

The King's Garden

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"A little monitor presents her page
Of choice instruction with her snowy bells—
The Lily of the Vale."

What is the message of the Lily? You will all be able to tell at once, for the lily has ever been the emblem of purity. So the snowy bells of the valley lily ring out the message. Be pure.

"The red rose says, Be sweet!
The lily says, Be pure!"

Jesus is both "the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valleys." All the sweetness and the purity of the flowers come from Him who made them. He is the sweetness of the Rose, and the purity of the Lily. If you keep this always in mind, you cannot look at any of His works without learning something of Him.

The fair lily of purity is always to be found in the King's Garden. The seed of it is in the Eighth Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Do you know what is the purest thing in the world? Perhaps you will say, The snow. But snow can be soiled, as you have doubtless seen it, and then it is no longer beautiful. But there is something so pure that it cannot be defiled,—so pure that it purifies whatever comes in contact with it. It is light.

And do you know that the white-robed lily wears a garment of light? It reflects the beautiful, bright, pure rays that shine upon it, and this is what clothes it with its white garment.

Some of the lovely-coloured flowers we have talked about show us the beauty of the light, but the lily shows us its purity. But remember that the light is the reflection of the glory of the Lord. So we may say: Some of the flowers show us a little of the beauty of the Lord, but the lily shows us something of His purity.

When Jesus, the Lily of the Valley, appeared to a few of His disciples in the dazzling splendour of His perfect purity, "His raiment was white as the light," "so as no fuller on earth can white them."

These things teach us how we may obey the lily's message, "Be pure." It is by turning to the light, by living in the light, letting the light of God's face shine upon us, and reflecting it.

God tells us in His Word that He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon sin. Yet He says, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." So when we obey His call and come to Him, He will

"Show His reconciling face,
Shine away our sin and shame."

and we shall be purified by His presence.

If you have been in places where flax is grown for making linen, you have no doubt seen fields spread all over with linen thread put out in the sunshine to bleach, that is to be made white. If a white garment becomes stained or discoloured, it is put into the sunshine to whiten.

So if you would have the stains and marks of sin taken away, and be made pure in heart, come in prayer to God, and look up into the face of Jesus, who is the Light of the world, and He will make you clean and white. "If we walk in the light, . . . the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

"Consider the lillies, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you?" He who gives the lily its pure garment of light, shall much more clothe you with the robe of His everlasting righteousness and purity.

No matter what your surroundings may be, you may be pure in heart. Did you ever see a beautiful white water lily floating on a slimy, stagnant pool of water? And did you read the message that Jesus has written for you upon its petals? It is that even in this dark world of sin, you may grow in beauty, in purity, showing the grace and glory of Jesus to all who look upon you.

Dr. T. L. Cuyler tells about visiting a coal mine; and he found growing at the mouth of the mine some beautiful white flowers, but alas! they were covered with the black dust of the place. He spoke of it regretfully to one of the miners, who took one of the flowers and shook it slightly. At once the dirt slipped off, and left the beautiful petals glistening white. "You see," said the miner, "this flower has the power to live in the midst of dirt without ever getting dirty." So the Christian can live in an evil world without being contaminated.

Think of the childhood of Jesus in His home in Nazareth. He "knew no sin," but lived a life of perfect purity "unspotted from the world," in a place where nearly all the people were of very bad character.

When Philip told Nathanael about Jesus of Nazareth, Nathanael said with astonishment: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said unto him, Come and see!" And when he went he found the fairest and purest lily that ever grew in this world.

Now the King wants the lilies of purity to bloom in His Garden, so that anyone who does not believe that He has the power to make and keep us pure, can come and see. This is a greater miracle than a pure white water lily growing on a dark, slimy,

muddy pool. The light that God sheds from heaven, over this dark world, can purify all who will come to it, and clothe them with grace and beauty.

“Maiden with the meek brown eyes,
In whose orb the shadow lies,
Like the dusk in evening skies;

“Bear a lily in thy hand,
Gates of brass cannot withstand
One touch of that magic wand.”
-Longfellow.

It may be that you have read these lines before, and wondered what was their meaning. The lily in the hand represents purity of heart, by virtue of which we can gain an entrance wherever we will.

You know what it was that closed the gates of Eden, and shut man out from the Garden where he walked and talked with God. It was sin, impurity. But when this is taken away by “Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,” then again we may come into His holy presence, which brings back Eden to earth and makes heaven below. For Eden means delight; and “in His presence is fulness of joy.”

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” They shall see Him now by faith, and as He reveals Himself, in all His works, and at last they shall “enter in through the gates into the city.”

“There is a city bright,
Cloud are its gates to sin,
Naught that defileth
Can ever enter in.”

The glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and

“The none of ignorance and night
May dwell in the eternal light
Through the eternal love.”

In a poem of Milton’s which some day you may read, he tells of a pure-hearted maiden who, when in danger was delivered by a guardian angel. As the angel ascends heavenward again, he says:—

“Mortals that would follow me,
Love Virtue, she alone is free;
She shall teach you how to rise
Higher than the starry skies;
And if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.”