

Hymns of the Church – *Lily of the Valley* – 14 April 2015, Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord)



*1 I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. 2 As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.* (Song 2:1-2)

The story of the people of God has always been one about the rare and beautiful Lily among thorns. Remember the Parable of the Good Seed growing with the Tares (Matthew 13) But this verse has a greater reference to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys. The lily has traditionally been a flower to memorialize those whose labors on this earth are over, and the veil of death has closed their eyes in sleep. It is the valley to which we all are bound. It is that “Valley of the Shadow of Death” to which the Psalmist makes reference in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. The comforting and radiant truth for the Christian is this: We do not go through the Valley of Death, but rather through the Valley of the SHADOW of Death only. Death is not real to the Christian believer. But, it must be acknowledged, life is comprised of many dark valleys through which we must travel. There is one encouraging truth that defines valleys – they are surrounded by MOUNTAINS and the only way out is UP!

This old hymn that we study today lacks the nasalized expressions of the Oxford professor. It is plain, simple, and biblical. It possesses precisely the properties that its author intended – reaching the poor and outcast of London. He had a loving heart for the oppressed, the down-and-out, and the refuse of the teeming shores of England. In this sense, he possessed a heart very much like unto that of our Lord and Savior. His name, Charles Fry, was a household name in the Europe and America of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and he is the man who formed the first Salvation Army Brass Band for William Booth, its founder, who shared his devotion to helping the poor who were being crushed by the Industrial Revolution. Fry, and his three musician-sons, decided to serve as body guards against the hooligans who stoned William Booth at every venue at which he preached the Gospel. Their music became so popular that physical exertion was no longer needed in defending the preacher. Mr. Fry’s hymn, *Lily of the Valley*, was published in December 1881 in the *War Cry Magazine*. He died the following August and the lines of another work he wrote are inscribed on his tombstone:

*The former things are past, and ended is the strife,  
I’m safe at home at last! I live an endless life!*

The title for this hymn comes from Song of Solomon 2:1 I am the “*Lily of the*

Valleys". But there is a slight discrepancy – the verse does not read 'valley' but rather 'VALLEYS' – every Valley!

### Lily of the Valley

*I have found a friend in Jesus, He's everything to me,  
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul;  
The Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see  
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole.  
In sorrow He's my comfort, in trouble He's my stay;  
He tells me every care on Him to roll.*

#### Refrain

*He's the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star,  
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.*

*He all my grief has taken, and all my sorrows borne;  
In temptation He's my strong and mighty tower;  
I have all for Him forsaken, and all my idols torn  
From my heart and now He keeps me by His power.  
Though all the world forsake me, and Satan tempt me sore,  
Through Jesus I shall safely reach the goal.*

#### Refrain

*He will never, never leave me, nor yet forsake me here,  
While I live by faith and do His blessed will;  
A wall of fire about me, I've nothing now to fear,  
From His manna He my hungry soul shall fill.  
Then sweeping up to glory to see His blessed face,  
Where the rivers of delight shall ever roll.*

#### Refrain

### Discussion

*I have found a friend in Jesus, He's everything to me,  
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul;  
The Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see  
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole.  
In sorrow He's my comfort, in trouble He's my stay;  
He tells me every care on Him to roll.*

Here is the great victory of all life – to FIND Jesus, to be His friend, and for Him to become your All-in-All. Having little other hope in life, the poor and wretched of London and, later, America, found comfort and joy in the realization that there was a King, above that little monarch of England, that loved them, cared about them, and had even died for them. Though their daily associations were with similarly dirty, scantily attired poor of the street, there was One who was the Fairest of Ten Thousand who loved them. He alone was the pure White Lily of the Valleys – every valley of their downtrodden existence. That Lily signaled hope, and the way out of the Valley. We all must come to know, as many of the poor of London did, that Jesus is the only One who can cleanse our sins and make us whole. Though all our troubles and sorrows do not evaporate when we come to know Jesus Christ, they become a joy amidst the stormy sea. He is our Anchor on that sea that keeps our vessel from drifting in the heat of the storm. Facing the bow of our ship into the oncoming gale, the Anchor Holds! We place all of our burdens on Him in response to His invitation to do so. Our labors are nil, and

His are all if we trust and obey.

Refrain:

*He's the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star,  
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.*

Our eyes may be downcast in the Valley, and our worried eyes catch the glimmer of a Lily that cheers our hearts for, even in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, a Lily will lift our spirits because it is a product, like we are, of the Maker. Having our spirits aroused and lifted by the Lily, our eyes are cast heaven-ward to see a stunning bright star, the brightest in the heavens – the Bright and Morning Star. He was there all along, it is just that our downcast brow did not lift upward to see Him. He was with us from the lengthening shadows at the setting of the sun; and He shall be with us all through the dark night as a symbol of promising of the coming Rising “*Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings.*” His Bright Star remains until every other is vanquished from the sky – until the moment of the bright Sun (the Day Star) rising on the eastern sky.

*He all my grief has taken, and all my sorrows borne;  
In temptation He's my strong and mighty tower;  
I have all for Him forsaken, and all my idols torn  
From my heart and now He keeps me by His power.  
Though all the world forsake me, and Satan tempt me sore,  
Through Jesus I shall safely reach the goal.*

Just as He has promised, He will bear our burdens. “**28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**” (Matt 11:28-30) Our High Tower is Christ. He serves to foreclose the tempter's snare when we are tempted and allows us not to be tempted more than we can forebear. I hope and pray that we have “all for Him forsaken” but I seriously doubt it. We all have those little foxes that come into the garden of our souls and spoil the fruit of our testimonies. Those idols may be cast out of the temple of our Hearts, but they linger just beyond the threshold – wealth, pride, sex, and every other reprehensible idol awaits our moments of weakness – all the more reason to keep Christ as our High Tower. On many long, forced marches, a soldier may weaken and become demoralized at his fatigue under the burden of a 72 pound field pack. But pride in himself and his fathers urges him only to take the next step up the rugged mountain trail. We have a greater pride to overcome our own weariness under the march of life –pride in our Lord Jesus Christ. How can we let One down who has done so much for us – even the death of the cross! Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We cannot fail to reach our Haven of Rest if we go WITH Him all of the Way.

*He will never, never leave me, nor yet forsake me here,  
While I live by faith and do His blessèd will;  
A wall of fire about me, I've nothing now to fear,  
From His manna He my hungry soul shall fill.  
Then sweeping up to glory to see His blessèd face,  
Where the rivers of delight shall ever roll.*

His Word is Gold Bonded – and better! He has promised, and He will abide His promise: . . . for he hath said, ***I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*** (Heb 13:5) How is it

possible to do the will of the Lord? First, we must allow our old, selfish wills to die – wills which we mistakenly call ‘free wills’ for free they are not. Any will of man is in bondage to Satan. If we will be free, we must surrender our old man to Christ, and take that perfect will of God upon us, possessing that Mind which was in Christ Jesus. Then we shall be free indeed for all that we will shall be righteousness. He protects us and builds a hedge about us to separate us from the deprivations of the world. We fear nothing when we walk with our great and courageous brother. The bully on the street will flee at our approach. He feeds us with that Manna which comes down from Heaven – the Word of God. If we will build strong spiritual bones and muscles, we will take our daily fill of that Word. I like very much that term, “*Sweeping up to Glory,*” for that is precisely the manner in which the child of God is escorted into the Gates of Splendor – an Angelic Escort. <sup>22</sup> *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried.* (Luke 16:22) What a great abyss is found between the repose of the dead in Christ, and the dark grave of the wicked! We shall see the Face of the One who saw our face – thousands of years distant from atop Calvary’s brow, and we shall be glad! Those Rivers of Delight shall be the river of Life bordered on every side by that Tree of Life that Adam shunned in the Garden at Eden.

The great decision that must be made in this life must be made while the sprig is yet green, and the sun is still shining.

Have you decided for Christ as Lord, or do you depend upon the failing and languid hands of mortal man?