which, free as the rain and the sunshine, comes with its benediction to all. It is the Word of God that creates the flowers, and the same Word will produce in you the graces of His Spirit. He has surrounded you with beauty to teach you that you are to make life joyous and beautiful with the love of Christ,—like the flowers, to gladden other lives by the ministry of love."

"What is stronger than a lion," the king of beasts? Solomon says that the lion "is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any." "The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion," are so terrible that the other beasts of the field are terror-stricken at the sound, and flee to hide themselves.

But there is One stronger than the lion,—He who created it, and whose "eternal power" is seen in all the things that are made. "Strength" as well as "beauty," is "in His sanctuary." "Power belongeth unto God," and "there is no power but of God." So wherever there is strength we see the power of God's life working. The lion is strong, but God its Creator is the source of all strength. "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

Jesus is called "The Lion of the tribe of Judah," and among the living creatures that uphold His throne is the likeness of a lion, the symbol of strength. And "the Lord will give strength unto the people," so we can say "The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" For "the wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are hold as a lion," which, as Solomon says, "turneth not away for any."

What is more glorious than the sun shining in its strength? It is "as a bridegroom coming forth out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race, His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

But the sun shineth not by its own brightness. "The heavens declare the glory of God." It reflects His rays who "dwelleth in light that no man can approach unto." "He covereth Himself with light as with a garment." He hides Himself, not in darkness, but in light too glorious for us to see and live.

Jesus is the true Light of the world, the One from whom the sun borrows all its brightness. Think how much the sunshine means to this earth. All the life, all the beauty, all the strength are the result of it. It is the channel of life, strength, and beauty and fulness to this world, and thus it "declares the glory of God," the Eternal Fountain of all these things.

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." It is streaming forth in the glorious sunshine, painting the rose, decking the lily, filling the earth with food and gladness, and giving strength to all that live upon it. The sun is but a servant at His gates, through whom He distributes His blessings, but He Himself is far more glorious than the sun.

A missionary was one day talking with a heathen man. This man said to him,

"I go to the place where you worship, but I see nothing of your God. If you come to my temple, I will show you there the god that I worship; but I never see your God. Why don't you show Him to me?"

"Come here," said the missionary, stepping out of the house, into the open air. It was noonday, and the sun was shining with great power. The missionary pointed up to it and said to the heathen, "look at yonder sun." He tried to look at it for a moment. But he instantly turned away his face, and covered his eyes with his hands.

"I can't look at that," said he; "it blinds me."

"Well," said the missionary, "that sun is only one of the servants of my God. If you can't bear to look at one of His servants, how can you expect to see the Master of that servant, the great God who made him? No sinful man can see God and live."

So in all these wonderful works of the great Creator, we see the beauty, the purity, the strength, and the glory, of our God and Father. Now remember that He made man in His own image, that he might be like Him in all these things. In His works He shows us what He is, so that we may know what He wants us to be, and what He is able to make us.

The beauty of the rose, the purity of the lily, the strength of the lion, and the glory of the sun—all these are to be seen even more fully in the children of God. If He so clothes the grass of the field with beauty, shall He not much more clothe you? If He gives such strength to the lion, shall He not much more be the strength of His people? He who lights up the sun with His glory has promised that His children shall "shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."

"Give unto the Lord, O ye sons of the mighty,
Give unto the Lord glory and strength.
Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name,
Worship the Lord to the beauty of holiness."