

Rev. Owen Turley's Sermon Suggested Theme For '1950 Lily Blossom Parade'

Rev. Owen T. Turley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Otoo C Turley, who was a guest of his parents last year at the time of Lily Blossom parade, was so impressed by the beauty of the lilies that he wrote the following sermon which he delivered in the Community Church, Swedenborgian, of Berkeley, Calif., of which he is pastor. The Azalea Garden Club, this year, is using his theme for the flower show. His address, "Dragging the Anchor," was published as the sermon of the week in the Nov. 14, 1949, issue of Berkeley Daily Gazette, and is given here as being timely and interesting to his many friends of the area.

Rev. Turley began his sermon by quoting Matthew 7:28: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow."

"The growing of Easter lily bulbs is one of the main businesses of the coastal area of southern Oregon and Northern California," he began. "Travelers passing through during July and August are greeted by acres and acres of beautifully white Easter lilies. Their fragrance is everywhere. It was my privilege and pleasure to be in Brookings, last July 4, when the townspeople held their annual parade and festival of Easter lilies. In the parade were perhaps 50 floats of every description made of lily blossoms.

"Along about half-way through the parade came a float entered by one of the local churches. It was a beautiful float with a huge replica of the Bible surrounded by a blanket of white lily blossoms. Upon the page of the open Word were these words, 'Consider the Lilies . . . ' It was a most effective application of the meaning of the Lord's words. 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?'

"The translation of the words 'Take No Thought,' are frequently misleading to the modern ear. The American Standard Version brings out the significance much more clearly by translating it 'Be not anxious.' The Lord's intent was not to condemn but to comfort. He was, those many centuries ago, pointing out the basis of so much unhappiness and spiritual death, a basis which is never more real than today—'anxiety, and feelings of insecurity. We must plan for the future, we must work for food, shelter and clothing. Even a certain amount of worldly goods for pleasure and recreation is a vital necessity for a full, well-rounded life. But we frequently become so engrossed in our efforts to seek more and more of life's necessities that we become slaves to a hunger that never can be satisfied. Rich man, poor man, alike can become so anxious for more of life's gifts, that a feeling of insecurity can kill the enjoyment of those gifts and opportunities which are at hand. We are placed upon this earth and given life, not just for our own benefit but for the benefit of the Lord's kingdom.

"Emanuel Swenbord points out that all men are created for heaven, to put it in the Lord's words, 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom', Luke 12: 32 (Swedenborg further states that heaven is a continuation of this life and that it is a state of life in which each of us has a function to perform, a job to do, that adds to the happiness of all people in heaven. Our sojourn on this earth affords us with the

opportunities to develop our abilities and talents and to choose whether we wish to use those abilities for the happiness of all people or just for satisfying our own wants and desires. This principle of living for the happiness of others is Swedenborg's Doctrine of Use which carries through the entire 30-some volumes of his religious writings.

"The anxiety and feeling of insecurity which we all have at times, does more to destroy our possibilities for happiness and real progress both worldly and spiritually, than any other human weakness. 'Consider the lilies of the field 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 today is, and tomorrow is cast in the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith.'

"'O ye of little faith' there is the crux of the whole matter. Most of our difficulties lie in our lack of faith in our ability to carry out the high purpose for which we were created. We cannot do our best either in gaining worldly goods or in seeking the Lord's Kingdom if we are constantly dragging the anchor of anxiety. We must have faith that life is good, that we have an important part in life to fulfill, that we can and will play that part no matter how small it may seem and no matter how hard the going. All we need to realize is that whatever the Lord creates is created for a purpose. 'Consider the lilies of the field how they grow'. You too can have a life arrayed even more beautifully than these, for you have a will and understanding, which the lilies of the field do not have. You can understand your purposes and goals and have a will or a desire to reach those goals to the best of your ability. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you.' A clear vision of your purpose in living—a clear understanding that you have been given the opportunity to contribute to the happiness of heaven, will release your mind from the drudgery of anxiety. Your mind will be sharper, your strength doubled, your abilities made more useful, your productivity and capacity for earning a decent living will actually be increased, if you have faith in yourself as a creation of the Lord's love and faith that He wants you to enjoy your life as a contributor to His Kingdom of heaven."

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