

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## SHARON'S LOVELY ROSE

*I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*

*Song of Solomon 2:1*

The LORD, (in teaching that the Kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink and that those things which are of value therein, are in nowise satisfactory to the flesh), said “*And why take ye thought for raiment? 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.*” (Mat 6:28-29). For in the realm of flesh and blood, men are consumed with a quest to gain this world's goods, and thus do apply themselves to the pursuit of things that pass away.

Yet in the Kingdom of GOD, these things are of no value at all and it is foolish for the sons of GOD to fret and worry in trying to attain them. The goal of those who enter this Kingdom is not to attain the things which the men of this world seek after but rather, to pursue those things that are eternal. Even as HE instructed HIS disciples, “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” (Mat 6:33) Paul confessed this when he said, “*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*” (Php 3:13-14)

Those that would make merchandise of the souls of men tell them that GOD's promises are conditional upon their obedience and that HE will reward men with a mixture of spiritual blessings and the goods of this world (which shall all, in reality, perish in the twinkling of an eye). This is how they would define the “things” which are added to men.

The airwaves of radio and TV are full of those who espouse this error, leaving men in greater darkness than those who have never heard anything. These blind guides fulfill that prophecy of the LORD, “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*” (Mat 23:15) They can be readily discovered, as they are constantly trying to gain contributions to fund their so called “ministries”, which are in large part designed with their own benefit in mind, while they call for “love gifts” and “seed faith” offerings to dupe their listeners.

The preaching of the gospel is not associated with the money of this world. Its success in no wise depends upon one nickel which any man can scrape up nor shall it cease or be hindered by any lack thereof. The LORD sends it to accomplish HIS purpose in the earth of calling HIS elect sons, out of darkness and into the LIGHT and HE will sustain it. No man ever gained one shred of heavenly or earthly blessing on the basis of any carnal “seed” he might sow.

All of the blessings of the sons of GOD flow to them, not because of their own obedience or faith, but rather because of the benefits purchased for them and imputed to their account by the work and person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. They stand ever before the presence of GOD as those who are clothed in pure white LINEN, a bride without spot or blemish of any kind, for they stand there in the perfect RIGHTEOUSNESS of JESUS CHRIST. They are blessed and made complete in HIM quite apart from any effort of their own.

Thus the LORD alludes to the beauty of HIS natural creation as HE describes the glory which is placed upon the “lilies of the field”, and would teach that the FATHER will clothe those in whom HIS soul delights, with a much more glorious garment than even these lovely flowers. There are few sights upon the earth which are more breathtaking in beauty than a field of wildflowers, spreading their colors and wafting their fragrance, in the Spring time. The LORD bestows this beauty completely without any input from men, nor can such magnificence be created or improved upon by finite and corruptible creatures.

It is surely true that the LORD knows exactly the carnal needs of all of HIS creation since not even a sparrow can fall to the earth without the direct determination of both its trajectory and its point of landing by the all wise CREATOR and SUSTAINER of all things. *“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Mat 10:29-31)* If he gives to all their meat in due season will HE not also provide all things needful for those whom HE values above all that HE has created. These are those men who are manifested by their desire to confess HIM before men. They are called the elect of GOD, the chosen and precious possession which HE has ordained to inherit HIS Kingdom.

The Plains of Sharon are located to the northwest of Jerusalem between the mountains on the east and the Mediterranean Sea on the west. It is a well watered and fertile strip of land which was renowned for the many colorful and lovely flowers which flourished in its rich soil. It is this verdant piece of land that the LORD is pleased to identify HIMSELF with as the greatest ROSE among the many roses which were rooted there and the most lovely of all the lilies found therein.

There is some disagreement among scholars as to whether this rose (and lily) is referring to CHRIST or to the church, especially in light of verse 2. While a case can surely be made for that view, it seems clear to me that HE is speaking in the first person when HE uses the definite article, **“the”** before both the ROSE and the LILY. This is in keeping with HIS statement in John 14:6 where HE refers to HIMSELF as **“the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.”**

One thing that is obvious is the close identity which the LORD makes with HIS people, since HE then refers to HIS bride as *“the lily among thorns”* which does perfectly describe her as that one who is brought up in the midst of brambles yet preserved and precious in the sight of HIM who has set HIS love upon her and gave HIMSELF for her while she dwells among the daughters of men who do not share in HIS affection. In any case the land of Sharon is specifically mentioned as that place wherein this blessing is both seen and experienced as this lily is separated from the thorns which choke the religious and those who are taken up with the cares of this world.

SHARON is the place where the LORD’s people grow up into the measure and stature of CHRIST. *“It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.” (Isa 35:2)*

SHARON is the pasture where the LORD’s sheep are fed. *“And over the herds that fed in Sharon was Shitrai the Sharonite.” (1Chron 27:29)*

SHARON is the FOLD in which the LAMB’s lambs find shelter and safety. *“And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.” (Isa 65:10)*

SHARON is that place wherein the sons of GOD feast upon the WINE of HIS Kingdom while those who despise HIS way thirst and perish. *“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: (Isa 65:13)*

“In Sharon’s lovely ROSE, immortal beauties shine.

Its sweet refreshing FRAGRANCE shows its origins divine.

How blooming and how fair, O may my happy breast,

This lovely ROSE forever wear, and be supremely blessed.”

(#75 Lloyd’s Hymnal, by John Dobell)

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