

The King's Garden
The Present Truth – July 4, 1901
E. J. Waggoner

EVERLASTING FLOWERS

Perhaps you may have seen the shining bunches of these pretty, old-fashioned flowers in vases on the mantel-piece, especially in country houses, where they are kept through the winter because they do not fade, like ordinary blossoms. It is because of this that they are called "everlasting flowers!"

Of course they do not last for ever, for all that is in the world passes away, "and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth." But all the flowers in the King's Garden are everlasting flowers, because they come from "incorruptible seed," even "the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever."

Last week we spoke of the beautiful land where God will give His people everlasting rest. And now we will see what it is that will give us long life in that beautiful land.

"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

There is in this Word of God the fifth seed that He puts into His Garden—the seed of everlasting life. The Apostle Paul quoted this commandment, and showed one way in which it is fulfilled. He said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." We are to obey our parents, because to disobey them would be to disobey and dishonour our Heavenly Father, who has placed us in their homes, under their care.

Adam was "the son of God," and every child of Adam is the child of God, though many are prodigal sons, disobedient children. Adam disobeyed his Heavenly Father. This was sin, for "sin is the transgression of the law." All sin is disobedience of God, and all disobedience of God is sin.

You know that this was what cut short Adam's life, and prevented him from living for ever in the beautiful world God had given him. For "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." But the results of his sin did not end with himself, for "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," and so "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

If this were the end of the story, we could have no hope of long life in God's beautiful earth. But no; it is only the beginning; and the very commandment that we are talking of promises us this long life, so we know there is hope that we may yet obtain it by His exceeding great and precious promise. So let us read the rest of

the story, and see how we may be brought back to obey and honour our Heavenly Father,—to “glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.”

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.”

Who is this One, whose perfect obedience has power to undo the evil effects of the sin of the first man, and bring back his family to obedience and life? It is the One Man—the Man Christ Jesus. Just as we were made sinners, born sinful, through the disobedience of Adam, even as we may be made righteous, born again God’s obedient children, through the obedience of Jesus.

For “because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” The Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit of perfect obedience and honour of His Heavenly Father, for He said, “I do always the things which please Him.”

Then would you always honour your Heavenly Father by perfect obedience to your earthly parents, and by never doing anything displeasing to them or to Him? Here you see the way, the only way in which this can be done. Jesus is the way. You cannot please and honour God, but He can and always does. So you must have His sweet Spirit of obedience in your heart, through being born again of Him, if you are to be among the many who are “made righteous” by His obedience. But what about the long life? Does not death reign over all alike, whether obedient or disobedient? No; for as sin—disobedience—brought death, even so righteousness—obedience—brings back to the children of men their lost life.

“For as by one man came death, by Man came also the resurrection from the dead.” Because Jesus always did the will of His Father, death could not reign over Him. He reigned over death, and arose from the tomb, the forerunner of all who shall be made righteous by His obedience.

“Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o’er His foes!
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives for ever with His saints to reign.”

“O grave, where is thy victory?” Because of the glorious victory that Jesus has won over sin and death, God says to all who will let Him make them obedient like Himself:

“Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. . . . And I will put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land.” Ezek. 37:12-21

So our days will be long in the land which the Lord our God giveth us, only through the resurrection from the dead, which has been made possible for as through the obedience of Jesus, the beloved Son of God.

Oh, may He sow this precious seed in your heart gardens, dear children (and He will if you will only listen to His voice) that it may break the power of sin and death over you. Then you will see that lovely land into which He will bring all whom He ransoms from the grave, and your days will be long in it—how long?—even for ever.

“Beautiful Zion, built above,
Beautiful city that I love,
Beautiful gates of pearly white,
Beautiful temple, God its light.

“Beautiful trees for ever there,
Beautiful fruit they always bear,
Beautiful rivers gliding by,
Beautiful fountains, never dry,—

“Beautiful light without the sun,
Beautiful day revolving on,
Beautiful worlds on worlds untold,
Beautiful streets of shining gold,—

“Beautiful crowns on every brow,
Beautiful palms the conquerors show,
Beautiful robes the ransomed wear,
Beautiful all who enter there.

“Beautiful throne of God, the Lamb,
Beautiful seats at His right hand,
Beautiful rest,—all wanderings cease,—
Beautiful home of perfect peace.”

Have you ever thought that everything you do is either an honour or dishonour to your parents. You bear their name, and people will judge of them by what they see in you.

If you are naughty, rude, and disobedient, they will think your parents have neglected to train you properly, and that perhaps your bad behaviour is a copy of what they are in their own homes. So they will think much less of them, because you have dishonoured them.

But if you are obedient, gentle, kind, and obliging, they will think that you have a good father and mother, and your parents will be honoured because of you.

Do you remember our talk two weeks ago about the Father’s name? When God puts His name upon us. He sows it in our hearts in seed from His own nature, that grows in His Garden His own beautiful character. But sometimes people take His name when they are not like Him in character. He says that His holy name is blasphemed because of these, for people who do not know Him judge of Him by what they see in them.

What a dreadful thing to so dishonour our Heavenly Father as to cause His glorious and fearful Name to be blasphemed!

But in His fifth commandment He gives us a safeguard against this. His Word of power speaks to us, bidding us honour Him. So let this Word sink as good seed into your heart garden, that the fragrant flower of perfect obedience to Him in all things may bring forth its everlasting blossoms to His honour.